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**"Catholic Schooling - A Crisis Revisited".**

**"A discussion of the key challenges confronting Catholic schools today in the light of their history with particular reference to County Durham".**

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**June 1996.  
Leo McCormack.**



**15 AUG 1996**

## **"Catholic Schooling - A Crisis Revisited".**

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Since the Second relief Act of 1791 the Catholic Church in England has placed exceptional reliance upon its schools to ensure the continuation of the faith. Throughout this period the Church has displayed an extraordinary ability to adapt to, and equal, the external challenges that have consistently confronted its schooling policy. The various manoeuvres that it has been forced to make over the past 200 years provide testament to its resolute resistance to the potential loss of control of its schools. Without doubt the manner by which the Church has responded to past challenges has had a profound effect upon the nature of Catholic schooling today.

Under close examination it becomes evident that many of the issues that currently dominate today's education debate have existed throughout the last two centuries and remarkably, while the Church has persevered with its schools policy, it has failed to determine any real schooling philosophy.

The Church authorities at both national and local level have been so engrossed with meeting the demands of external threats that no clear vision or coherent policy has emerged and consequently much confusion remains as to the purpose and nature of Catholic schooling today. Despite all the sacrifices and advances made, recent government legislation bears the potential to provide the greatest challenge yet to the Church's policy while raising a serious question mark against the very continuation of Catholic schooling.

In this study I shall attempt to explore the key influences that have shaped the development of Catholic schooling and to examine today's crisis in an historical perspective as illuminated by the educational advances made by the Catholic community within Durham county.

Leo McCormack.  
June 1996

## **"Catholic Schooling - A Crisis Revisited".**

**"A discussion of the key challenges confronting Catholic schools today in the light of their history with particular reference to County Durham".**

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School of Education,  
Durham University.**

**June 1996.  
Leo McCormack.**

***This is an original piece of research and as far as I am aware no part of such work has been submitted for a degree at this or any other university.***

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## INTRODUCTION

### INTRODUCTION

Over the past two hundred years a unique system of Catholic schooling has developed in England. A system founded upon the hopes and aspirations of Catholic priests at the beginning of the 19th century and systematically built upon by subsequent generations. The early development of Catholic schooling was given formal direction and subsequent control by the Catholic bishops during the middle of that century. Until recently this direction has served the children of the Catholic faithful well. Today new challenges have emerged that have threatened the very existence and continuation of Catholic schooling.

Recent Conservative legislation, in an attempt to wrestle the stranglehold of Local Education Authority control from what it regards as "looney left" Labour councils, has also, perhaps inadvertently, placed Catholic schooling under direct threat. The culmination of recent government initiatives is that parents are being asked directly to determine the future of all state controlled schools including the voluntary aided Catholic sector.

In the past the Catholic Church placed the utmost dependence upon its schools to guarantee its future, and how it responds to the current crisis may directly affect the continuation of its schools' programme. Perhaps more importantly, any decisions at this juncture could well determine the faith of future generations of young Catholics which, in itself, could threaten the very continuation of Catholicism in this country.

The latest danger cannot be said to be unique, for evidence suggests that the Church has met many similar threats to its schooling in the past. While there is a certain urgency about today's crisis the church cannot afford to divorce today's

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difficulties from similar past challenges. In this respect the present lure of short term gains must be viewed from the historical perspective of the last two hundred years. If the Church, through the parents and local based clergy, chooses to ignore its previous campaigns it is in danger of rejecting its heritage and hard won traditions. In considering those challenges many parallels and contrasts can be drawn which may provide indicators for the Catholic Church as to how the present crisis might be faced.

### **A REGIONAL STUDY.**

Ever since the early nineteenth century the Catholic Church has placed great dependence upon its schools; not only to educate, but also to provide its future members. It is difficult to define with any great certainty the original vision that the Church held of its schools except to say that they were places which were expected to produce "good practising Catholics". One of the aims of this study therefore will be to consider to what lengths the Church, along with a number of influential individuals, were prepared to go in an attempt to realise that goal.

The original intention of this study was to examine the development of Catholic schooling in the region coupled with an empirical study of the effectiveness for the Catholic Church in developing its schools programme. Chiefly for two reasons this approach had to be forsaken. Firstly, while examining local developments it quickly became apparent that following the 1852 Westminster Synod's 'schools first' declaration a pattern emerged which was extremely repetitive and, to quote my supervisor, led to "One damn thing after another". The empirical study had to be abandoned because two of the Durham Catholic comprehensive schools refused to take part. Never-the-less the educational developments of 19th century within the Durham region are of great significance to the history of Catholic schooling for they provide an insight of the Catholic community's

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determination to educate its children in the faith, whatever the cost. Unless this historical background is appreciated it is difficult to view today's resistance in perspective.

The county itself provides us with a unique area whose geography and industrial potential at the turn of the 19th century offered a catalyst for great social and religious development. Within a relatively short period Catholicism developed from being the faith of a small minority group to a dominant religious force which was to play a significant role in a rapidly expanding industrial climate. Interestingly this religious congregation emerged at a time when the other established religions were experiencing great difficulties and rapidly losing members at an alarming pace.

Most importantly, the region retains many Catholic traditions. The rich heritage left by the endeavours of the early 19th century priests and parishioners is very evident today in the schools and churches. Despite the many social and industrial advances a large Catholic community remains in Durham enjoying the fruits of their forebears' labour and continuing to display a real commitment to the faith. This is no more evident than in the current education debate where the parents of the Durham district have been almost totally united against the government's attempt to take control of Catholic schools through the implementation of Grant Maintained status.

Throughout this study a number of recurrent issues emerge which, in reality, are still evident in today's education debate in some shape or form.

They are presented in the following manner:

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### **1. The control of Catholic schools.**

Since the middle of the nineteenth century the Church has consistently conducted a campaign to protect its own vision of education. The key to the Church's ability to establish and retain its schools lies in the fact that throughout the intervening period it has successfully managed to maintain control of its schools despite a number of serious threats. But today the 1988 Education Reform Act has arguably provided the greatest threat for Catholic education, for the Act provides the potential for Catholic schools to opt out of local authority control and seek Grant maintained Status. Such a move enables schools to be directly funded from central government therefore freeing them from any financial dependence upon the LEA. This provides the opportunity for a direct challenge to the Church's authority but also raises fundamental questions about who exercises final control over voluntary aided schools. This recent conflict between the Catholic Church and the State is central to modern education debate and, as it presently stands, is in danger of burying the unique partnership of the 'dual system'.

The relationship between the Catholic Church and the State, and the essential issue of who exercises control over Catholic schools, has not been without tension over the last two centuries. One of the aims of this study is to explore this unique partnership and the significance of this relationship for the development of Catholic schooling.

### **2. Schools for evangelisation or catechesis?**

As Mass attendance continues to decline at an alarming rate one must question whether all the past sacrifices have been worth it. Never before has the nature and purpose of Catholic schools been placed under so much scrutiny. For many Catholic pupils today school has become the only focal point of religion in their



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lives and it has become increasingly apparent that, as time has progressed, the expectations and demands placed upon the schools have altered. Today questions need to be asked as to the original intentions of Catholic schools and whether they were initially intended to be places of Catechesis or evangelisation. Also, if the church cannot stop the 'drift' through its schools, what other strategies could it employ?

## **LOCAL FOUNDATIONS.**

When considering the development of Catholicism in County Durham from the beginning of the 19th century one of the first tasks must be to take account of the size and variety of the Catholic communities in the region. This will provide a measure as to the rate and magnitude of growth that was experienced during that century. From this historical starting point a picture emerges of a minority religious group gradually awakening to their new found freedom. However the image is quite sketchy with some Catholic communities remaining 'intact', relatively unharmed, and even enjoying fellowship with other religious groups. In contrast, small pockets of Catholics existed in other areas in the face of continued hostility. Eventually, the geography of the region determined that the existing Catholic population would be boosted by a large group of Irish Catholic immigrants during a period of unparalleled industrial growth. It is against this background that I shall consider the Catholic scene at the start of the 19th century.

The turn of the 19th century witnessed a re-awakening of Catholicism after a couple of centuries of suppression. The Restoration Act of 1660, followed closely by the Toleration Act 9 years later, went a long way to creating a climate where Catholics could worship freely. But in many areas suspicion lingered and manifested itself in various forms of violence which only abated following the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829. Aggression was not universal for, while there is clear evidence of mob aggression in some North Eastern towns, such as Sunderland, there is evidence to suggest that in some of the long established communities, such as Darlington, Catholics not only lived peacefully with their neighbours but also formed a healthy working relationship. An interesting aspect of religious life in Darlington was the co-operation between the Catholics and the Quakers which seems to have continued well into the nineteenth century.(1)

Roman Catholicism had survived the difficult years of persecution mainly through the loyalty of some local families. But the faith eventually blossomed more freely as public attitudes became more liberal during the early part of the nineteenth century. The earliest known mission in the district took place in the village of Esh Laude during 1651.(2) In 1773 the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith undertook a survey of the Catholic population and estimated that there were 1200 communicants in County Durham.(3) The situation will have changed little by the end of the century except for a redistribution of Catholics seeking work in the new industrial towns. This constant shifting of the workforce must have alienated many Catholics from their faith because of the shortage of missions and priests to serve them. Stockton and Darlington, for instance, shared a priest while Sunderland and Bishop Auckland were served from Durham.

According to the Hexham and Newcastle Catholic Directory, at the beginning of the 1800s there appear to have been only a handful of Catholic places of worship in the North East. St. Cuthbert's in Durham was recognised as the mother church serving almost half the Catholics.(4) Parish records from the time reveal that the number of communicants was steadily dropping as people moved out of the city in search of work. Evidence suggests that a limited number of Jesuit schools had survived the persecution uninterrupted, although there is no mention of any specifically Catholic schools in Parsons and White's directory of 1827 which lists 42 'academies'.(5) It appears that the only Catholic chapel school in existence was in Dunning Street, Sunderland which was founded in 1811. This can be realistically assumed to have been the original St. Mary's school which was rebuilt in 1835. From these humble beginnings the Catholic inhabitants of the North East could not have possibly envisioned the changes that were about to take place in virtually all spheres of their lives. Neither would they have expected the

Catholic community, which was only recently granted its freedom, to grow to such an extent and to become a dominant force in society.

The Irish economy had been in difficulties for decades and Irish immigration had started as a trickle in the 1790s, had become a stream by 1820, and by 1840 had become a flood as the Irish potato famine spread. Many of the poorest came to Britain and three main routes of emigration were established: from Ulster to western Scotland, from Cork to London direct by sea or via Bristol, and from Dublin to Liverpool. While the three largest congregations of Irish settlement developed in these centres, there were also a great many smaller centres founded in the industrial towns of northern England. By the 1830s the Catholic Church in much of the north east was experiencing great difficulties and had one overwhelming task: to provide sufficient priests, churches and schools for the immigrant Irish, and the re-education of some at least of them in the modern norms of English Catholicism. The language and cultural difficulties the Church experienced was most likely the reason behind the search for Irish Catholic priests to teach in the schools of the Durham district although some other bishops proved reluctant to resort to this measure.(6)

The advent of industrialisation brought with it many social problems and, for the first time, people of all persuasions began to recognise the community value of schooling as a means of quelling social unrest. Many religious groups began to take an active interest in providing schools and for a short while there was a rapid growth of academies. Around this time the Catholic church, through the initiative of local priests, also became involved and, in many respects, the school of St. Mary's in Sunderland became a prototype for many Catholic schools to follow.(7) In establishing the school the Church initially employed lay people as an interim measure while they sought to recruit religious orders of both men and women for staff. Eventually this approach was adopted throughout the region.

Such was the growth of Catholicism in the region during the early period of the 19th century that it became inevitable that the church would embark upon a formidable building programme up and down the county to create permanent schools and places of worship. The Jesuits were very quick to seize the opportunity to evangelise and, in 1824, they decided to leave Durham to establish new missions in some of the new mushrooming industrial towns.(8) Elsewhere in the region the Church followed the Jesuit's lead and began to lay the foundations of new parishes by carrying out missions with a view to establishing schools and churches. Meanwhile in Ireland, the Catholics had set up their own teaching bodies through a number of groups to provide cheap education; the Irish Christian Brothers and the Sisters of Mercy being the most famous. It was to these two bodies that the Catholic church in Sunderland and other towns in Durham would eventually turn to for help.

The urgency of school building is revealed in the fact that some were founded without even the necessary staff to resource them. Unfortunately a lack of foresight is apparent in the size of the schools created, with many proving to be hopelessly inadequate. Despite being hampered by poor facilities and a shortage of staff, the Church displayed sovereign determination for its educational endeavours. Where necessary, temporary accommodation was accepted and begging tours were embarked upon. Perhaps the most remarkable feature of this day was that the regional Catholic schools were deemed as very successful. The Irish teaching orders were recognised as delivering, on a shoe-string budget, an excellent standard of schooling which proved good enough to pass government inspection.

One of the most dynamic and leading clergymen of the early part of the nineteenth century proved to be William Hogarth, who was appointed to Darlington in 1823. Hogarth was perhaps the greatest educational pioneers of the region and such was

his drive and commitment that he wrote appeals to the Catholic press and embarked upon a 'begging tour' of the North West to raise funds for a new church and school. His tour proved successful for the church of St. Augustine's opened in 1827 and an Ordnance survey map of 1851 shows a school very close to the church. Evidence suggests that this mixed school was most likely the original St. Augustine's, as mentioned in the Bishop's inspection of 1839 which showed that 18 boys and 14 girls were being educated.(9) Catechism classes were also a feature of the school and, interestingly, the mission had a congregational library containing 258 volumes. This small school was probably housed in temporary accommodation as the first permanent school building took place around 1849.(10)

As the Sunderland mission of St Mary's developed, the first Catholic church was built in the town in 1835.(11) The new parish priest, Father Philip Kearney, saw the need for a new school so the chapel school, along with the now defunct chapel, was sold and the money used to purchase a plot of land in Pann Lane. Under his direction a small school was built. It was a two-storeyed building measuring 63 feet by 33 feet, with accommodation for boys on the ground floor while the upper floor was used as a girls school. The building was served by separate staircases and conveniences for each school.(12) Down the coast, at Hartlepool, Father William Knight who was of a similar vein as his contemporary Northern neighbour, Father Kearney, was anxious to have a school as soon as possible. With the help of a generous benefactor St Hilda's school was built near the church in 1837.(13) At first less than twenty pupils attended, taught by one teacher, Mr Joe Taylor. But two years later, as the number of pupils increased, an additional teacher, Miss Hedley, a girl of sixteen, was appointed for the younger children.(14) Her role was to take a class of seven little girls in an upper room where the only furniture was a little desk and two benches made by Father Knight.

By the end of the 1840's Irish immigration was beginning to have a major impact upon the Catholic community of the North East with most heading for the farms, industrial towns or mines surrounding Durham city. As immigration steadily increased towards the end of the decade many Irish used the city as a staging post in their hunt for employment. In the space of fourteen years, from 1846 to 1860, the Catholic population had quadrupled from 600 to 2425.(15) The influx of immigrants caused real practical and social difficulties but this did not deter the Church in its endeavours. Despite the many problems, wherever possible, accommodation was found to serve as schools and any strategy employed to secure it ranging from knocking two cottages together, to hiring rooms and converting buildings. Where this was found to be impossible Catholic parents were prepared to send their children considerable distances to attend Catholic schools.

Following the massive influx of Irish a pattern emerged by which the Catholic Church adapted to the new demands and pressures that the rapidly increasing numbers presented. The natural resources the region provided afforded it to become one of the largest industrial centres in England. A variety of employment could be found in the coal fields, iron works, railways and shipyards. The Catholic population explosion that accompanied the industrial progress caused the local churches to respond with desperate measures and abject heroics from some young clergy. The history that unfolds is a story of a few priests with fantastic energy, heroically trying to adjust to a unique age. These few men encountered immeasurable challenges while coping with the arrival of parishioners in numbers that had never been experienced before. Not content with catering for spiritual needs, they also recognised the need and practical value of education. Undaunted they embarked upon fund-raising missions, successfully provided schools, and, in some cases, found time themselves to catechise the children .

Significantly, Gilley suggests, this was a Catholic population with a different understanding of Catholicism. The immigrants were much more willing than the English Catholic gentry to defer to the priest in matters of religion, and so reinforced the rise of English Catholic clericalism.(16) One great difficulty was that the Irish were Gaelic speakers and the English clergy were ignorant of their language but also there were wide cultural differences also. The Irish were still attached to customs such as the wake for the dead, wakes being banned in the Hexham and Newcastle diocese in 1870 (17), but also Gilley suggests that the Irish religion was permeated by an ancient pre-Christian folklore driven underground in much of Catholic Europe by the Counter-Reformation.(18) Moreover, Mass attendance in rural parts of Ireland was very low and families preferred to restrict their worship to family prayer and the local shrine or holy well. Certainly there is little evidence to suggest that Irish worship, in the rural parts, was priest or chapel centred. In the English urban slums, however, the local chapel would provide the only centre for worship and the priest therefore became the adopted natural leader.

The religious turmoil of the age also made an impact upon the local scene, for one of the chief instigators of the building of the church in Crook was Thomas Wilkinson who converted to Catholicism as a result of the Anglican "Tractarian movement".(19) Wilkinson had been invited to Ushaw by Hogarth and such was his progress that he was ordained within three weeks and within two months he was given the task of establishing a mission at Wolsingham. Eventually two of Wilkinson's friends, Richard Ward and Seton Rooke, also converted and became instrumental in developing the faith community in the Crook district by establishing both a church and a school.(20)

The mood of the day can be recognised by the endeavours of Fr. Wilkinson at Wolsingham. According to The Tablet 1854,(21) he catechised from a dozen to



twenty children in a cottage and was so successful in establishing the mission that within twenty years the churches of "Crook and Wolsingham were so intimately united...as to be considered one parish".(22) Such was the commitment and religious fervour of the parishioners generated by Wilkinson and his successor, Fr Austin Pippet, that when he arranged for a mission in 1874 to be given by the Redemptorist Fathers, 1500 people received the sacraments out of a total of 2300!(23)

It would be difficult to place a value on these priests' contribution to the development and history of the diocese but perhaps, out of all these pioneers, one man, William Hogarth, stands alone. It was he who exemplified the priesthood of the age. He proved to be an outstanding priest who displayed great conviction and yet had the humility to embark upon his begging tour. Within the parish he presented an ideal which is frequently duplicated today almost a century and a half later. Hogarth, later in his role as bishop, became the regional representative of the national drive for schooling and played a significant role in this area.

As populations more than doubled in relatively short periods of time, priests in Hartlepool and Seaton Carew resorted to hiring rooms for use as schools and Mass centres. A little more foresight appears to have been in evidence in places such as Darlington, Bishop Auckland, Blackhill and Consett, where "handsome" schools were built.(24) As was the case of St. Mary's Sunderland, parishes employed lay teachers until religious orders could be persuaded to take over the running of the schools. Eventually the Sisters of Mercy took over at St. Wilfrid's Bishop Auckland, St. Hilda's Hartlepool, St. Godric's Durham and the infants school at Witton Park, while the Sisters of St. Paul were employed at Blackhill.

Evidence suggests that during the first half of the 19th century the Durham Catholic schools were almost totally dependent on Irish Religious orders for the

provision of formal education. Apart from the established schools in the city of Durham itself, the only other school which was not initially run by Irish clergy was the one to be found at Hartlepool. However, this was a comparatively small school catering for less than twenty pupils and therefore quite easily managed. Perhaps here-in lies the clue as to the desperate urge to attract Irish "religious" to take on the role of educators.

Hartlepool at this point in its history had not yet experienced the sudden upsurge of Irish immigrants that had beset the town of Sunderland. It was not until almost a decade later that Irish immigration made its impact upon the town with first the railway and docks and second, the potato famine. Interestingly the school is listed at a later date as having been run by "Religious"(25) so the possibility is that, when the number of Irish children became too great, the sensible solution would be to turn to the mother country for help from a proven source. In this way they could employ staff who would be capable of dealing with all the cultural and social problems associated with a rapidly expanding immigrant minority. Fr. Knight would no doubt have been aware of the strategies that had been employed so successfully by his contemporary in Sunderland.

The question therefore arises as to why Kearney was forced to resort to such measures in the first place? Originally, as there were very few Catholics in the region during this period, there would have been little or no demand for a Catholic school. As Catholicism had been suppressed for so long, and open animosity was still being experienced, it would have been extremely difficult to attract anyone to teach in what must have been a very public office of the day. Furthermore, owing to previous inhibitions, there would have been few qualified Catholics who could have filled such a position. The few Jesuit schools that had survived had tended to do so in a clandestine manner only surfacing once the suppression had been lifted. The other alternative would have been to employ

local Catholic clergy as teachers but, at this time, they were in extremely short supply and furthermore would have found difficulty teaching the Gaelic speaking immigrants. In some areas the Church was forced to employ French clergy who had fled the Revolution to fill the void. The only English male teaching order in the district was the Jesuits but they were forced to leave in 1824 such was the demand for missionaries. Also at that time there was only one English teaching order of nuns throughout the whole of the country, the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who were based at either the Bar Convent in York or at Hammersmith.

However, the uncertainty of the age is well illustrated by the development at Witton Park. The Catholic population had increased to the point where a room was hired and Mass said every Sunday.(26) As the number progressed, Witton Park combined with Shildon in 1881 to create a separate parish under the charge of Father Francis Kuyte. Such was the anticipated increase of communicants that Kuyte commissioned Mr Martin Carr, an architect from Middlesbrough, to present an ambitious design for a combined church and school with the school forming the basement allowing for a large school room 44ft X 15ft. Incorporated in the design were an infants gallery and separate boys and girls toilets divided by a 'cess pool' situated under the sanctuary!(27) Sadly for Kuyte and the community in general of Witton Park, events overtook them with the transfer of Messrs. Bolkow Vaughan's Iron Works to Middlesbrough. Although this created a new industrial centre on Teesside it left in its wake great unemployment and a parish labouring under the burden of severe debt.(28) As a consequence the combined church and school was never built and the congregation to this day have to travel to either Crook or Bishop Auckland for Mass, its children likewise for their education.

At the beginning of the 19th century the Anglican Church had been at the forefront of the move for the provision of organised education and, as such, had orchestrated an organised campaign to put a church school in as many parishes as possible. The Church of England was able to do this through its superior wealth while the non-Anglican, although being numerically stronger in personnel, could provide fewer schools through lack of finance. However, the non-Anglican religions made a significant contribution to the day schools. If we take Sunderland as an example, at the beginning of the century the Quakers and Presbyterian churches had provided their own schools - both however appealing to the middle and upper classes, with the latter adopting the title 'Academy'. But it was the Wesleyans, apart from the Catholics, who provided the most schools for the working classes. Initially the Wesleyans had been happy to let the Church of England get on with education, but the development of the high church Oxford movement isolated many and, by the 1840's, decided that they should launch their own education system which they could control, but build with the aid of government grants. Thomas Greener tells that the Wesleyan definition of education was "an education which may begin in the infants' school, and end in heaven". While this may appear rather ambitious, it must be pointed out that the Wesleyans were extremely successful in this enterprise for within 33 years they had built 90 schools up and down the country, with five in Sunderland alone.(29)

Compared to the rapid educational progress of the Wesleyan Methodists the Catholic church's progress appears rather limited and somewhat laboured, but it must be viewed in the light of the fact that Methodists had a strong foothold in the country at the beginning of the century and were particularly strong in the North East. Following Wesley's death in 1791, his followers abandoned any attempts to maintain links with the formal church. Its first efforts won immediate support from the working classes and mining villages of the area. Many found the warmth of fellowship along with the educational advantages of its Sunday

Schools very attractive, but also, Methodism gained increasing support from the middle classes who admired its puritanical emphasis. Significantly, by the late 1860's, Methodism began to decline while Catholicism was perhaps about to reach its peak and was soon to overtake the former as perhaps the principal religion in the region.

Whether the Catholic authorities decided to adopt the model of the Methodist schooling policy is debatable. But certainly they must have been aware of the impressive progress: Progress which was founded on the principle that the Methodist schools acted as 'nurseries' for nurturing Christians on the Methodist pattern. In 1852 the first Provincial Synod of Westminster emphasised the priority of building more schools for the poor which might also serve as chapels, meeting places or Mass centres.

The Synod wrote:

**" We much prefer the establishment of good schools to every other work. Indeed, wherever there may seem to be an opening for a new mission, we prefer the erection of a school, so arranged as to serve temporarily for a chapel, to that of a church without one.....it is the good school that secures the virtuous and edifying congregation".(30)**

This policy was adopted up and down the country but was perhaps no more evident than in Sunderland. The town church of St. Mary's was originally built in 1835 to cope with massive immigrant growth but soon Sunderland rapidly expanded and there was a demand for more schools and churches. The provision of mission chapels, schools and churches, presented St Mary's with its greatest challenge. By using temporary accommodation or dual purpose premises while funds were raised, the Catholics were able to continue their mission and quickly to establish schools and new churches. Using this strategy, within the space of

sixteen years, six new churches had been built at Millfield, Seaham, Hendon, Monkwearmouth, Silksworth and Washington, and permanent parish schools were built soon after, usually alongside the church.(31)

A similar story emerges at Durham during the 1860s. As the need for coal increased to meet the needs of the developing railways and shipyards of the region more Irish workers were attracted to the villages surrounding Durham city. In 1863 a meeting was held in Sacriston to organise a collection for the building of a new church but the building was forestalled to follow the official church policy of schools first. As a result of the meeting, two cottages were knocked together in 1865 to make a school which acted as a chapel on Sundays. A similar pattern emerged in the villages to the west of the city and by 1876, both Brandon and Langley Moor had created their own schools/chapels.(32)

The thirty year period stretching from 1850 to 1880 experienced probably the greatest influx of immigrants this country has, or will ever see, with many being of Catholic persuasion. Of all the regions covered by the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle, including Durham, Westmorland, Cumberland and Northumberland, Durham had by far the largest population and the greatest growth in numbers. A report in the Catholic directory in 1876 presented the developments as such:

**"The rate of increase between 1851-1861 was 15%, between 1861-71 23%. Since 1871 to this current year (1876) the rate of increase, especially in the coal fields and iron districts of Northumbria, Cumbria and Durham and in the large manufacturing towns, has been even greater than previously. It may therefore be estimated that the present population is approximately 1½ million, an increase in the last quarter of a century of half a million or thereabouts. The Catholic population at present is 120,000, or one twelfth of the whole. In 1850 it was estimated at 70,000, therefore an increase of**

**51,000 in 25 years or 70%. Catholic baptisms now count for one in  
nineteen".(33)**

The Catholic church must consider this period of growth as its golden age because during this period of intense growth, the Church was recognised for its formidable educational programme and its parish work with the poor. With regard to the catechetical nature of the schools they must undoubtedly be considered a resounding success, for the churches appear to have been full and, from this point on, church attendance has been in decline.(34) The schools themselves were also beginning to gain a reputation as sound places for education on a shoestring budget but, as with today, the reputation of the Catholic schools was greatly enhanced by the introduction of the examination system. These features afforded the Church a new found social status and a political voice that was beginning to be accepted.

On a national level, Cardinal <sup>NICHOLAS</sup> Wiseman was initially responsible for bringing to the attention of the Catholic population the plight of the poorer classes of children on the streets of England. But it was <sup>GEORGE</sup> Manning, his successor, who suggested that there were two main causes of the 'leakage' of Catholic children into "infidelity". He suggested that there were insufficient places available in the Catholic schools, for reasons of poverty in an age of voluntary effort, and the non-Catholic atmosphere of the Reformatory and Industrial schools and other schools run by the Home Office and Poor Law Guardians for the poor and delinquent.(35) Both Wiseman and Manning made the Catholic 'underdog' their principal educational concern and, for the following ten years, the problem was to identify Catholic children in need of a place in Catholic institutions who had been automatically sent to Poor Law schools. This in itself would be no mean feat and countless bitter confrontations must have taken place to persuade the anti Catholic Boards of Guardians to give up their charges. The persistence of the Catholic hierarchy,

mainly Wiseman and Manning, in pursuing their ideals is evident in the fact that two acts were passed during that period to assist their purpose. The 1866 Reformatory and Industrial Schools Acts prescribed that Catholic delinquents and destitute should be catered for in the denominational Catholic institutions, henceforth rate aided; while those who were incarcerated in Her Majesty's prison were granted availability of Catholic chaplains in 1862. To accommodate all the destitute Catholic children, a massive fund raising effort was launched to provide sufficient places in Catholic establishments.

The first local indication that the Catholic hierarchies were concerned with the increasing influences of other persuasions came in this region in 1850 during Bishop Hogarth's inaugural address. This was followed by a bishop's statement appealing for funds for a new Poor Law School at Tudhoe in 1868. Previously it seems that all poor law schools in the local Catholic sector had been created and controlled by religious orders independent of the church authorities. At this time, 1868, there were thirteen Certified Poor Law Schools in the diocese organised by the Sisters of Mercy (ten) and the Sisters of Charity (three), with seven being within the Durham County boundary. (36)

Hogarth, a contemporary of Cardinal Manning, was a firm supporter of Manning's ideals on schooling and the commitment to the poor. While Manning had instigated action for the provision of poor schools in the South, it was Hogarth, a man of great energy and drive, who was a prime motivator in the Northern region. His successor, Bishop James Chadwick, continued his work and made the following official appeal in 1869 during the time of the great 'Educational Crisis'.



## BISHOPS CIRCULAR 1869

**"All parishes are requested to raise money to provide for a Certified Poor Law School at Tudhoe, County Durham, to take Catholic certified poor children from the different Protestant workhouses in which they are now placed, at the imminent risk of losing their faith, and to send them to a poor law school of our own, where they will not only be very well instructed in their holy religion, but also afforded every opportunity of practising it. All that is required to found this noble and pressing charity - one that will draw down a blessing upon all who contribute towards it, and upon the diocese at large - is a sum of money large enough to rent or purchase a sufficient quantity of land, and to erect upon it a building for a Certified Poor Law School. For once a school of this kind is established, it becomes self-supporting; in as much as, by a recent act of legislature, 25th and 26th Vict Cap 43, Sec 1, the Poor Law Board guarantee so much per head for every child that is placed in a school certified under the Poor Law as being a Poor Law School. There are at present about 300 Catholic poor children distributed throughout the various Protestant Workhouses in this Diocese".**

**Bishop J Chadwick D.D. Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle.(37)**

Such a statement would have been unthinkable 50 years previously but it can be seen as testimony to the re-emergence of the Catholic faith in the region and to the growing popularity and power of the Bishop - a position which must have given him a renewed authority and respect among other denominations. In this circular Bishop Chadwick is appealing to many emotions/senses. He is petitioning for justice for Catholic poor children, the protection of the faith and allegiance to it, and the noble value of the cause for which heavenly rewards, in the form of

blessings, will be given. But he is also appealing, on this occasion, for a short term limited project which he presented as not excessive, but better still, would be self supporting and shouldn't have created any ongoing burden or extra responsibilities. In this appeal we see the Bishop exercising excellent public relations in what turned out to be a successful enterprise. The article ran for two years in the Directory, perhaps suggesting that the growing Catholic population was still coming to terms with its new identity and the idea of a Diocesan community as opposed to the parochial system that had evolved. Whatever, the new school at Tudhoe opened in 1872 with 47 'inmates' - presumably rescued from the Protestant workhouses!

Bishop Chadwick was obviously aware of the need for greater development in this sphere, and in 1870 he founded the Diocesan Poor School committee, perhaps the first official Hexham and Newcastle diocesan education body, spurred on no doubt by Manning's inspiration and the threat from the 1870 Education Act. The work of the D.P.S.C. was to raise the necessary funds for providing sufficient school accommodation throughout the diocese, so as to meet the requirements of the 1870 Act of Parliament, by voluntary efforts, and thereby return, under Catholic control and management, the education of the Catholic poor children. The D.P.S.C. was to work alongside the state Poor School Committee to promote the Elementary education of the poor. A census must have taken place earlier in the year because, from returns already made, it was estimated that 7000 children had to be provided with schools, and for this purpose 30 or 40 additional would have to be erected or rented, and many of the existing schools enlarged. Bishop Chadwick's appeal of 1868, which considered only approximately 300 pupils in need of such schooling, looks grossly underestimated unless he failed to appreciate the scale and scope of the forthcoming legislation.

The D.P.S.C. made rapid progress, and its report of May 17th 1872 was pleased to note that increased accommodation for 8325 children had been provided by the erection of 41 additional schoolrooms and 32 classrooms, at a cost of £26,684, 7s 11d, towards which there had, at that date, been raised £12,908, 10s 1d.(38) The extra provision had obviously come from the schools which had been built alongside churches during this period of growth with further schools being built at Stockton, Monkwearmouth, Darlington, Hendon (Sunderland), Tow Law and Seaham, for only two more poor law schools were opened - one of them being Tudhoe (another being Darlington, where the Sisters of St.Clare opened their school for young ladies), and another further school for the Sisters of Charity at Whitehaven. It must be pointed out that all these poor law schools, with the possible exception of Tudhoe, although it underwent changes later, were girls schools. Little, if any, provision appears to have been made for poor law schools for boys. But by this time the pattern of educational progress in the region had become established and the first diocesan competitive exam of pupil teachers took place in October 28 1872 with 72 pupils examined and prizes awarded at a special ceremony at the end of the academic year. This was to become an annual diocesan event and in the space of sixty years, through the enterprise and convictions of a handful of dedicated priests, Catholic schools had become a major feature of the many and varied communities of Durham.

The Catholic schools and churches of Durham provide a testimony to the bravery and conviction of the men who created them. Living in an age of uncertainty they were frequently forced to deal with a difficult floating population at the mercy of the coalfields. The decisions of the industrial managers, as in the case of Messrs Bolkow Vaughan's Ironworks, underline the social insecurity. Courageously, they carried out their vocation and established parishes in areas where the immigrants rapidly became the majority. Today one can only marvel at the prospect of priests

looking after such numbers in districts covering such vast areas with little transport and even less communication.

Without doubt, the English Church's fortunes were transformed by the influence of Catholic Ireland. Since 1800 the parliaments of both countries and their Protestant Church establishments had been united. By the 1820s many poor Catholic peasants, estimated to represent three quarters of the Irish population, were organised by their priests into a Catholic Association. The Association, led by Daniel O'Connell, and regarded by Gilley as the first democratic mass movement in the modern world, forced the English Tory administration in 1829 to pass the third Emancipation Act admitting Roman Catholics to the British Parliament and to most public offices under the Crown. (39)

It is impossible to discuss the religious developments of the region without recognising the contribution the Irish immigrants made, for little would have been achieved without their support. While one cannot ignore the problems they created, the Irish must be given great credit for their involvement in Catholic issues and their commitment to the faith in extremely difficult circumstances. Apart from their spiritual allegiance, the parishes must have enjoyed a financial commitment which allowed them to embark upon remarkable building programmes in an attempt to establish schools at any cost.

The Irish, by all accounts, were a very difficult group to deal with and extremely demanding. Yet the success in establishing schools should not overshadow perhaps the priests' greatest success in uniting the two different cultures to realise parish models which are still held as benchmarks today. In these early parishes we find Catholic community life of an age which has sadly been lost to us in the 1990's. The parishes were led by vigorous men who guided by example and, by employing basic practical Christianity, bonded the people together to establish

churches and schools. The people, rough and ready as they undoubtedly were, responded, made sacrifices and through their endeavours must have experienced a great sense of belonging, of being truly 'Church'. In truth the struggles that local priests and parishioners faced in establishing their schools appears rather insignificant compared to the titanic struggles that the Catholic hierarchy endured in its attempts to retain control of their newly founded schools.

## **CHURCH V STATE**

From the beginning of the nineteenth century the number of Roman Catholics in England had been steadily growing. With the increase came a gradual change in the nature of their composition and this in turn began to have an effect upon the power structure within the Church. During the years between 1770 and 1850 the gradual eclipse of lay control became evident. Newsome suggests that there were a number of reasons for this: the clergy had finally become less dependent upon the financial resources of the wealthy Catholic families; there had been an exodus of rural Catholics to the rapidly expanding urban areas; and there was a growing determination among the Vicars Apostolic to reassert their authority. (40)

A key feature of the old English Catholics was that they had remained ignorant of the new devotions that had developed in Rome since the Counter Reformation and, in many respects, their practices resembled a sect. The English Catholics had clung to the medieval rites regarding worship during the persecutions and saw no need to embrace Roman influences or to evangelise. Devotion to the Virgin Mary was frowned upon as 'continental', communion was received rarely and the Mass was conducted with the minimum of ceremony. The old Catholic families themselves were renowned for their fierce internal antagonism and Wiseman was certainly correct in believing that they were not material from which the Catholic revival in England could be fashioned. Many years later the bold, and somewhat tactless, manner by which Wiseman announced the new hierarchy appalled many of the old Catholics who remained cautious of the new and continental devotions that had been introduced.

According to Norman, early advocates of the restoration of the hierarchy had wanted more control of the Church by the lower clergy because of their attachment to an 'Old Catholic' sense that favoured government rather than rule

by Roman Congregation.(41) Yet, in reality, the movement for the hierarchy, with the chief architect being Cardinal Wiseman, was seized upon by the ultramontanes and transformed by the 'Roman spirit'.

Norman suggests that a paradoxical outcome of the movement for Catholic Emancipation - for the removal of the penal laws and for the re-entry of Catholics into parliament itself - was an increase in Roman influence over the English Church. For, although the lay Catholics who conducted the campaign went to considerable lengths in emphasising their detachment from papal jurisdiction, it was the clergy who really gained in authority.(42) The appeals to Rome by the clergy to decide about various issues, coupled with the emergence of a new Catholic middle class, paved the way for the ultramontanes to centralise the Church.

By the late 1830s Catholic numbers had increased considerably and the Vicars were finding it extremely difficult to create regional policies or exercise control over their clergy. The rapid increase of population, mainly due to the numbers of Irish immigrants, began to cause serious administration problems and it became increasingly apparent that if the Vicars Apostolic were to be able to have any effective control then their numbers needed to be increased considerably. In this respect a restructuring of the hierarchy was essential for, until this was granted, there was little chance of the Catholics making any systematic progress in schooling or social development. By 1840 the move to restore the Catholic hierarchy in England was gathering pace and, following a ground-swell of support, Bishops Wiseman and Sharples were sent to Rome to argue the case that the only way to administer the mission in England was to restore the hierarchy to a manageable level. The restoration would not only allow for the establishment of a coherent national policy for Catholic schooling as it would enable the Bishops to exercise closer control over regional developments, but would also allow this

rapidly growing faith a recognised political body to speak with some authority in any future educational debates. The proposals were eventually accepted by the authorities in Rome and on Michaelmas Day, 29th September 1850, Pius IX 'restored' diocesan government to the Catholic church in England. (43)

During this period the Catholic Church had grown steadily more powerful both within and outside of Europe and the prestige of the Papacy had reached a height unparalleled in modern times. Missionary enterprise had ensured that the territorial boundaries had been considerably expanded but also a new Catholic spirit had emerged which coincided with the miraculous events in Lourdes. Sympathy with the ultramontane ideal grew alongside Marian devotion. Newsome argues that 'Ultramontanism became unquestionably the most powerful force within the Catholic Church in the decades leading up to the summoning of the first Vatican Council'.(44) The restoration involved the formation of a definite ecclesiastical constitution for the Catholic Church in England but did not go so far as to define the rights and duties of the bishops and the clergy in general. Further to this there was a continuous struggle between the old Catholics and the new converts who were aligned to the Catholic Irish immigrants. To compound this, the emergence of the ultramontane movement was creating fundamental controversies as to how the Church in England should be run.

For many Catholics the restoration was the symbol of Roman control over their Church. But the consequences were to be seen in heightened morale and in the quiet extension of the influence of the clergy over the laity, rather than in any dramatic change in the way the Church in England operated. But for the Church in the early 1860s, the restoration also heralded a new period of tension where two issues emerged which divided the ultramontanes and the Liberal Catholics. According to Newsome, the first was political concerning the relationship between Church and State, while the second was cultural and intellectual



embracing the inadequacies of Catholic scholarship and its failure to respect the independence of scholars through its insistence upon censorship. Unfortunately Pope Pius IX heightened the tension by choosing that period to reassert the right of the Church to censure any teaching which conflicted with the dogmatic definitions of the Church .

The Catholic church in England cannot be said to have been wholly united in its desire for the restoration of the hierarchy. The recently converted Newman, for instance, expressed serious reservations and felt very uneasy as to the excitement it might create in Protestant circles.(45) Newman reluctantly accepted the restoration along with the proceedings of the Vatican Council for he took the line that 'what our ecclesiastical rulers have done is right, because it is done.'(46) Newman thought that these new developments should be accepted because if they were carried through, then they must be God's will. What Newman was really concerned about was what he considered the 'real English problem--lack of education;' "we want seminaries far more than sees." Ian Kerr in his biography, 'John Henry Newman', suggests that Newman complained about the tendency of Catholics to lay out money on 'showy works', as exemplified by their naive enthusiasm for neo -Gothic churches. More important were proper schools: 'How few Catholics can compose! for instance Dr. Ullathorne's style! It was the same lack of education which led to the appalling taste of Catholics (in the matter of sermons, for example). The current persecution of Catholics could profitably be exploited by making it an excuse for 'getting up a great organisation'...." (47) But if Newman's criticism of Catholic church building programmes reflected a national profile, they cannot be said to be true in the North East where the greatest emphasis had been to create schools before churches. While it is true that Catholics did create neo-Gothic style churches in Sunderland, Hartlepool and other such North Eastern towns, this was not to the detriment of the schools which were established at the same time.

To many Catholics, and certainly the majority of the English, the Papal States were an anachronism, an affront against the nationalist and democratic spirit. Since many English Catholics were anxious to display loyalty to the Crown and tended to equate support of the Temporal Power with ultramontist sentiments the issue became one which eventually divided the English Catholics but also brought to the surface a national spirit against Ultramontanism. Newsome suggests that for Manning, the power-base of Rome lay first in its dogmatic authority, independent of secular power or pressure; and, second, in its popular roots, its recognition that its primary obligation was to the peoples. But the spectre that haunted Manning was the phenomenon he described as 'Caesarism', a form of anti-clericism which he had experienced at work in the Piedmont of Cavour and Ricasoli. Manning was convinced that the only effective antithesis to 'Caesarism' was Ultramontanism and therefore for him the issue of Temporal Power was crucial.

Prior to the restoration, the English speaking Catholics had regarded such a measure as being a national necessity and no doubt some saw it as an anti-Roman issue. But many must have felt that the Restoration would have provided the country with spiritual self government through the bishops. However, the English hierarchy was re-established at a time of immense social upheaval caused by the massive influx of immigrants who were mainly Irish and who could therefore have been more sympathetic to Rome rather than England. Catholicism in England at this juncture, therefore, was becoming increasingly ultramontane and, since England remained missionary territory, episcopal authority and independence continued to be restricted.

The disputes and divisions in the Catholic church regarding dogma and authority were also having an effect upon the established church in England as an anti-

dogmatic liberal spirit grew amongst the Anglicans. While the Catholics were turning to Rome, the need arose for the Anglicans to establish a normative teaching authority which in itself was to provoke questions concerning the fundamental nature of the Church. Out of all these tensions the Tractarian movement emerged which made the episcopacy the foundation stone of its ecclesiology. However, one of the outcomes of this was that the Catholic church gained a number of influential disaffected converts such as Thomas Wilkinson who would go on to play a significant role in the development of schools in the Durham region.

Cwieskowski suggests that, during this period, it became fashionable for Catholic clergy to hang onto the Pope's every word and to adopt Roman influences such as vestments, buckled shoes and the kneebreaches of Roman ecclesiastics.(48) Holmes confirms this by stating that English priests started to adopt the dress of the Italian clergy, wearing cassocks and birettas at all times.(49) Wiseman, apparently, was becoming quite a flamboyant character and, as a leader, was leaning more and more towards Rome. His standards of taste and etiquette reflected this and, by all accounts, he loved to process in medieval splendour and considered himself the Church's representative in Rome.

For many people the restoration was regarded as an attempt to control the spiritual dominion of the nation and therefore it faced much opposition. Wiseman eventually alleviated the tension by producing his famous "Appeal to the English people" but not before much hostility had been directed towards the Catholic community. During this relatively short period of anti Catholic demonstrations, priests were attacked and church windows broken in scenes reminiscent of a previous age. Wiseman was successful in arguing that toleration of the Catholic religion must logically include permission to establish a Catholic hierarchy, and further pointed out that the Catholics were only asking for what the Anglicans

had done in Jerusalem and Malta; in founding bishoprics outside the Queen's temporal domain. The bigotry eventually subsided and a period of stability followed which led to the new hierarchy's finest hour; its participation in the Vatican Council of 1869. This was the first General Council to be held for three hundred years and became known to all as the Council which defined the infallibility of the Pope. Unfortunately, while the bishops were taking their rightful place at Rome, great educational debates were taking place at home and, during this critical period of absence, Forster's education bill was adopted which was to prove costly for Catholic schooling.

Aside from the practical difficulties that the Vicars Apostolic had experienced in controlling their districts, if the new authority of Rome was to be adopted then absolute control of the Catholic schools became essential. Manning went further than this, for his vision was of a Catholic education system controlled from top to bottom by the Church. In this respect he was to advocate national control of the seminaries and the establishment of a Catholic university. The initial result of Manning's and his contemporaries' endeavours was that the Catholic church became divided and experienced religious isolation. Without doubt the emergence of Ultramontanism and the restoration excited the government into action which was aimed at seriously threatening the Church's control over their schools.

In the secular age of the mid nineteenth century, when education began to dominate political debate, the rise of Ultramontanism was to prove of crucial importance for the Catholic Church. The essence of Ultramontanism was that the Church, as an infallible divine institution, remained within its own sphere, independent of all civil authority and was the judge of mankind in all matters of faith or morals affecting that law. Manning, it seems, was oblivious to the dangers associated with allowing the Church sole right to determine the limits of its own jurisdiction, regardless of civil requirements and law. This ultramontane ideology,

which was evident throughout Europe and was to be adopted in England, created severe tension within the Catholic Church but also provoked outrage in the Protestant ranks with many viewing Catholic allegiance to Rome as a direct threat to the spiritual control of the nation.

The climate of the age was aptly illustrated by Pope Pius IX's "Syllabus of Errors" in 1864, which was the Church's official response to the scientific progress and social advances of the day. The 'Syllabus' was interpreted by many as Catholicism's war on modern thought, scientific spirit, democratic freedom and the principle of popular sovereignty. This controversial publication may well have prompted the English authorities to attempt to weaken the control the Catholics held over education. In the following year, the encyclical 'Quanta Cura' was published, to which was appended the notorious document entitled 'The Syllabus of Errors'. While Quanta Cura was relatively inoffensive, the 'Syllabus' proved to be something different. It contained a list of 80 propositions, constituting all the chief errors and false doctrines of the age but the final proposition provoked outrage because it questioned the 'progress, liberalism, and modern civilisation' of the day. The reaction was quite forthright and the press suggested that the Holy See had plunged back to the dark ages. Newsome proposes that the 'Syllabus' was the Church's reaction to the developments of the day for, around that time, German Biblical criticism was coming to the fore, a new critical school of historians had emerged and the research of Darwin was beginning to have some tangible effect upon religious belief. (50)

Norman suggests that the Catholic triumphalism of the ultramontane spirit which came to dominate the leadership of the Church under Wiseman, Manning and Vaughan, and the continued popular hostility to the 'foreign' character of the Catholic Church inhibited the appearance of a real denominational self-consciousness. But it would be true to say that the dogmatism of the

ultramontanes with their Italian ideals of the Church, met a comparable dogmatism in the champions of 'English' Catholicism. Opposition to the new devotional styles came from those traditional English Catholics who correctly discerned that they were an external and popularized sign of a great shift of emphasis within the Church according to the vision of the ultramontanes. A great deal of controversy ensued during this age of frantic church building regarding the architectural styles and devotional practices. But as Norman states, these conflicts were the by-products of vitality and expansion. (51)

Throughout the early ultramontanist period Wiseman had continued to work ceaselessly to provide more priests, missions and schools for the immense poverty stricken immigrant population. In an attempt to solve the difficulty of manpower he occasioned a major controversy by appointing Manning, a convert, to form the congregation of the Oblates of St. Charles whose brief was to assist the Ordinary by constituting a pastoral task force to undertake work of a pressing nature which would undoubtedly influence the younger generations in Roman attitudes. Both Manning and Wiseman agreed that the local control of the seminaries was of fundamental importance for the future of the Catholic Church in England but, while they were defeated on this issue, one cannot underestimate the important contribution that both these men made to the rise of ultramontane attitudes and policies. Supported by other ultramontanes, Wiseman and Manning came to regard any opposition to their policies as worldly or anti-Roman and they condemned the laity who were at odds with them as un-Catholic. In these difficult circumstances the clergy continued to work tirelessly, in almost impossible conditions, to organise their dioceses and parishes. Throughout this period the Catholic population had grown considerably; partly because of Wiseman's encouragement for missions but also because of the public respect he himself had gained as a result of his social work.

The regional progress of Catholic schooling in the period leading up to the middle of the 1800s had escalated at a considerable pace despite any real diocesan strategy. Most of the initiatives had come from the local priests who were often remote from their Vicar Apostolic while there is little evidence supporting much lay involvement. Since 1688 the country had been divided into four Districts and Vicars Apostolic had been instituted to govern the administration of the Catholics. Their task was twofold: first they were to look after Catholic finance and, second, to find vocations to the priesthood. Out of all the four districts, the Northern region must have proved the most inhospitable, covering about five hundred and eighty square miles. If any coherent policy was to be drawn up then it was essential that greater ecclesiastical control was exercised and, to this end, the movement advocating the restoration of the Catholic hierarchy proved critical. However, during this period, the Government had also begun to show a great interest in education as a means to solving social problems and the combination of the two interests was to lead to direct confrontation between the Church and State.

During the first few decades of the 19th century there had been little, if any, evidence of any diocesan involvement in Catholic schooling, but the rapid increase of Irish immigrants upon the region was to have serious implications for both the parishes and the schools. The Government had shown little interest in schooling but the Catholic authorities began to recognise the value of their schools as places of nurture and, as a result of the Westminster Synod's 1852 declaration, the building of schools was being actively encouraged. This declaration suggests that the Catholic hierarchy was now beginning to take a serious interest in schooling. After years of locally based chaotic development some clear direction, both on a national basis and regional basis, was forthcoming which was a clear indication of the emergence of the "schools first policy". A further encouraging sign was the fact that quality education was now being

delivered in " purpose built" premises and a good deal of thought was going into planning. This was in sharp contrast to previous attempts at establishing schools on a "make do" programme initiated by local priests.

Nationally, the rate of educational progress in the different districts had been extremely fragmented depending upon social and population changes initiated by industrial developments. Some areas had enjoyed the benefit of missions while others remained almost untouched by Catholicism. The Church's 'schools first policy' was driven by the population demands of the major industries in the rapidly expanding towns. However, the policy appears to have been implemented on an "ad hoc" basis with little evidence suggesting strategic diocesan planning. The main reason for this was the vast areas that were covered by the Vicar Apostolics who were extremely short of man-power and therefore missions had to be established on a supply and demand footing. Further to this, although the Catholic population was increasing dramatically, the Catholic bishops had forfeited their rights as a body with a national voice during the 17th century and, in the intervening period little had happened to warrant the restoration of any power or authority as Catholics had remained a distinct minority.

One of the main instigators of the provision of education had been Cardinal Wiseman who, as Coadjutor Bishop for the London district, encouraged the influx of teaching Orders from the continent. After his elevation to Vicar Apostolic of the London District in 1847, Wiseman extended his invitation to more congregations to teach throughout the country, for he believed that there could be no more powerful instrument for the conversion of England than Catholic schools.(52) Wiseman's successor, Manning, also recognised the value of education for, within a year of his consecration, he had issued three important pastorals on the education question. Manning's basic philosophy remained the same as it had been in his sermon on national education in 1838: "education



without religion was no religion at all". The difference now was that, for Manning, religion meant Roman Catholicism.

When Manning was appointed Archbishop of Westminster on 8 July 1865, he inherited a changing intellectual climate where the philosophy of Utilitarianism was being replaced by the philosophy of Positivism and, according to McClelland, there is little doubt that Manning was influenced by this new ideology, although it is highly likely that he had no sympathy with its theological implications.(53) However, what is evident is Manning's resolute belief in the incompatibility of non-Catholic and Catholic education which was driven by a philosophy of what has been regarded as a 'Roman Catholic attitude to education'. Roman Catholic Education, for Manning, meant training for death and, unless these views are understood and appreciated, Manning's educational policy appears meaningless and narrow.(54) His great pastoral of 1866 proposed the establishment of a diocesan education fund. While this in itself was not an original proposal, Gray suggests, what was new was the remarkable force of his appeal. This, Gray believed, must surely have derived as much from the Evangelical background of his youth as his new found Catholicism. (55)

According to McClelland, Christianity, to Manning, was not a code of belief as much as a code of action: an intense practical rule of life, not an intellectual proposition: it was something that had to infuse itself into all person's actions.(56) The clearest evidence of this belief can be seen in the matter which concentrated his energy at the outset of his episcopal career - the problem of education. Unfortunately Manning's fundamentalist approach did not appeal to everyone and his frequent use of horror stories concerning orphans in his homilies brought criticism that he bordered on Methodism. However, he proved to be very successful in putting forward his message for his appeals were quickly answered. Gray suggests that Manning's zealous approach to stir Catholics into active

involvement with the plight of their co-religionists sprang from policy as well as conviction. (57)

While all the Catholic bishops were concerned with education, the one who most specialized in the question, according to Norman, was William Ullathorne, an anti-ultramontane by background, who became Bishop of Birmingham in 1850. (58) McClelland proposes that Ullathorne was one of Manning's greatest critics and one of the greatest opponents of government intervention in educational matters. Ullathorne enjoyed much support from the laity and, in 1857, published a lengthy tract on the hazards involved in accepting government grants. Later when Manning accepted the Education Act, Ullathorne rejected it.

Manning was successful in inspiring Catholics to action against the Protestant workhouses but the reality of the situation confounded many attempts to extricate Catholic children from them. While a series of acts had theoretically permitted their transfer, no legislation had conferred powers strong enough to overcome the obstinacy of the Poor Law Guardians who, according to Gray, were militantly Protestant. (59) That conviction can be borne out by the fact that only four Catholic children were surrendered from the workhouses during the period 1859 and 1867. This is despite there being thousands in that position. Following Manning's perseverance two amendments to the Poor Law were made in 1866 and 1868 which compelled Guardians to give up Catholic children. Even then some Guardians proved extremely reluctant to surrender Catholic children and it was not until 1884 that Manning could report that all Catholic children had been freed from the Protestant workhouses. Gray suggests that this effort on Manning's behalf showed him at his best because it combined his concern for the poor and pastoral zeal with his great administrative ability and, in this respect, he would be remembered as the most accomplished and beneficent man of affairs that the Church has possessed in England since the Reformation. (60)

The Church continued to place the utmost dependence upon its schools to continue its rate of progress but, as with today, in a short space of time, a number of items of education legislation began to threaten the system. However, once again the Church displayed an extraordinary ability to adapt to and meet the external challenges for its schools which allowed its programme to survive intact, further illustrating its resolute resistance to the potential loss of control of its schools.

Norman suggests that "Catholic expansion was actually a part of a more general British phenomenon of the nineteenth century. All the Churches were in a confident mood, as they battled against the infidelity of the slums, sought to bring education to the children of the poor, and associated the moral seriousness of the age with Christian values".(61) The massive church and school building programmes required by the Irish immigration, and the subsequent huge Catholic population increase, tended to stimulate diocesan administrative machinery and control. Norman offers that the last remnants of lay involvement in ecclesiastical administration were swept away in the floods of diocesan fundraising. (62)

For many English Catholics it was the Vatican Council which raised fears for intellectual freedom. While the doctrine of papal infallibility had been implied in Catholic thinking for centuries, the fact that it was now defined and had been given predominance by the ultramontane movement caused great concern to many Liberal Catholics. 'Liberal Catholicism' was a European phenomenon which manifested itself in an intense intellectual and ecclesiastical struggle which questioned the extent of the Church's "magisterium" along with the Pope's spiritual and temporal power. For Manning, one of the glories of infallibility was that it provided such a magnificent counterblast to the pride of intellectuals but also served as a bulwark against the 'exaggerated spirit of national independence'. Gray suggests that it was upon the Vatican Council, rather than the English

Government, that Manning's influence proved critical for Manning was at the centre of a powerful infallibilist lobby and during the Council his tactics proved to be ruthless. Unfortunately the events of the Council provoked an adverse effect in England which left little sympathy in Parliament with regard to the Irish Land Bill or the Education Bill.

As the Government began to take more than a passing interest in education, the Catholic authorities were soon to face a greater threat to their schooling programme. The Government recognised the social and economic value of an educated nation as was exemplified by Gladstone's determination to introduce compulsory education, but this in itself was to present Catholics with a new threat. Previously the Government had intervened by passing legislation in 1833 which provided some financial assistance in an attempt to improve the quality and standard of the education delivered. Now, however, if the Government were going to insist upon compulsory schooling, and the financial investment required to make such a policy work, it would also have a profound interest in how efficiently schools were run and managed. For the first time the Catholic Church was confronted with a direct threat to the control of its schools. The Education Act of 1870 brought the re-organisation of elementary education in an attempt to 'fill up the gaps in the voluntary system'. But, at the same time, it presented the Catholic Church with one of its greatest challenges. The danger as seen by the Church was that Catholic children would drift into the Board schools which were Protestant by nature, and subsequently lose their faith. To compound the Church's problems the Government's deliberations over whether its policies should be either secular or denominational also provoked religious rivalry between the Catholics and the Anglicans in their respective educational aims.

The Government's policies of the time provided a genuine threat to the whole sphere of Catholic education and, as a result of Lowe's "revised code" of 1862,

the Catholic training colleges suffered severe financial pressure and, within two years, St Leonard's Training School was forced to close.(63) One must also ask whether Gladstone expected the Catholic hierarchies to surrender their schools to government control for the increased cost of building and upkeep had brought about the surrender of thousands of Church of England and Wesleyan schools. if, when agreeing to allow a period of "grace", he truly expected the Church system to collapse? Provision was made for the transfer of voluntary schools to the School Boards, but William Forster, by all accounts, had over-estimated the number which were actually transferred. Certainly from the outset the Government was to make little allowance for the number of Catholic pupils who needed to be educated when it introduced compulsory education.

Gladstone's policy of "completing" and filling the gaps in the denominational "voluntary system" which, despite the attempts of the Anglican, Nonconformist, and Catholic pioneers, had been unable to provide school places for all the nation's children, was thoroughly in tune with the age: an age which long after the rise of a "secularist" outlook after 1836, was still religious in its view of education. Beales suggests that the long line of abortive bills from 1830 to 1870 is testimony to this "climate". He states that all these bills failed not because of the "inviolable unity" in religious and secular education, but how the unity could be best preserved, by legislation, amid, what he describes as, a variety of denominations each at war with the others, and all at war against the entrenched position of the Anglican establishment.(64) No doubt the Anglicans felt justifiably entrenched as they had enjoyed the lion's share of the work previous to the 1870 state system and, even up to 1902, fully half the country's elementary schools were Anglican foundations.

The key issue as far as the Government was concerned was whether schools that were rate supported should be secular or denominational. Beales argues that the great irony of the 1870 legislation was that the principle of no denominational teaching in schools provided by the state had already been negated by previous laws and would be compromised again later in subsequent legislation. He points out that there were four statutes relating to state schools which demanded that the state had the duty to ascertain the religion of the child to ensure that he could be sent to a school of that denomination.(65)

The introduction of the "Revised Code" was to present a different threat that would challenge the very bedrock of the Catholic schools in that it prescribed that the only religious teaching that should take place in publicly financed schools should be determined by the Government. This problem was exacerbated by the later introduction of the "Cowper-Temple" clause forbidding any religious teaching, except non denominational, in board schools. If the Church was to be unable to teach Catholicism in its own schools then its policy of creating schools as places for nurture would be left in tatters.

Once again the Church authorities were forced to prove their resilience and responded by drawing upon public support. The new found esteem and social standing of the bishops was to allow them to arrange for a "crisis fund", which meant that in a practical way they could take the political battle to the parents and justify the cause under the banner of Catholic freedom. But even when the Church ensured the continuation of its schools through the sacrifices it made, it could still not exercise full control for it suffered financial inequality and, as with today, had to resort to a contracted series of campaigns to gain concessions in funding arrangements.

Previous to 1850, the principal objective of Catholic policy had been to secure an equitable share of the central Exchequer grants which had been made available for school building. While the problem on the surface appeared financial, the underlying issue was of political and religious freedom. By 1870 the fundamental claims of the Catholics had emerged: that of parental choice, that a parent had the right to have his child educated according to his conscience, and that that right should not cost him relatively more than his neighbour. These two issues provide the key to the school's campaign since 1850.

A further problem for the Catholic authorities was the provision of sufficient numbers of trained Catholic teachers, because all the previous efforts would have come to nothing without this essential element. The difficulties that the early schools in the North East had experienced in recruiting competent teachers, most having recourse to turn to religious orders, were exacerbated by the grant conditions imposed by the Revised Code of 1861 which caused considerable hardship. The effect of the Revised Code, whereby curriculum grants were restricted to the three R's only, was to put further strain on Catholic resources but also to discourage entry to the teaching profession. As for those who did, there were very few places in training colleges available for them. Fortunately Wiseman had the vision and foresight to establish the first Catholic training colleges.

Nationally, Gladstone had made it clear that he wished to supplement rather than supplant the historic voluntary system which brought about the question as to what shape or form religious teaching would take in any publicly financed schools. In 1870, Beales suggests that public opinion fell into four camps. The National Education League was openly secularist, and the enemy of the Voluntary schools; the National Education Union, as an Anglican organ, wanted the Voluntary system retained, supplemented and rate aided; the moderate

Nonconformists inclined the same way, but were a minority; the Catholics insisted upon a fully rate-aided voluntary system.(66)

The Government, however, rejected the secularist solution but also rejected the completely denominational solution of the Anglicans and Catholics on the ground that both bodies lacked administrative and other resources to force a truly national system, even if assisted by rate aid. W.E. Forster was not in favour of a total rejection of the voluntary system but preferred a dual system as can be seen in his initial memorandum of 1869 where he explained that he was determined "not to injure existing and efficient schools." (67) He was, on the other hand, aware of the ethical implication of rates: "It would not be fair to tax a Roman Catholic to teach Methodism.....(but) it would not be unfair to levy a rate on a Roman Catholic for the secular education of a Methodist." Gladstone's solution was to suggest that the State should provide the secular teaching and, either leave the option to the ratepayers to go beyond this essential requirement in providing religious education if they saw fit, or they could leave the parties themselves to find bibles and other such necessities from voluntary sources.

Forster's Bill did not reject outright the possibility of rate aid for denominational schools, but proposed that there would be a period of grace whereby the voluntary bodies should attempt to provide sufficient school places to meet their needs. All those who could not be accommodated after this period, when building grants would be given for the creation of new schools, were to be housed in new schools publicly provided by local School Boards. This obviously provided a major crisis for the Catholic church. Manning appealed to the other denominational religious groups by issuing a memorandum claiming that Christian education was the 'genus' and that the denominations were the 'species' in an attempt to provoke a united front.(68) Allies added that if education were to be a compulsory necessity then a denominational system was an absolute right as any



other system was an affront to parental conscience. "The moment this truth is made clear, the question of primary education is settled for Catholics. "Catholic schools for Catholic children" must be their motto".(69)

A period of intense political activity followed, but the Catholics were seriously hampered by the fact that their bishops were in Rome at the time attending the Vatican Council. The Catholic Poor School Committee set up a series of meetings, in fact nine in all, petitioning both the Commons and Catholic M.P.s up and down the country, and interviewing the Government on four occasions. Beales regarded this period as crucial but also a lost opportunity, probably through the absence of the bishops, because the Catholic authorities failed to make a plea to 'contract out' of the general terms of the Bill, which is what Forster expected and what the Jews actually did.(70) More lamentable for Beales was the fact that the first personal contact between the bishops and the Poor School Committee occurred on the day that the Bill received the Royal Assent.(71) Manning, on the other hand, had maintained a dialogue with Gladstone from Rome insisting that, given time, the Catholic Church could create sufficient places for its poor children.

McClelland suggests that while the 1870 Act itself took Manning by surprise, the attitude of Manning towards State entry into the field of education has been misunderstood. Contrary to the view that Manning abandoned the educational fight to concentrate upon affairs during the Vatican Council in Rome, McClelland states that Manning left Bishop Brown of Newport at home to be in charge as 'locum tenens'. Unfortunately Brown did not prove himself to be an effective campaigner and remained in Wales and it was left to the Catholic laity to mobilise some form of resistance to the proposals. Manning had also entered into dialogue with Gladstone regarding the educational question as early as 1868 and had followed this up with a letter a year later querying Forster's Bill. (72)

The famous "crisis fund" was launched and ultimately raised £390,000, creating sufficient room for 75,518 school places nationally. Public opposition to rate aid for denominational teaching in England however, proved too strong for Gladstone to resist and, in an attempt to appease everyone, the Government resolved that no aid should be given to the voluntary schools by the School Boards but the Government itself would issue them with increased Privy Council grants.

The real danger for the Catholic schools came in the form of the threat of closure by the Boards for being either insufficient or inefficient. Manning, aware of this possibility, recommended that the best course of action for the Church should be to co-operate as fully as possible with the implications of the Act. But Manning, perhaps with some justification, felt that the Act was divisive for the nation, in that one third would be educated as Christians and two thirds educated indefinitely.(73) He saw this to be a breach of centuries long Christian tradition and a blow to the very foundation of England's Christian aspiration. There was never a greater need for a national Catholic policy as well as sufficient trained teachers because, as Allies pointed out, the Church had an obligation to keep its schools efficient.(74) Allies proposed that as the Catholic Church needed to deal with the whole body in a similar way that the State dealt with the whole population, then the laity would be the best body to deal indiscriminately with the "crisis fund trust" as he felt that by the very principles of their faith they would offer no interference in regard to the teaching of faith and morals.(75) With regard to Manning's approach and policy to the 1870 Act, it is difficult to see what other strategies he could have employed under the circumstances for certainly, if the Catholic hierarchy had remained uncommunicative, their schools would undoubtedly have disappeared.

The Education Act presented serious challenges to the denominational schools and contained within it five key points: The Timetable Conscience Clause provided for the withdrawal of children from religious instruction at the request of parents; the Cowper-Temple Clause meant that denominational children in the board Schools would no longer find unity of secular and doctrinal instruction; the year of grace was reduced to six months; (The result of the clause was that the teaching of 'religious catechism or religious formulary, distinctive of any particular denomination', was forbidden in board Schools thereby declaring for 'undenominational' religious instruction. The effect of the clause was to destroy the relationship between the voluntary schools and the board schools.) building grants were to cease at the end of the year; and rate-aid was withheld altogether. All these reforms brought into being the "Dual System", albeit totally unequal. The new undenominational schools were to be entirely provided for, and maintained, out of public funds, while the older denominational schools were to be provided for by voluntary subscription and assisted only by Privy Council grants. Once again the Catholic Church faced a heavy financial burden which was so severe that it was seen to pose a real threat to the very existence of voluntary schools.

Holmes suggests that Forster's Act created competition between the board and the voluntary schools which the latter, unable to draw upon the rates, could only lose.(76) Only the Anglican and Roman Catholics attempted to compete and during the period between 1878 and 1885. The Anglicans increased their schools by 9% whereas the Catholic schools were increased by 22%.(77) But the voluntary schools continued to be greatly disadvantaged and were inevitably compared unfavourably with the board schools. At the same time the standards of education were constantly being raised so that voluntary schools were being closed to be replaced by board schools. The inequality of the system was illustrated by the secretary of the Catholic Poor Schools' Committee who

complained that since 1877 very real differences had risen between the Education department and his organisation, which had been refused 18 grants. In the name of all Catholics, he strongly protested against Catholics being forced into board schools, and asserted that they would suffer "persecution rather than be compelled".(78)

According to Holmes by 1884 more than 1000 voluntary schools had disappeared, but interestingly none of these was Catholic.(79) Given that the Catholic schools had the highest proportion of free admission and received the smallest contributions, this is tremendous testimony to the determination of the Catholic hierarchy to maintain its own system but also, perhaps more importantly, to the newly trained teachers who achieved the necessary educational standards despite experiencing serious disadvantages.

The inequalities of the "dual system" created much resentment amongst the voluntary bodies and in 1884 the Voluntary Schools Association was founded to secure four specific reforms and increased Government grants. The first issue was that voluntary schools were restricted to a total annual grant of seventeen shillings and six pence for each student, unless the school had an independent parallel income of the same amount; this in fact meant that there was no escape from the poverty trap for the voluntary schools. A second issue was to try to remove the humiliating requirement of parents who sent their children to denominational schools, but could not afford the fees, to appear before the workhouse authorities. A third problem was one that has re-emerged today was that no other school could receive a Government grant where a Board school already had sufficient accommodation for local children. Consequently, Catholic children had to travel long distances simply because the local Board decided that another Catholic school was not needed. The fourth and final grievance was the rating of voluntary schools.

From 1873 onwards in every Irish colony there had been a branch of an association which in reality was an outpost of the nationalist movement. In the industrial towns where the votes of the two main political parties were evenly balanced, the Irish voters were in an excellent position to influence the outcome of a general election. In the summer of 1885, when the dissolution of parliament looked inevitable, Parnell opened negotiations with leading members of both parties in the hope of extracting a promise to grant Ireland a separate legislature. But as Gladstone refused to commit himself to any policy for Ireland until he was certain as to how the Irish would vote Parnell retaliated by authorising the president of the Irish National League of Great Britain, T.P. O'Connor, to publish a manifesto calling on the Irish in Great Britain to vote against all liberals and radicals. Howard suggests however, that Parnell was only obeyed by the Irish voters in England when his advice coincided with that of the clergy; and the clergy were primarily concerned, not with the demand for home rule, but with the threat which the 'unauthorized programme' of Joseph Chamberlain constituted to the church's schools. (80)

'Chamberlain's red book' contained a number of proposals, of which two were especially calculated to cause apprehension in ecclesiastical circles; namely, the disestablishment of the state churches and what radicals referred to as the 'free schools', by which they meant the abolition of fees in the undenominational board-schools. If the board-schools were, with state aid, to dispense with fees they would enjoy an immense advantage over the voluntary sector who could not compete financially. This proposal raised serious issues which were of vital importance to both the Anglican and Roman hierarchies for churchmen, who were already compelled to pay rates for the maintenance of board-schools under the conditions of the 1870 act, would now have to submit to an increase in the income-tax in order to provide undenominational teaching with a further subsidy.

The 'free schools' question was of grave concern to the Voluntary Schools Association who gained support in the electoral field from Cardinal Manning and some of the English hierarchy. One of the Association's immediate courses of action was to attempt to secure a Royal Commission to investigate the afore-mentioned grievances and any other alterations of the 1870 Act. To this end Manning orchestrated a political campaign previous to the 1885 election whereby pressure was exerted on local politicians in an effort to procure their support for the Commission. Although Manning had been careful to limit his political intervention to the single question of the church schools, and he insisted that Catholics were able to vote according to their consciences on this issue, the real effect was eventually to favour the conservatives. In a speech on 24 June 1885, Manning warned his audience against allowing their children to become state controlled, exhorting them to "rise up and say they did not want board schools for their children".(81)

Manning was quite determined that Catholic schools should not be put at risk by the encroachment of Board schools through the lack of funds. The solution he felt was that the voluntary schools should now also be granted rate aid. He argued that if the Government can tax the whole people for education then the whole people have a right to share in the use of such taxation. He also believed that the Protestant denominations had as much right as Catholics to share in the education rate and he believed that if the Protestants joined him on this campaign then his argument may carry greater weight. He claimed that the national character had been formed in religious schools and asked 'How can this English and Christian character be perpetuated or formed when the schools have ceased to be Christian?' (82) If the State was to be neutral with regard to the different religions did that mean that it could enforce secular education as had happened in France? Manning suggested not but was so concerned with the education issue that he

broke his own rule of political neutrality by publishing an article in 1885 entitled; "How shall Catholics Vote at the Coming Parliamentary Elections?"

Following the election which resulted in a hung parliament the Home Secretary, Lord Cross, appointed a commission to investigate the working of the 1870 Education Act and Manning's services were recognised by the Government and he was invited to become a member. Manning proved to be a dominant member of this commission which recommended in 1888 that voluntary schools should receive aid from the local boards. The report became known as Manning's report and it went a long way to ensuring that the denominational schools survived. The Government however were not persuaded by the report to put "Rome on the rates" and even though it would have undoubtedly been to their benefit the Anglican bishops also rejected this proposal. Manning reacted by producing 'Fifty Reasons why the Voluntary Schools of England ought to share the School Rates' (1888), which he referred to as 'fifty stripes for the backs of those cowardly Anglican bishops'.(83) Manning regarded the Education Act 1891, which greatly helped Catholic schools by providing a ten shillings per pupil grant towards the cost of fees, with much disdain, for he believed that it offered 'blood money' acquired at the cost of surrendering the principle that parents, and not the state, were ultimately responsible for education. (84)

However, under these terms, the voluntary organisations could only be liberated from their educational financial burdens when the principle of free education was accepted. The Catholics had fiercely opposed this fearing a loss of control of their independent schools, but they were also suspicious that the abolition of fees would only apply to the board schools which would seriously threaten the mere existence of the Catholic schools. Catholic schools did however gain some financial relief around this time as in 1891 an act was passed which, according to Armytage, "put a stop to the farce of uninvestigated necessity", (85) This provided

an annual grant of ten shillings for every non-paying pupil under fifteen years of age and supplemented fees up to that amount which in effect made elementary education free.

As Catholic schools were the poorest they were the ones to profit most from the grant, although this relief was short lived as expenses grew with the demand for better accommodation and staffing. Despite these initiatives, the previous grievances had not actually been addressed so that some Catholics were still paying for Board Schools as well as their own. McClelland suggests that the bigotry and religious rivalry of so many of the Boards was one of the reasons why Manning was later to doubt the wisdom of the Government setting up School Boards under the 1870 Act for he was afraid that they would become an excuse for sectarian squabbles. Furthermore, antagonism was expected because of the sectarian feeling generated by the Vatican Council.(86) The support that the Catholics had enjoyed from the Anglicans for Voluntary schools sadly evaporated as a result of inter-denominational controversy and the Catholics were left to fight on alone.

William Vaughan, who eventually became Cardinal Manning's successor, perceived this financial inequality, that Catholics continued to give financial support to Board schools while paying for their own, as a religious disability and a restriction of freedom of conscience.(87) He must have been aware of the damage that the financial burden was having on the Catholic sector and argued that while the Anglicans were quite happy to pay twice for their education, the Catholics were generally too poor to do the same. Holmes attributes the prolonging of this financial inequality directly to the attitude adopted by the Anglicans.(88) The Education Act of 1897 gave a further grant of five shillings for each child and abolished the rating of voluntary schools.



Progress was made in 1900 when, during the General Election, the Conservative party published a leaflet on the inequalities between Board and Voluntary Schools and, two years later, a bill was introduced which placed public elementary schools under the control of the local authorities. At the same time the Conservatives recognised that the voluntary schools had the same claim to financial support for maintenance and running cost as the Board schools. Vaughan regarded this as a major development although others saw it as leaving the voluntary schools at the mercy of the local authorities while they continued to finance the cost of repairs and new building and, at the same time, repay previous debts.

The story of English education from 1870 onwards is the story of more and more encroachment by the State. As the ideology of "collectivism" became the norm of the later period of the 19th century, the State strengthened its grip on the individual and subsequently its grip on education. Eventually the State was to extend its interest beyond elementary schooling and took control of secondary and further education. This progression led to the act of 1902 which is generally recognised by many educationalists as the starting point of our modern system of education.

The public emergence of the Church had been most visible in the work of education, for this brought the bishops into contact with the Government, through claims to a share in parliamentary funds made available to the denominations for subsidies to their schools. Since almost all the available popular education until the Education Act of 1870 was conducted by the State Church of England, Catholic denominational schools alone seemed able to satisfy the premises of the bishops. As liberal theology developed inside the Protestant Church, furthermore - epitomized in the publication of 'Essays and Reviews' in 1860 - Catholics were more than ever convinced of the need for separate education for their children. The education question also had the effect of consolidating clerical influence in

the Church: the bishops centralized policy in order to co-ordinate relations with the Government. Those relations began when applications were made by the Catholics for a share in the funds made available by Parliament in 1839 to the Committee of Council on education. Although the bishops themselves were divided as to what level of State interference they could safely accept.

With regard to the development of Catholic schooling, one cannot underestimate the importance of the moves that the ultramontanists made in both the political and educational arenas. On the continent the ultramontane current in France had been distinctly religious and political; in Germany its emphasis had been on catechetics, on education, and on the Church's closer allegiance to Rome; but Cwiekowski suggests that in England its distinctive character was more properly theological.(89) In promoting Ultramontanism they were protecting Catholic interests and ensuring the continuation of the schools but, more importantly, they were instrumental in shaping the nature of Catholic schooling for the next century.

Manning proved throughout his life to have been a true champion of the Catholic schools cause. By the time of his death in 1892, 10,000 children in the Westminster diocese alone had been rescued from the workhouses and sent to Catholic schools and a further 4,500 waifs, strays and outcasts had been housed and educated in Catholic reform and industrial schools. Perhaps Manning, more than anyone else during the nineteenth century, was responsible for the survival of denominational schools (or voluntary schools as they became known after the 1870 Education Act) From 1847-1862 Catholic schools had received over £200,000 from the Privy Council and had achieved recognition of the principle that the Government inspection should be carried out by a Catholic. But by now the more aggressive secularists wanted to cut off all government aid to denominational schools with the view that these schools would eventually peter

out through lack of funds. Manning was quite determined that this would not happen, and, according to Gray, in order to prevent board control, was prepared to give up the right to have Catholic inspectors for Catholic schools. (90)

While Manning never showed any great liking for the Act, the only satisfaction he could gain from it was that denominational schools would still receive grants, albeit rather meagre, from the Privy Council. But it looked apparent to all concerned that the eventual extinction of government-aided denominational schools would be forthcoming. Ullathorne initially refused to accept any government aid for Catholic schools, but Manning, as ever the pragmatist, urged him to cooperate in manipulating the Act. However, there were many Catholics who bitterly resented Manning's policy of accommodation to the Act. Unperturbed he made the quest for a fairer deal for Catholics his new crusade but he was also careful to insist that he was fighting for all denominational schools, not just Catholic ones.

In 1876 and 1891 the parliamentary grant was increased but it went to board schools as well as the Church schools. Later in 1897 the Conservatives passed an act which provided greater funds but this time only for the voluntary schools. Five years later in 1902 when the Conservatives proposed further aid to Church schools the reaction from the Nonconformists and Liberals was violent. The outcome of the negotiations was that local authorities would maintain elementary Church schools. This included teachers' salaries and repairs due to 'fair wear and tear'. However the money for any further school building projects remained the responsibility of the managers who retained the control of the appointment of teachers and the teaching of religious education. Local authorities were to select one third of the managers and had to approve appointments.

The Education Act of 1897 followed declarations of principle by the bishops, and the abolition of the rating of voluntary schools included in its clauses was regarded by them as a great achievement. The 1902 Act, similarly, was helpful to the Catholics. In these campaigns, in which Cardinal Vaughan exerted himself so tirelessly, Catholics and Anglicans worked on the same side against the Liberal party and the Non-conformists. This affinity with the State Church on a major question of policy was a key factor in preventing Catholics from acquiring a 'denominational' self identity, for it occurred just at a time when consciousness of their place in the religious pluralism of England might otherwise have placed the Catholics on the side of Dissent.

The assault by the Free Churches and the Liberal Party upon the Balfour Act of 1902 was unrelenting; before 1914 some twenty legislative attempts were made to end the 'Dual System' of education. After the Liberals' success in the 1906 Election, Cardinal Francis Bourne went to some lengths to make it clear that however much the Catholic Church would oppose Liberal educational policies, there was no quarrel with any particular party. Augustine Birrell's Education Bill of 1906 was intended to conciliate free churchmen and secularists. Within the Bill the Dual System was to be abandoned, and all schools in receipt of public financial aid were to come fully under local government control. The Anglicans joined the Catholics in opposition to the proposals and eventually the Bill was withdrawn. Subsequent similar attempts were also unsuccessful but the result was that the Catholic hierarchy became dependent upon the Conservative Party. An Act of 1936 empowered Local Authorities to pay 75 per cent of the cost of new schools and of improvements to existing ones. The hierarchy declared that it could never accept the legislation, and launched a campaign to finance the continuation and extension of its own system.

The first thirty years of the twentieth century saw a rapid decline in the numbers of pupils attending denominational schools, mainly because the Nonconformists adopted the council schools as their own but also because the Anglican Church refused to direct funds towards education. Catholic schools, on the other hand, showed a modest increase from 337,000 to 377,000 by 1936.(91) During that year Oliver Stanley piloted a bill empowering local authorities to contribute a one-off grant no lower than fifty per cent or higher than seventy five per cent to assist denominational schools in the building of "special agreement" senior schools. However, this piece of legislation also included the element that the managers of the schools should sign over the right to appoint teachers and this provoked such a hostile reaction that a further piece of legislation was required, which was encompassed within the Liverpool Act, whereby local authorities would build senior schools and lease them to Church bodies. Unfortunately all building work was stopped with the advent of World War II.

After the War various educational pressure groups emerged ranging from the established religious groups to the professional teaching bodies and Trade Unions and each wished to influence the direction of schooling in this new era. In what Francis Phillips called a 'rare coming together' (92) the churches agreed on certain basic principles, one of which was that: "every child, regardless of race or class, should have equal opportunities of education, suitable for the development of his peculiar capacities". Catholic leaders used this principle in putting forward a claim for full equality and opportunity in education and argued that the current situation was most unfair to the largely 'poor' Catholic sector. The tone of the Government was however, soon to be revealed in the Education Department's document "Education after the War" which responded by suggesting that the existing partnership of Church and State was "inconsistent with proper economy and efficiency" and extremely complicated to administer.(93) Yet far from wishing to destroy the partnership the Education Department saw the value of retaining them

and suggested that the voluntary sector should be supported by being given generous assistance.

In July 1941 R.A. Butler, without serious opposition, introduced his major Education Bill which was to have far reaching consequences for church schools. All church bodies were to be given a choice regarding the future status of their schools and managers or governors who chose "controlled" status would be relieved of all financial expenditure. "Aided status", if chosen, would place on managers or governors the responsibility for providing premises and equipment, for alterations and on going repairs (except to the interior of the school), but towards certain expenditures on these schools the Education Department would pay half. The local education authority would retain the right to appoint one third of the managers and the managing body would hold the authority to appoint or dismiss teachers and, importantly, religious instruction could be solely denominational. Unlike the Anglican church, which was still reluctant to invest further resources to their schools programme, Catholic leaders from the outset made it known that "aided status" was the only possible route for them. But rather than solving the financial problems for the Catholic authorities, Butler's Act placed further hardship on the Catholic community. It was obvious by the conditions laid down that the Board of Education did not expect Catholics to fulfil their educational obligations.

In an effort to deflect the obvious financial burdens the Catholic authorities petitioned the Government with a number of possibilities to reduce the millstone. They even went to the point of suggesting that local authorities assume total financial responsibility for the voluntary schools and that the Catholic managers would surrender their right to appoint all teachers! All petitions were however rejected but the Catholic case was not helped by the fact that they acted alone on fighting this discrimination. As in the previous century the Catholic hierarchy was

not prepared to allow the matter to rest, nor could they afford to, for too much money and effort had been spent in establishing their schools. For the next ten years various manoeuvres were instigated by the Catholic bishops and, once again, education became the battle-ground for the Church against the State.

A major crisis hit the Church leaders in 1948 when a requirement from the Ministry of Education demanded that managers and governors of schools applying for aided status should satisfy the Minister that they were willing and able to meet their share of the costs of altering, repairing and equipping schools. Furthermore the document, (Form 18 Schools) had to be completed within six months of the date of approval by the Minister. Phillips suggests that further strain was exerted by the emergence of three factors: first, a rigorous new building code, secondly, the alarming increase in the cost of construction during the early 1940s, and finally, the dramatic shift in population. (94) These three elements had caused considerable alarm amongst Catholic authorities who had planned for a place in a Catholic school for every Catholic child.

Amidst the panic the hierarchy once again petitioned the Government for help, suggesting that the Church could lease its schools to local authorities at a nominal rent with a view of receiving total relief of education costs in return. However, such plans were once again resisted and George Tomlinson, Labour Minister of Education, perhaps reflecting the mood of the day, was quite critical in suggesting that the Catholic hierarchy was once again attempting to get the whole of their educational costs funded by the public.(95) The Catholic body made little progress until Bishop George A. Beck was appointed chairman of the Catholic Education Council in September 1949, as a replacement for the Earl of Perth who had been reluctant to continue the campaign. Bishop Beck at last gave some dynamism and direction to the Catholic crusade and, like Bishops Hogarth and Chadwick in the previous century, he stands out as the twentieth century

champion of Catholic schooling. Beck quickly organised a forceful campaign which targeted candidates leading up to the General Election of 1950 but even then there was disharmony amongst the Catholic leaders with some, notably Captain Stanley E Norfolk, suggesting that very few; "not one Catholic in ten, had even the haziest idea of what all the fuss is about".(96) However, Norfolk faced great opposition from the rank and file clergy from the Cardinal down through the bishops and deans whose members constituted a well organised and motivated force. Drawing upon methods used a century earlier, but this time in pamphlet form, the Catholic Hierarchy produced the document "Save our Schools" which was to be distributed in every constituency.

Cardinal Bernard Griffin, a close associate of Bishop Beck, adopted a similar tone to that adopted by the circular produced by Bishop Chadwick in 1869, when he addressed a mass rally in the Albert Hall on January 30th 1950. With regard to Catholic schooling Griffin proposed that religious instruction was in itself insufficient but that every subject had to be inspired by Christian truth and taught by those who lived a full Christian life. In echoes of Chadwick's appeal, he propounded that Catholic parents would be "flouting the law of God if they were willing to entrust the education of their children to teachers who may be not only hostile to the Catholic Faith, but may even be rationalists and atheists determined to destroy in the mind of the child the very seeds of the Christian doctrine!" (97)

To bring the Catholic community to the attention of the threats at hand Beck organised a series of rallies which, although very well attended according to the Catholic authorities, failed to gain any real publicity from the major News corporations. At the second rally Bishop Joseph McCormack of Hexham and Newcastle warned in the gravest terms of a danger to Catholic schools "such as we have never known before." While Bishop Edward Ellis in Derby saw the Catholic body confronted with "the greatest educational crisis in history." (98)



The rallies were followed up with a postal campaign requesting that Catholics forget politics and put the Catholic school question first, but it appears that this led to much confusion so the authorities in some dioceses turned to house to house canvassing in an attempt to persuade Catholic voters where their priorities lay. Yet within all these political manoeuvres there still remained much doubt as to whether the Catholic Church could meet its financial commitment to schooling and this would provide the greatest threat. But soon some support for the Catholic cause was to come from both the main political parties with Winston Churchill pledging that it was "no part of Conservative policy to administer denominational school out of existence" and Labour giving a similar assurance.

(99)

While Labour won the election, the Catholic schools problem had still not been resolved but Beck suggested that, following the tension that the vigorous pre-election campaign had caused, perhaps a less abrasive approach was now needed. While within the respective governments there had been a great reluctance throughout this period to tamper with the conditions of the 1944 Act, the Church sought all possible means to relieve itself of its school's financial burden. Bishop McCormack proposed what Phillips called an ingenious solution which was to limit the financial dependence of the denominational schools solely to classrooms while leaving the responsibility of the remainder to the local authorities.(100) If such a proposal was successful it would undoubtedly save a considerable sum and support was enlisted from the Church of England. Unfortunately this added to the downfall of McCormack's proposal, for in the main Parliamentary debate Butler produced figures to suggest that the Church of England had by and large accepted controlled status and therefore had a diminishing commitment in the field of education. While Butler conceded that voluntary schools gave "something vital to our national character and to our future national existence" (101), he also felt that the 1944 settlement had been fair. In all the Catholic schooling question was

given a thorough airing and most Catholic leaders were well pleased with the sympathetic nature of the debate but the two main political parties were as one in refusing further aid to denominational schools.

For most of the educational debate concerning denominational schools over the previous twenty years the Catholic body had stood alone but, following the defeat of the McCormack proposal, the Catholic hierarchy, spurred on by Bishop Beck, decided to adopt a different approach and pressed for an education conference which would include representatives from all the religious groups. The purpose of this was to hopefully produce a united front against the Government's reluctance to meet the Catholic Church's demands for greater aid. While the Catholic and Church of England representatives made some progress the representatives of the Free Churches continued to oppose any alteration of the 1944 settlement and remained hostile throughout.

As it became evident that little progress was being made on that front the Catholic Church embraced a new appeal through Robert O'Brien, the Secretary of the Catholic Education Council, who recognised that the main difficulties created by the 1944 Act were chiefly of an administrative rather than a religious nature. Phillips (102) suggests that, at this point of time, policy making was "slipping from the hands of the hierarchy" but this would allow them "greater freedom of action in later negotiations."

Following the meetings of the interested religious bodies O'Brien proposed what was deemed to be a "joint memoranda". Within this, local authorities would maintain any independent schools seeking aided status but he also suggested that greater flexibility was needed in the interpretation of 'alterations' to schools and more generous provision of transport costs. Furthermore he proposed that a wider definition was needed of 'displaced pupils' and sites should be provided for

"substituted" schools. Unfortunately, before the "memoranda" could be placed before Parliament, dissent crept in with the Anglican Bishop of Peterborough wishing to alter some clauses and drop others. At this the proposals lost their impetus, for if the religious bodies could not agree there would be little chance of the political parties accepting the proposals. Following this disappointment Beck decided that the Catholics must once again proceed alone and he turned his attention once more to instigating another political campaign.

The focus of this new campaign centred around the definition of the term "displaced pupils". The original definition had included those pupils who, when displaced from their old school, caused a substantial reduction in enrolment. The Catholic argument however, was that the definition should include those who moved as a result of action taken, or proposed to be taken, under the enactments relating to housing or town and country planning. The new definition would allow school places vacated by displaced pupils to be filled up again. The hierarchy also wanted the definition altered to include pupils who ended up in new housing estates at second or third remove. O'Brien proposed that the definition should include displaced pupils coming from a school which had been closed - the definition said "existing" school. In reality, however, this was only a diversion for the real goal of equality of status and finance remained the same. This period provided an interesting juncture for the Catholic hierarchy and, Bishop Beck in particular, had begun to manipulate the political parties knowing how important the Catholic vote had become while both parties had struggled in the recent past with small majorities. Phillips suggests that all along it had been well understood that concessions to a denomination should be by consent of the two main political parties and only after consultation with representatives of all concerned bodies. According to Phillips this procedure had not been ignored and Conservative leaders, while in the middle of preparing for the General election, were furious.(103)

Without doubt the nearest the Church collectively has come to political action was over the education question, with the formation in 1945 of the Catholic Parents and Electors Association. This body, with numerous local branches, had naturally evolved out of existing diocesan associations. It carried Catholic opposition to the terms of the 1944 Education Act into the general election of 1950. Candidates records were scrutinised, and they were questioned publicly about their attitude to denominational schools.

This may well have been a master stroke by Beck, for soon the Conservative party was pressurised into courting the Catholic vote through the Catholic education issue and even R.A. Butler presented a statement suggesting that if all bodies concerned were in agreement, then some modification to the 1944 Act could be made. While attempts by the Catholic bishops were made to suggest that they had inadvertently drifted into politics, it is quite obvious that that was their intention, and without doubt Beck, had played party against party. Very soon the Catholic schooling debate had become an election tool for use by both main parties bidding for the Catholic vote, although Churchill strongly denied such.

Once again Beck instigated a pre-election interviewing campaign but this was also followed up by the Hierarchy producing a speakers handbook; The Case For Catholic Schools, for distribution to the interviewing committees and, under the direction of Bishop Beck, the interviewing campaign was carried out with considerable thoroughness.

In November 1951 the Conservatives won the General Election, but it was not until the following November that any pre-election promises that had been made came to fruition. During that month the Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill was introduced into the Commons and it had three main benefits for denominations: the first widened the definition of displaced pupils; while the

second and third eased the restriction on enlarging existing "controlled" schools and authorised the building of new ones. Perhaps the most significant alteration was the fact that displaced pupils would now be regarded as those who moved school because of town and country planning or enactments related to housing. Prior to the move the pupils had to be in attendance at an aided or special agreement school. Also those below school age could be included if it seemed likely that they would have attended the old school if they had not moved.

On the issue of Trusts, the Minister would be empowered, on application by the trustees, to require that a maintained school, held on general or educational trust, remain as such until no longer needed. While the Catholic body as a whole was delighted with this progress Bishop Beck challenged the Minister to see if Clause 1 on displaced pupils could be made retrospective and this proved to be the next point of issue for the Catholic Authorities. Unfortunately what should have been a smooth passage through the two Houses turned into a debacle and eventually the Catholic Hierarchy struggled to find a way of extricating itself from the political arena. One of the key causes of interest now centred around the issue of 'proposed' as against 'established' schools, for this would have far reaching financial consequences for all involved.

The Education Act 1953, although in itself an insignificant act, was quite unique in Catholic educational history for it was the first piece of legislation to have been brought about by the hierarchy. Towards the end of 1954 the financial picture was favourable but the truth remained that the Catholic hierarchy were still very hard pushed to maintain their school building programme. Furthermore, while limited success had been achieved, certain resentment had been generated towards Catholic leaders from the Ministry. This didn't however prevent Beck from pursuing further action as rumours of a General Election spread. Once again he

resorted to his previous trusted methods of mobilising his forces through interview panels.

As the financial picture worsened, Catholic diocese began to feel the pinch and resorted to loan arrangements to fulfil their building commitments. The difficulties increased when the Banks decided that no further loans would be advanced for school building and the Church therefore had to turn to other financial markets. What did not help the Catholic cause was the fact that the dioceses had failed to apply for loans from the Government which were worth £1 million. The financial difficulties created pressure from within the Church and urged the authorities to begin a new campaign for aid in 1955 for unless aid was forthcoming a number of projects would have to be abandoned. By 1956 the general mood in Catholic quarters was that the denominational schools issue needed to be solved once and for all, for the problem could not be allowed to continue indefinitely. Beck, on the other hand, was quite adamant that a fifty per cent grant would be most inadequate. Unfortunately negotiations continued to be hampered by references back to the injustices of 1944 but Beck, rightly or wrongly, eventually settled on the figure of seventy five per cent as his goal. To this end he courted Harold Wilson, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who, while being supportive, suggested that there might be other ways of raising money other than through further political confrontation.

For support Beck was forced to forget past differences and turn once again to the Church of England and the Free Church. Unlike previous encounters Beck was careful to avoid any disharmony and by way of introduction to the first reconvened meeting during October 1958 he cited the Nonconformist argument used prior to the passing of the 1870 Education Act, which spoke of the harmony necessary between home and school for the general good of the country. While the Nonconformists appeared sympathetic to the voluntary schools' cause, this did

not stop them once again opposing Beck's grant proposal of seventy five per cent. Although the tripartite approach petered out Beck was increasingly wary of allowing the issue to become a party political problem once again.

As social unrest arose later that year, education once again came to the forefront and again attention was focused upon the schools to seek an answer. Beck employed this disorder to further his cause and wrote to R.A. Butler referring to a letter in the Daily Telegraph on 5th November which spoke of the "deep disorder in society" and put it that definite religious and moral teaching, given by teachers who showed their religious convictions by their own example, was a powerful means to counteract this disturbing trend among young people. (104) He asked Butler to use his influence to persuade the Minister for Education to present proposals for financial relief to enable the Catholic body to play its full part in making its children better human beings and better citizens. The ensuing White Paper, "Secondary Education For All" was to provide a wide range of facilities for secondary education but, more importantly for the Catholic sector, it gave recognition that "the Churches may need some further help if they are to be enabled to play their full part in carrying out their share." As this was the first time that the Government had shown that it may be prepared to go beyond the restraints of the 1944 Act it gave great hope to the Catholic authorities. While some Catholics saw the white Paper as another potential election tool Beck promised that, if the grant was given to all new schools, the question of denominational school finance would be taken out of politics for the foreseeable future, and problem of voluntary schools would cease to be a prickly one at elections. (105)

By the following year it was becoming evident that any hostility towards the Catholic issue was subsiding and the Times Educational Supplement commented that "if sufficient parents wanted to have their children to have a denominational

education, there seemed no good reason why they should not have it on the same terms as those who did not." One of the stumbling blocks to the grant being increased to seventy five per cent however, was the fact that the Anglican Church, which had accepted the 1944 settlement and had never pressed to retain aided status, was now proposing a drive to win the same figure. The proposal by Anglican leaders was to allow them to complete the building work they had started on a limited scale fifteen years previously but to ask for such would bring a new principle to the equation. But this new proposal represented a shift in Anglican policy to secure assistance for secondary school places.

The Education Bill of 1959 was relatively short and in essence it would offer a grant for just about every secondary school the Catholic or voluntary sector could manage to build in the future. But importantly no clause was included which would allow the authorities to interfere with the running or appointment of teachers. Serious opposition was directed from the Free Church movement which feared "the growth and revival of Romanism".(106) They also feared that the Church of England could, by virtue of what was then an educational monopoly in many areas, "steal their children."(107) The Nonconformists, on the other hand, were more moderate in their criticisms. Ultimately it was the principle, argued by Hailsham, that opposition to the Bill would deprive Catholic parents of their rights which won the day. The Bill received Royal Assent on 29 July 1959 and it was estimated that it would save the Catholic authorities £22 million in the following fifteen years but, more importantly, it would ensure the continuation of Catholic schooling.

Within the Catholic body, Bishop Beck stands out as the chief architect of the Catholic success. He proved himself to be a skilled negotiator capable of responding to the many challenges that were placed before him by the various political and religious parties who were determined to obstruct any attempts to



alter the 1944 Education Act. Through Beck's perseverance and penchant for organisation and by employing thorough tactical campaigns, the Catholic sector was eventually able to redress the inequalities of Butler's Act, win major financial concessions for the voluntary sector and ensure the future for Catholic schools. Ironically in the ultimate analysis the final figure of seventy-five per cent was secured as much by the Anglican effort as Beck's.

On the other hand, Phillips recognised a number of areas where Beck failed and, with hindsight, it is easy to be judgemental. But the criticisms Phillips makes, while quite justifiable, imply a lack of discernment and vision on Beck's behalf. Perhaps with a little more support from his fellow bishop's and the lay sector, where some remained quite convinced that the Catholic schools' issue was a lost cause, then these 'failures' may well have been avoided.

What Beck had succeeded in doing was to bring to public attention the discrimination that Catholics experienced in trying to establish their own schools. He also allayed many of the prejudices and hostilities which had been shown towards the Catholic community and certainly, by the end of his campaign, sympathy for the Catholic sector was shown from most quarters. Curiously, although Catholic schooling suffered from inevitable outbursts of bigotry, voluntary schools never appear to have been condemned by any of the political leaders for being "dens of iniquity" or ineffective. Rather the contrary is to be found with both the main parties recognising their value to the nation and its future. If that is the case, and Catholic schools were thought of so highly, one can only wonder why the respective governments were not prepared to support them earlier.

The education question, indeed, was the major concern of the bishops and clergy in the first half of the twentieth century. In Britain, Cardinal Carmel Heenan said

in an interview for 'Osservatore Romano' at the start of the Vatican Council in 1962, 'our greatest preoccupation is school building'. The preservation of the faith and morals of children, and the education of parents into a sense of responsibility, which separate schools achieved, was regarded as the great strength of Catholicism - as the sure foundation established by the nineteenth-century Church.(108) Cardinal Francis Bourne's first pastoral, like Manning's half a century before, was taken up by educational questions. The problem facing the Church was twofold: how to finance the building and maintenance of schools in view of the relative poverty of most working-class Catholic parishes; how to persuade the governments of the day that Catholic tax-payers were entitled to full and equal State grants for their own denominational schools alongside the national system of education.

In a famous declaration of 1929, the hierarchy acknowledged the right of the State 'to see that citizens receive due education sufficient to enable them to discharge the duties of citizenship'. But in doing so 'the State must not interfere with parental responsibility, nor hamper the reasonable liberty of parents in their choice of a school for their children'.(109) The issue thus concerned fundamental Catholic natural-law teachings about the priority of the family over the State. Phillips suggests that differences were also sharpened by the increasingly divergent attitude of the State to moral issues which led the Church to believe that the State could no longer be regarded as the guarantor of traditional Christian morality: it was therefore dangerous to entrust the moral education of children to agencies of the State.(110) As with Manning in the previous century the schools issue was not, therefore, a matter of doctrinal or catechistical exactitude only; it concerned the whole concept of the preservation of Catholic spiritual culture and a belief in the inseparability of sacred and secular learning in the classroom.

By the time of the Education Act of 1944, there were 1,260 Catholic elementary schools, with 400,000 children, and an increasing number of secondary schools. In the large industrial areas something like 90 per cent of Catholic children received a denominational education which, in itself, was a considerable achievement.(111) However, the financial strain of keeping the system going, expanding it, and the almost permanent need to protect the government subsidies from political opposition, occupied a great deal of the leaders' time.

In 1949 the hierarchy estimated the cost of maintaining and expanding the Catholic system would be up to £60 million to be, as they lamented, sweated out of the working men. It was, never-the-less, one of the most impressive of Catholic achievements that the parents' associations established to co-ordinate the campaign, and the parish priests in the localities, were successful in extending Catholic education in the years after the war. Through representations to governments of the day the State aid was gradually increased, first to 60 per cent and then up to 85 per cent.

Following a couple of decades of relative educational calm the nineteen eighties reflected a period of intense reform with four major Education Acts being passed during 80, 81, 86, and 88. Each piece of legislation was to make a significant contribution to schooling, but each also reflecting the political climate frequently referred to as the age of 'Thatcherism'; an age of enterprise and market forces. Stan Bryce writing for the Diocesan monthly newspaper, 'The Northern Cross', contends that the education reforms of the eighties belonged to a philosophy that insisted upon the moral superiority of private enterprise, individualistic competition and material and economic improvement within a free market economy. Bryce quotes the Director General of the Institute of Directors, Peter Morgan who stated publicly;(112)

**"We cannot afford to allow the opponents of free enterprise to take the moral high ground. We cannot accept that in the same way the public provision of services is moral and that private enterprise is immoral.....Enterprise has got to lay down the claim to the high moral ground."**

This philosophy is still very evident today in its various guises ie; "the Citizens Charter", the dismantling of the care services, the privatisation of the various service industries such as B.T. , British Gas and the Electricity and Water Boards.

'Enterprise philosophy' argues that the market economy is morally superior to that of a nationalised or state controlled economy, which concentrates power in the hands of few and effectively undermines personal responsibility, personal moral choice, and initiative. It follows therefore, that the quality of life is only enhanced through individuals controlling their own affairs. In practical terms this philosophy is very evident in schools today where greater financial autonomy has certainly brought greater freedom and flexibility and has in many cases undoubtedly improved the quality of life in school. However this philosophy favours the strong and resourceful as it is argued it can only survive through competition which has a tendency to manifest itself in greed and personal ambition which can over-ride or disregard moral responsibility. After a decade of this approach it is little wonder that Cardinal Hume expressed his concern at the moral decline of the nation where many people regard morality as choice.(113) However, the supporters of enterprise culture argue that the free market encourages the growth of moral sensibility through the constant exercise of personal moral choice. The perpetrators of this particular branch of philosophy project the view that the community will benefit through the emergence of individuality and interdependence. Bryce suggests that the Education Acts spring from this fundamental belief that progress must take place through individual enterprise and

competition.(114) However, this conviction can only be realised through an education system which supported this ideology and therefore to the patrons, education reform would be essential to lay the foundation for this new culture.

In direct contrast to Morgan's views, Peter Coombs, founding Director of UNESCO'S International Institute of Educational Planning identified religious and moral education rather than the growth of technology and science as the fundamental challenge confronting education in the twenty first century. Coombs, writing in his book 'The World Crisis in Education', pin-pointed a conflict between the morality taught in schools and by the great religions with the morality embodied and embedded in modern industry, commerce and finance. (115)

Regardless of what educational initiatives the Government introduces the prime responsibility for the education of a child continues to rest with the parents or guardians who have a moral responsibility to ensure that their child receives appropriate formal schooling. Neither the Government nor the Church can usurp the essential parental duty of the education of their child. What both the Government and the Church do is to provide a service via their respective schools whereby parents have the freedom to choose what they deem best for their children. The situation has developed once again whereby both the Government and the Church are competing to persuade parents as to what they consider to be the best form of education. The Government, on the one hand, encouraging freedom of choice as a means to raise standards of schooling, and the Church, on the other, defending its policies of providing balanced diocesan schooling reflecting Gospel values. The Government contends that the Education Reform Act, particularly through Local Management of Schools and Grant Maintained Status, was an opportunity for Catholic schools within the State sector to be even better managed, more effective, more efficient, and thus able to deliver more and better Catholic education to more Catholic children. The Church however remains

constant in its approach, for it still strives to meet the needs of local situations while maintaining its option for the "education of the poor."

Initially the view that freedom of choice would lead to the raising of educational standards gave rise to concern that such policies could lead to Catholic parents taking their children out of the Catholic sector if they were dissatisfied with their schooling, but there is little evidence that these concerns have actually materialised. On the contrary, the reforms seem to have galvanised some sections of the Catholic sector who, instead of leaving, employed the Government's mechanisms to protect schools that were under threat of closure.

Some consideration needs to be given as to what effect the introduction of this change of philosophy has made upon Catholic schools? As an indication of the concern generated it is worthwhile to note that the Catholic bishops of England and Wales originally were united in their condemnation of the shift in ideology. Before the Education Acts of 1986 and 1988, the responsibility for the management of schools fitted into a structure set out in the 1944 Education Act but modified by the 1980 Act. But the philosophy brought about by these acts is that management decisions are best taken by those who are closest to the users of the service, the head and the governing body. While the Department of Education and Science has tried to impress that local management is concerned with far more than budgeting, the bulk of its directives have involved finance and have reinforced the view that this piece of government legislation was primarily aimed at removing control from the L.E.A.s.

The Education Reform Act of 1988 provided the mechanisms to allow the Government to implement its new ideology by introducing a new category of school; "Self-governing State Schools" which are no longer maintained by local education authorities, but receive their funding directly from the Department for

Education. Such schools which have 'opted out' of local authority control are referred to as those which have achieved "Grant Maintained Status". Grant Maintained Schools have chosen by balloting their parents, to run themselves, quite independently of local education authorities. They remain state schools providing free education, but with many advantages which work to the benefit of their pupils. Those that have chosen this particular path are varied by their persuasion encompassing every type of school, ie. mixed, single sex, comprehensive, grammar, primary, secondary and middle schools. The nature of the schools themselves does not alter when they become GMS, but their funding changes by being awarded directly by the DES.

Under Grant Maintained Status schools still receive a limited number of services from the local authority, mainly consisting of psychological support, home-to-school transport, and careers support. But extra services normally provided by the authority, such as music and swimming, now become the responsibility of the school itself under GMS.\* The governors of these schools have over-all responsibility for everything that happens within them including the budget and one stipulation of the new status is that the governing body must possess at least one representative from the world of business. The head teacher continues to be responsible for the day to day running of the school but a bursar must be appointed to administer the school's finances.

The obvious benefit to these schools is the financial freedom they gain which enables them to direct extra resources to areas they consider to be most needy. Of those who initially took this option many used their increased finances to decrease pupil-teacher ratios, while others, mainly secondary schools, employed their resources in providing extra support teachers and enabling a wider range of 'A' level subjects. Supporters of the system argue that the increased funding has allowed them to employ greater numbers of ancillary and administrative staff

\* GRANT-MAINTAINED SCHOOLS - QUESTIONS STAFF ASK - PT. DFE. 1992 .

therefore freeing teachers to teach. A further effect is that GMS schools can now target 'In Service Training' and provide the most relevant courses to suit their school's needs. However, despite all the benefits to those who 'opt out', many have viewed this initiative as the chief tool by which the Government seeks to destroy the present locally accountable system of education through which all children were theoretically provided with an education according to their needs.

In September 1989 Cardinal Basil Hume, speaking to head teachers, attacked the Government for allowing schools to 'opt out' of local authority control. He also criticised the way funds were to be centrally allocated and considered that there were real dangers connected with "centralising responsibilities and tasks which were best and more appropriately left in the hands of local bodies".(116) Furthermore, he expressed his concern at the difficulties Local Education Authorities were experiencing when control of school budgets was largely delegated, and when their ability to rationalise and finance educational provision was restricted by grant-maintained legislation and charge capping. No doubt the Cardinal feels a certain empathy with the Local Education Authorities because he, like them, is charged with providing a coherent policy for education. He felt that it was "extraordinary to see the way grant-maintained schools were being better funded than their counterparts in the maintained sector". The over-riding aim and objective in establishing or reforming an educational service, he said, must be to "ensure that every child receives the best education available, responding to the potential in each young person, so that insofar as is possible that potential is fully realised".(117)

Bishop David Konstant, chairman of the Bishops Conference Department for Catholic Education, reflected Cardinal Hume's view when he said that we cannot accept that competition in the context of "unrestrained market forces" should shape the future of our schools, such development would lead to the closure of



schools that should not close and "to the further deprivation of pupils who may in some way already be disadvantaged".(118) This would well suit the purposes of a short sighted government which obviously cannot see that it is reinforcing the weaknesses that have bedevilled the education system this century. Given that the Catholic school's right to be called "Catholic" rests with the bishop of the diocese it would appear to be a flagrant breach of ecclesiastical authority for a school to opt out expressly against the wishes of the diocese and it would not be unreasonable for the bishop, if he should so wish, to withdraw diocesan support under Canon law although this would be most unlikely.(119)

A different face of the Conservative's policies arose in 1993 when the Government refused to invest more money in building programmes to save pupil places in successful Catholic schools while there were surplus places available in local state schools. Such a refusal flew in the face of their market forces approach as the majority of these schools were popular and over-subscribed. Eventually the Government was obliged to climb down, although when the finance for further building expansion becomes available for use, remains to be seen.

The Government's reforms cast a shadow on the belief that education is a service, not a commodity, and that it must be available for all irrespective of status, accommodation or living environment. Under market influence schools would be deemed "successful" if they produced the best exam results, which could lead to schools in deprived areas being seriously disadvantaged. If the Government succeeds in forcing such issues how far will the Church be able to continue exercising its "preferential option for the poor?" How far will they be prepared to admit children with severe social and learning difficulties?

The uncertainty of the future for Catholic schools was reflected upon by Bishop Konstant who questioned what would happen if the majority of schools became

Grant Maintained.(120) He pointed out that unless the education budget was substantially increased, the current level of cash benefits available for Grant Maintained Schools could not be sustained. Bishop Konstant's words may well prove to be prophetic because already the financial rewards being offered to GMS schools appear to be suffering in the recession along with every other service industry. Within two years of the Act, more than 20% of the schools who had opted out received up to £100,000, less than they were originally promised by the Government. Just four months after the beginning of the financial year, 99 GMS schools had been told that their running costs would be less than the amount notified to them in March. Figures, which estimated by the DES, showed that eight schools faced a reduction of £100,000 and 26 one of £50,000 or more. Coupled to this, a further 119 of the 493 schools that opted out at that time had yet to receive a budget for the financial year as they approached the start of the new academic year. (121)

Around the same time the Government suffered a further embarrassment when the Lincoln School of Science and Technology, regarded by many conservatives as the flagship of its educational policies, became a local neighbourhood comprehensive at the insistence of the newly elected Labour and Liberal council. This about-turn reflects the uncertain future for education policies whilst locally elected education authorities maintain power over schooling. It is exactly for that reason that the Government is determined to oversee the demise of the L.E.A.s.

Apart from political manipulation, Bishop Konstant also foresaw a situation whereby, even if a majority of schools became Grant Maintained, the gap between the well-provided for and the less would be difficult to overcome. Konstant, like Hume, also criticised the influence of "market forces" on education provision. He was concerned that by adopting this approach we were encouraging success at other people's expense; achievement as the only valid measure of work; and a

stress on money that obscures other, more human values. "Living by such values we shall more and more develop into a society characterised by materialism, acquisitiveness, impatience and a lack of success automatically associated with failure; a selfishness bred from this same impatience, a lack of attention to non-productive members of society, for example, the old, the sick, the handicapped." (122) This, according to Bishop Konstant, would be a disaster of the first magnitude. Many similar arguments were offered in the Catholic press suggesting that Catholics had a moral duty to oppose opting out.

Bishop John Brewer gave a gentle warning to any schools in his diocese that may have been considering opting out of local authority control when, in his homily during a Mass for school governors, he said that schools should not start to compete against each other. "Unity is the hallmark of the Catholic Church, and therefore the diocese". He affirmed this by going on to say, "No school stands alone in this diocese. We form a family of schools". He further went on to quote from scripture 'There must be no competition among you' warns St. Paul (Philippians 2,3). And I say the same. "Don't let concern for your school blind you to the needs of the rest of the family of schools. Things may sometimes seem very good for your school, but might prove harmful to others, especially in the same area. No school, like no man, is an island sufficient to itself".(123)

Bishop Patrick Kelly of Salford saw the reforms as posing a more serious threat and suggested that the educational initiatives could cause Catholic schools to vanish 'one by one'. He condemned as immoral the Government's refusal to guarantee support for less popular schools. The Education Bill asked parents only to consider what was best for their children, implying that other people's children and tomorrow's children were no concern of theirs. (124)

Amidst all the rhetoric and opposition reminiscent of Gladstone's era, some Conservative quarters retaliated by claiming that Church schools had too much power and an independent group, perhaps in frustration or in retaliation, called for a "radical review of the disproportionate influence of the Church".(125) The Government attempted to allay the Church's concerns at the time by suggesting that 'Church schools were not even an area that was being considered for reform' and the then minister for Education Kenneth Clarke went on record to say that he thought Church schools did a "fantastic job".(126)

The first cracks in the Church's united opposition to opting out began to appear in late 1990 where schools up and down the country began to experience difficulties caused by financial cuts and restraints. While the Church maintained its stance it held little water in the local situations where many schools were faced with the prospect of redundancies or closure. The Catholic schools that chose the road to GMS in the first wave did so against the wishes of the controlling diocese. Some took the decision to stave off closure as threatened by the authority, some to avoid closure by the diocese, some to overcome problems of space and inadequate buildings, and others who felt that they would benefit greatly from the financial increase and the autonomy they would receive.

However these pioneers were not without their critics and the bishops continued to maintain their disapproval to such an extent that the heads of the GMS schools met to outline their case and to defend their positions. The headteachers responded to criticisms made by Cardinal Hume regarding the government policy of providing more generous funding for GMS schools. John McIntosh, head of the London Oratory school, one of the first to opt out, suggested that it was unfair to continually snipe at them and that there was no threat to Catholic education from schools that 'opt out' of local authority control. The heads felt that the cash increases they received were not at the expense of other local Catholic

schools.(127) Michael Thorp, Chairman of the Governors of a school in Wiltshire, writing in *The Universe*(3/10/91) suggested that there was a great deal of hypocrisy on behalf of the Church's hierarchy as they never cease to show support to the Catholic public schools such as Downside and Ampleforth. He also failed to understand the hierarchy's worry about the maintenance of the Catholic ethos in GM Catholic schools. Perhaps, he proposed, their concerns reflected a lack of confidence in its appointed governors. Interestingly a number of schools have used extra finance from Grant Maintained Status to appoint full-time chaplains perhaps with a view to salving their consciences or, to indicate their continued allegiance to the Church.

Further signs that the bishops were beginning to weaken came in 1992 when two Catholic schools in Sheffield voted to opt out of local authority control with the support and backing of the diocesan education officials. The diocese had taken this course of action to protect the funding of the schools which, they considered, had been under-funded under the city council's formula for funding arrangements. Further evidence of a shift could be seen during July 92 where, in Stoke on Trent, a dramatic reversal of a previous attempt at opting out was experienced and attributed to a change of policy by the Birmingham Archdiocesan Education authorities who had actively opposed such a move the previous year. In May 1992 the Diocesan Schools Commission had revised its advice to schools but maintained that it was in full agreement with the reservations expressed by the national Catholic education leaders, and the bishop's conference on GMS. But the Archdiocese recognised that there could be occasions when Catholic schools would be seriously disadvantaged if they were not allowed to opt out. The Schools Commission felt compelled to write to parents to point out that, while it did not give its whole hearted support to GMS, it was no longer totally opposed, but recognised that opting out was now a fact of life. The Commission went on to explain that in seeking GMS status it did not intend to opt out of diocesan control

and the governors had given them written assurances on a number of issues including the nature of the school, the admissions policy and the conditions of service for the staff.(128)

By November 1992 the bishops of England and Wales had obviously taken note of the developments in Birmingham, and similar developments in Sheffield, and had retreated from their outright opposition to opting out, recognising that some Catholic schools were compelled to seek GMS status. Their shift in policy had come about in the face of mounting pressure from an increasing number of Catholic schools wishing to opt out. However the Church hierarchies expressed their fear that the Church would find it increasingly difficult to meet parental wishes on schools without recognition of the key role of dioceses in the provision of education. They, the hierarchy, fearing that 120 years of dioceses working in partnership with local authorities was under serious threat, issued a statement stating that the sustaining of the educational partnerships at local and national level was of paramount importance. They also expressed their concern as to how that could be done within the centralised educational structure that was being proposed in the forthcoming education bill. The bishops re-affirmed their reservations regarding GMS and suggested that it would create a two tiered system for schools. This announcement marked a significant shift and dioceses would now decide opt out policies individually.

By April 93 there were 16 Catholic GMS schools with a further 27 having proposed to opt out.(129) These figures virtually reflect the same percentage of state schools that have chosen this path with 3.5% of state schools having balloted compared to 3% of Catholic schools.(130) The strike rate of ballots actually rose during the Autumn term of 92 but surprisingly the number of 'no' votes grew during this period. The latest statistics suggest that the early stampede to go GMS has petered out. This slowing down has caused the Government to

change the rules by bringing about the 1993 Education Act and subsequent changes, in an attempt to speed up the process and to make opting out a more attractive proposition.

First the Act changed the condition that schools could not change status from five years from going GMS, thus allowing opt out schools to change from comprehensive to grammar or vice-versa in a short period of time. Second the condition that there would be no financial benefit in opting out was changed. However, during January 1993, Chief Education Officers of 39 councils estimated that under the way budgets are calculated for GMS schools, those that voted to opt out would gain £60 million at the expense of the state schools. As Stephen Sharpe, Secretary of the County Education Officers Association, pointed out, "Unless the proposals are changed, the funding of 95 per cent of schools will suffer to pay for the five per cent."(131) Yet recent evidence, as mentioned previously, suggests that the 'golden goose' of educational funding for GMS is not as rich as it first appeared. A third alteration of the Act is that now each school, by law, will have to consider the option of going GMS annually and the process will take only one meeting rather than the two at present which allows for further deliberation or a change of heart.

While there has been an increase in the number of Catholic schools deciding to opt out nationally, the picture is rather incomplete with the majority of those schools concentrated in the South of England, particularly in the dioceses of Southwark and Westminster.(132) Interestingly four out of the six largest dioceses, Liverpool, Salford, Hexham and Newcastle and Birmingham, which can be said to be the traditional heartlands of the Catholic faith in England, have stood firm in their opposition to opting out with only a minimal percentage going GMS. While the other two largest, Westminster and Southwark reflect the national north-south divide in terms of numbers opting out with Southwark having the

highest number of Catholic schools opting out at 12% and Westminster at 3.6%.(133)

There appear to be a number of reasons why the Government has been unable to fully implement its Education Reforms, particularly GMs. One of the most fundamental is the afore-mentioned uncertainty over future funding highlighted by Bishop Konstant, and embarrassingly revealed in the recent shortfall of the anticipated funding being given to those schools that have become Grant Maintained. The Government still appears to have made little progress with its notion of "common funding formula" and many see this as replacing one set of council employees with another run centrally by the Government. It is difficult to envisage any great financial saving in this respect and eventually the "GMS well", like TVEI and City Technology finance, must run dry, lending further support to the belief that this whole operation is an attempt to wrestle power back to the centre by the Government. A further possibility is the general public dissatisfaction with the present Government and its leadership. For many people the policy for Opting out is so closely identified with Conservative education policy that some ballots may have become mini-referenda on the popularity of the government.

While Labour policy, at the present time, remains confused as to the future of GM status, many in the Government must regret that the recent legislation did not go further and drop the parental ballot and adopt an approach it recently applied to further education and sixth form colleges by compulsorily removing all secondary schools from LEA control. Many Conservatives will see the 1993 Education Act as a lost opportunity to finally nail the Labour controlled authorities because, while the legislation provides for a radical shift in school organisation and funding, the balance of power still remains in the hands of parents.



In many dioceses finance is unfortunately, if not unexpectedly, dominating discussions concerning opting out. Reflecting the spirit of the early 19th century pioneers, Kathleen O'Gorman, Education Minister of Westminster Archdiocese, speaking at a Pastoral Council meeting in February 1994, told the gathering that schools should not worry about money when making key decisions. She suggested that thinking about money would only lead to wrong conclusions, and if people allow finance to drive their decisions, they will not be decisions of the spirit.(134) She proposed that the conference should decide what the educational mission of the Church was and, if they got the work of the Lord right, the finance will come. Rather than focusing on money she asked that the meeting focus instead on children and their need to share in the message of the Gospel. She felt the provision of providing children with an integrated Catholic education was of paramount importance. While these are fine convictions they appear totally impractical in this day and age and one can only wonder at the reaction of some of the delegates who would be faced with the real possibility of making teacher redundancies.

Furthermore, there is a growing feeling within the Church that we live in an age of a lost generation of church attenders who, at best, use Catholic education as a convenience, so why should genuine church attenders of all ages pay through their voluntary contributions for the education of 'outsiders'? Such arguments lend weight to the view that opting out, for many Catholic schools, would be financially worthwhile. This proposal is supported by the fact that many Catholic school's salary budgets are heavily penalised because they employ a high percentage of older, established staff. Liverpool diocese, for example, in 1994 was in debt to the tune of £8 million because of its schools, for which an annual levy of £6.48 is being charged for every parishioner. Mrs O'Gorman's sentiments appear extremely naive in this day and age.

In the 'opting out' debate however, the LEAs were not without support. Bishop Vincent Nichols defended the role of local authorities and stated that the root cause for schools 'being forced' to opt out was down to councils being obliged to cut budgets because of Government rate-capping.(135) One of the serious implications if widespread opting out occurs is that the partnership between Church and Government, recognised in 1870, and enshrined in the 1944 Education Act, would be in grave danger. The question of the existing partnership and who has control of Catholic schools was aired by the Duke of Norfolk in the House of Lords. Norfolk wished to see included in the Bill some statutory acknowledgement of the overseeing role of the Catholic bishops in the matter of maintained Catholic schools.(136) However, this was initially rejected by the Government.

One of the key concerns of the Catholic hierarchy, that they could lose control of the schools through GMs, seems to have been allayed in later legislation as the Trustees of the Diocese, of whom the Bishop is the principal Trustee, will continue to be the legal owners of GMs schools, except where the Trustees are of a religious order. In practice, many of the responsibilities of the Trustees are delegated to the foundation governors, who represent the interests of the Trustees in the school of which they are governor. As the Act allows schools to appoint any number of foundation governors, subject to the Secretary of State's approval, then the Bishop can, if he so wishes, appoint sufficient foundation governors to ensure a majority to preserve the distinctive nature of the school if required. However the Trustees cannot veto a resolution by the governors to seek GM status and the only way in which the Trustees could ensure greater control would be by not re-appointing foundation governors at the end of their term of office.

In 1991 Cardinal Basil Hume said there was "no greater contribution that the Church can make to the welfare of young people than to provide good Catholic schools for their education". The Cardinal continued to tell the conference that there was a lack of consensus about what the priorities in Catholic education should be!

(1) He urged them to "never to cease to strive to win for God the hearts and minds of the young under their care" The Cardinal spoke of the great need to promote in the pupils a personal spiritual life, "a recognition and acceptance of objective moral norms and a vivid sense of social responsibility". God had to touch the mind and heart and awaken in us an awareness of Him and a desire for union with Him.

(2) The second objective should be "to teach our pupils the importance of fundamental moral norms" and to enable them to make the distinction between a rightly formed conscience and private judgement. Morality today, he suggested, was for many entirely a matter of choice and opinion.

(3) The third objective of Catholic schools should be to "encourage a sense of social responsibility and a study of the Church's social teaching". "our commitment to the Kingdom and its values and our concern for society is something which was, he regarded, something profoundly theological that had been carefully developed in successive social encyclicals".(137)

All these objectives were to be underpinned by the Catholic church's commitment that all its schools should strive for the pursuit of excellence at every level, academic, technical and physical and to the integrating of them all into a coherent vision which benefits each individual. The Cardinal also singled out the point that the "promotion of spiritual development" was the first priority of the National Curriculum as prescribed by the 1988 Education Act. He warned of the danger of having a too narrow view of the purpose of education and suggested that it was easy to get the impression that the main purpose of education was to sustain our

economic prosperity; there is more to education than training and preparation for a career. While competition in itself is healthy, and in some areas vital, it was different when it came to schools if it meant that some schools would benefit at the expense of others, it was wrong for some to be generously funded while others were neglected. The real danger however, he added, was not with parents choosing schools but popular schools being able to choose pupils, driving a wedge between the successful and unsuccessful schools by financial resources being automatically linked to pupil numbers.(138)

Bishop Gerald Moverley, the Bishop of Hallam, took a similar approach in warning that "the Catholic community must not resort to the tactics of competition to fill Catholic schools at any price". In an address he spoke of the considerable sacrifices upon which the Catholic system of education was built. He regarded formula funding as a real threat to the established system and foresaw schools competing in the educational market place in a way as they never have before. Bishop Moverley saw this threat as a challenge that the whole of the Catholic community must meet. "Let us not forget that our schools were built at considerable sacrifice and expense to our parents and grandparents, in order to assist parents to fulfil their responsibilities as Christians". He echoed the words of Bishop David Konstant of Leeds who said that it was "because education is to do with such basic matters as faith and morality, that we take it so seriously".(139) From the challenge that opting out presents there is little doubt that Catholic schools are being used as a tool by the Government, which has little interest in furthering Catholic education, to reduce the influence of many of the locally run services.

As was the case following the 1870 Education Act, the Church authorities created a new body to look after the interests of the Catholic schools. In 1992 the Catholic Education Service succeeded the now disbanded Catholic Education

Council and arrived at a time when Catholic schools and colleges were in desperate need of clear guidance and support in all aspects of education and educational administration. The director's brief was to provide a service of information and advice on all aspects of education to diocesan Schools Commissions, but there is little doubt that the major concern of his role would be to address the issue of opting out. Such was the feeling in Catholic circles against opting out that the headmaster of one of the more notable Catholic comprehensive schools in the diocese of Hexham and Newcastle felt compelled to write to the Catholic Herald in March 92 urging Catholics to mobilise "popular pressure" to save the character and control of the Catholic schools. In an emotional appeal reflecting a bygone age, he expressed his alarm at the "Cancer" of opting out of local authority control which a number of secondary schools within the diocese were considering at the time. Stan Bryce argued, quite correctly, that the Churches had already lost control of the colleges of higher education and were now being threatened by opting out incentives from Government and there was also the potential loss of Church sixth form provision; the old Dual System was being challenged.(140)

How do the Education Acts equate with the Roman Catholic Church's educational mission as prescribed by Vatican Two? The broadening of representation on governing bodies and the subsequent formation of specialist sub committees is certainly in line with Christian organisation and administration models and it could be argued that the legislation of the Acts of 80, 86, and 88 brought about the end of clerical dominance of the Catholic schools governing bodies.

The new constitution of the governing bodies allows for greater dialogue, shared responsibility, a common vision and a sense of purpose and belonging. This 'new dawn' has led many to realise that schools belong as much, if not more, to the

parishioners and parents as to the clergy. The demands of the new regulations have allowed many parental governors to use their strengths and skills but, at the same time has revealed administrative weaknesses of many of the clergy who in the past regarded themselves as experts. To be fair however, the pace of reform and the demands and responsibility, coupled with the element of accountability which inevitably accompanies it, has brought many people, not only clergy, to recognise their limitations. Sadly one of the greatest channels for communication, the annual 'open meeting', has been restrained by rigid structure and rubric which has resulted not in constructive dialogue but a soliloquy bordering on farce, while the simplistic presentation of examination results has led to manipulation and mistrust.

It would be fair to say that both these initiatives parallel the philosophy and spirit of Vatican Two which emphasised greater involvement of the laity and shared responsibility of the role of the clergy. In many respects the Education Reform Acts have provided the impetus and implemented the structures of partnership which the Church, since Vatican Two, had been unable to achieve. Bryce argues that the Education Acts of 81 and 88 have given a legal recognition to the Christian belief in the sanctity of the individual.(141) He suggests that in a very real sense the whole notion of "entitlement" is theologically based. 'Incarnational theology' is the celebration of God made man and as such celebrates the uniqueness of humanity. This conviction has been extolled by both Cardinal Hume and Bishop Konstant at successive North of England conferences (90-91). In a similar vein the '81' and 88 Acts could be construed as Christian in so much as the former was concerned with the quality of education for the less able of society and the latter provided an entitlement curriculum for all regardless of race, religion or ability.

There is, unfortunately, another side to the argument...a more sinister side outlined by the recent riots on Teesside and in Newcastle borne out of frustration, hopelessness and failure. The Archbishop of Canterbury expressed concern about the sterility of the Government and declared: "Human wrongdoing is inextricably linked to social deprivation, poverty, poor housing and illiteracy".(142) A society which neglects basic Christian principles for the employment of market forces and an enterprise culture must surely expect social and civil unrest. If one considers that one of the chief motivations for developing Catholic schools in the North East at the beginning of the 19th century was an attempt to reverse the tide of social unrest and civil disturbance by instilling moral values and discipline, then the present policies are in danger of turning the clock back 200 years. Such policies, along with a deep recession and subsequent unemployment are a recipe for social disaster. Locally the diocese of Hexham and Newcastle had continued to remain silent on the subject of GMS, but this is understandable in the light of the ill health of the Bishop, his subsequent retirement, and the election of his successor. As a result little debate in the Catholic local press concerning schools in this diocese took place with most people watching and taking note of national developments. However two schools within the diocese have recently pushed GMS firmly into the forefront of Catholic debate.

The first is an interesting case because it involves a primary school in Sunderland which is jointly run with the Church of England. The debate was started by the unilateral declaration of Sunderland's Anglican rural dean, Canon Granville Gibson, that he favoured opting the school out of local authority control along with two other Church of England schools.(143) As yet no response to the declaration has been forthcoming from the Catholic authorities. One can only guess at their response and embarrassment.

The other case also involves a primary school in Seaham which appears to have succumbed to the financial temptations. Its main motive, it seems, is to secure more money to preserve the job of a member of the school's staff. The chairman of the governors, the parish priest Fr. Peter Carr, speaking to the Northern Cross Catholic newspaper in April this year, admitted that ideologically he had grave doubts about the grant maintained policy but financially it was very tempting. A similar pretext was made by Canon Gibson who was accused in the local press of 'choosing mammon before principle'.(144) The financial advantages of opting out are well illustrated by the case of St. Cuthbert's school in Seaham. In the first instance they would receive a one off lump sum grant of £23,500 from the DES, sufficient to retain a teacher for a year, they would also retain the 16.3 per cent of their budget which normally goes to the education authority. But perhaps most attractive to the parish is the fact that they will no longer have to find the £15,000 of every £100,000 spent on school buildings. Taken alone these statistics must sound like music to the governors of a school which is struggling financially. The editor of the Northern Cross believes it is little short of bribery to get governors and parents to "abandon their longstanding, trusted partnership with the local authority". He saw it as a 'creeping policy to turn schools into little businesses where head teachers are being weaned away from their first vocation, to learn business and marketing skills to sell their schools and trade in pupils'.(145) However, while the financial arguments are convincing, as far as the Church is concerned, money should not be the only consideration.

For the Catholic church one of the most disturbing aspects of GMS is the fact that as yet there is no provision for the word 'Catholic' or 'RC' in any school title. The Church then foresees the possibility of schools which, until now, have remained under diocesan control for decades being high-jacked by groups of vociferous parents and losing their Catholic identity. A further issue which could compound the problem is the fact that once a school elects to go GM there is no mechanism



at the present time which will allow it to return. The decision of the two schools in the Newcastle Diocese to seek GMS has compelled the Schools Commission to draft a statement of guidelines that any contemplating opting out should follow. But in reality these are, as they suggest, only guidelines because the law gives parents and governors the right to go grant maintained regardless of the diocesan authorities.(146)

The Diocesan guidelines for GMs were issued to schools in May 1993 containing a forward by Bishop Ambrose Griffiths briefly outlining the origins of the Catholic school system in the diocese and background to the recent legislation. But, unlike the great appeals of the past, the tone of the letter is now very much advisory rather than compulsory. Bishop Ambrose expressed his concern at the challenges now being faced by the schools and, while he felt unable to give a general ruling, he requested that any schools giving consideration to seeking Grant Maintenance status should let the Diocesan School's Commission know before any decisions are taken so that they can offer any support or advice in enabling schools to make the best decision for their school. With an air of reluctant acceptance he went on to say, "Whatever you decide, never forget that you are, and will remain, a member of the diocesan family of schools and that you can always rely on the help and support of the Diocesan School's Commission, its officials and myself, as we work together to provide the best possible education for our Catholic children."(147)

Such conciliatory words will surely offer some encouragement to schools that are currently investigating this path while hoping to avoid direct confrontation with the Catholic hierarchy. If nothing else Bishop Ambrose Griffiths will be well aware that the road to GM status can be extremely divisive, both within the schools themselves and the wider Catholic communities. He no doubt is prepared to go to great lengths to avoid isolating schools and their immediate communities.

However resigned the Bishop may be that legislation could well surmount his control over Catholic schools under his authority, he must also be aware that within this diocese a two tier system already exists with the Catholic Public schools living alongside the voluntary aided and one wonders at how much difference to the current system if only a small number of further schools left would make. Perhaps the Bishop is being unduly pessimistic for in truth the few Catholic public schools have always enjoyed the patronage of the diocese and engaged its support.

The "Guidelines for Governors" issued by the bishops of England and Wales following their conference in November 1992 contained a statement which stressed the importance of preserving, wherever possible, the key educational relationships developed over so many years both locally and nationally. They also expressed their reservations about the emergence of a two tier system of schools but accepted that some schools may feel compelled to opt out. But they continued to say that if schools do opt out they run the risk of separating themselves from the local community they were established to serve.

Can any valuable lessons be learnt from the past to provide direction for the future or has Catholicism and society in general lost sight of the original aims of creating Catholic schools? G.A. Beck writing in his work "Today and Tomorrow" (1950) suggests that the Catholic attitude to education in this country is unique. He sees it as not concerned with sectarian advantages or ecclesiastical privilege but prefers to suggest that it goes much deeper, that is to the very pith and marrow of education. For the Catholic, he maintains, has an answer, and a complete answer, to a question educationists back in 1950 appeared reluctant to address, that is, what is the purpose of this process, what is it all for? For an answer Beck quotes H.O. Evennett from his book "The Catholic Schools of England and Wales" which echoes modern social and moral concerns.(148)

"The hierarchy of values taught by Catholicism is one which runs directly counter to much modern social and moral ideology. It runs counter not only to those idealisms which are constructed upon a frankly secular or hedonistic basis but also to others which would turn, in the chaos of modern standards, either towards some misty nationalistic ethic or towards a Christianity interpreted on humanitarian lines. Death and original sin are the constants in the light of which the Catholic Church surveys humanity. Life is a preparatory stage and its values are secondary.... If education is what remains after we have forgotten all we learnt at school, the quintessential left by a Catholic education is a lasting consciousness of the fact and meaning of death."(149)

Beck proposes that Catholicism can claim that there can be no complete conception of education which does not take into consideration the final end of man and, once this is admitted, the necessity for the Christian education at once becomes apparent. Beck's view was supported by Pope Pius XI in his encyclical letter on Christian education; "It is therefore as important to make no mistake in education as it is to make no mistake in the pursuit of the last end, with which the whole work of education is intimately and necessarily connected.....it is clear that there can be no true education which is not wholly directed to man's last end.....there can be no ideally perfect education which is not Christian education."(150)

Is this not the same ideology as presented by the Wesleyan model of 1840 which most probably was the major influence upon the Catholic hierarchy's determination to establish their own schools; the Wesleyan definition of education being; "an education which may begin in the infants school, and end in heaven." This notion that schools could be used as "nurseries for nurturing Christians" appears to run throughout English Church History since that period and was adopted as a fundamental principle by the Catholic hierarchy during the mid

nineteenth century as is very evident in the Church's priority as stated in 1852 of creating schools first before places of worship, and summed up by Manning's declaration of 1870; "Catholic schools for Catholic children." (148) This philosophy was also central to Chadwick's appeal in his bishop's circular of 1869 which suggested that poor law school children attending Protestant workhouses did so at the "imminent risk of losing their faith" and, further to this, those who supported his appeal would receive great blessings! Such an insinuation, that Catholicism is the only true means to heaven, would be intolerable today yet the fact that it seems to have been acceptable in 1950 is a measure of the changes in society and the advance of ecumenism over the last forty years. The principle of educating Catholics from the "cradle to the grave" gave sizeable weight to Religious Instruction in their schools; an importance which still remains to this day. But it was also the key reason why the early 19th century priests strove so hard to establish schools as agencies for conversions and catechesis.

In this country, apart from Cardinal Hume, the most recent treatises on Catholic education have tended to concentrate upon moral sensibilities, the quality of the education delivered, and the pursuit of excellence in response to the threat of Grant Maintained status. Amidst all the arguments Cardinal Hume seized the initiative by re-iterating the basic philosophy underpinning Catholic education as he listed a series of priorities for Catholic schools and in this context he placed the constant "striving to win for God the hearts and minds of the young" as the chief priority! Hume, also suggested that, through its schools Catholics should develop a sense of social responsibility as a means to "our commitment to the Kingdom and its values", which he regarded as something profoundly theological. and something which had been carefully developed by the Church in various encyclicals. (151)

A further key point highlighted by the "Guidelines" is that in both civil and church law the bishop is responsible for education throughout his diocese and, as such, retains the legal responsibility for all education premises within the diocese, even if a school is accorded GM status. How much of an intimidation this is I am not sure but certainly the suggestion seems to be that whatever happens schools will continue to remain under the bishop's jurisdiction and powerful influence. A further caution was issued implying that if a school does become Grant Maintained and faces financial difficulty it cannot expect the diocese to bail it out.

The document also re-iterates the bishops' concerns about the apparent inequity of funding between GM schools and LEA maintained schools, not only in terms of running costs, but also in respect of capital expenditure. It quotes the Parliamentary Select committee<sup>\*</sup> in its first report of the 1992/3 session as follows: "If its forecasts of the rate of growth of the GM sector are accurate, then the government's plans for capital spending on schools appear to us to favour the GMs sector rather than the LEA sector". Following Bishop Konstant's line the Diocesan commission also questioned what would happen to the financial incentives if most schools opted out. But throughout this particular passage the question of equal opportunity and justice for children is propounded alongside the financial debate.

The 'Guidelines' appear to have had an initial impact for as yet all the schools that were seriously considering GMs have put all decisions on hold until further advice is forthcoming or, until one Catholic school actually takes the plunge. The general position of the schools in the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle is that no one really wishes to be first and most would like to see the reactions of both the hierarchy and the parents to such a move before proceeding. A further complication is that a number of votes recently in this region appear to have been politically motivated and as such have gone against the adoption of GMs. This has

been very evident in Darlington where the local Labour party has been accused of politically interfering in the recent opt out procedures at Haughton school. In this politically charged atmosphere Catholic schools would not relish the humiliation of defeat should they choose to go against the Diocesan Commission's wishes. In the close social sphere of Catholic schools such a scenario could lead to isolation or possible inequitable treatment.

The Government, however, remains determined to pursue its educational reforms in the face of mounting hostility for, in his most recent speech, the Prime Minister outlined to GM heads and governors four incentives for schools to opt out: relaxation of admissions procedures, new borrowing arrangements, a fast track to GMS for church schools and the retention of the full proceeds of property sales.(152) But attempts to rewrite admission procedures for GM schools will almost certainly not be completed until 1997, and by that time the Government may well have fallen, while other incentives will need approval in the House of Commons where it has a tiny majority. Changes to rules over the sale of assets which would allow GM schools to keep all, instead of half, of the money will require primary legislation and are certain to face increasing hostility in the House of Lords from bishops loath to give up Church land, as well as from some MPs. In this latest initiative church schools have been offered a fast track to opting out with the possibility of scrapping parental ballots. Detailed consultations with diocesan directors begin next month but the indications are that most remain reluctant to take advantage of this route.

Senior sources within the Grant Maintained Schools Foundation are advocating a radical shift in policy by promoting the idea of opting out decisions being taken by governors and headteachers with parents having to petition against it.(153) The policy of allowing GM schools to borrow on the open market, in line with colleges and universities, is the only piece of legislation that has already been

written. Gillian Shephard, the Education and Employment Secretary, said: "We believe there are real advantages from self government for schools, we think it is the right way forward for all schools."(154) Mr. Major also outlined plans for a national funding formula. He conceded that the common funding formula, in place in 22 education authorities, was not perfect. It emerged this week that the Funding Agency for Schools is being taken to court in a row over whether it is overfunding its own sector at the expense of local authority schools.

The Prime Minister's support for independence for all state schools is regarded as a desperate attempt to revive the opt-out movement but few outside the GM sector share that view. Both Catholic and Anglican churches have found little to tempt them in this latest plan which provides a fast track to grant-maintained status. Parents on the other hand have, quite justifiably, decried the loss of their rights and the drive towards greater selection. This latest initiative flies in the face of earlier legislation which enshrined parental rights. Attempts by Major to woo schools down the GM route through cash incentives and special admission arrangements will further deepen the divide between local authority and opt-out schools.

The fast track, with the possibility of opting out without holding a parental ballot, could be seen to be a deliberate attempt to drive a wedge between church and non-church schools. Geoffrey Duncan, secretary of the Church of England board of education, would be very unhappy if that happened. "We have never intended that the claimed distinctiveness of church schools should denigrate or imply superiority over non-church schools." Less than 4 per cent of the 7,260 church schools have opted out---140 of 2,400 Catholic schools and 131 of 4,860 C of E schools.(155)

Feelings against opting-out continue to run high among Catholic bishops in the North who believe there are moral arguments about taking money away from other schools. Catholic bishops have said publicly that if GM status is such a good thing why doesn't the Government make all schools opt out? John Major's move to allow GM schools to retain the full proceeds of property sales, instead of half, will also have grave implications for both LEAs and Church authorities. The more far-reaching proposal set out in the Prime Minister's speech is for GM schools to set their own admission criteria without approval from the Education and Employment Secretary. But if every individual Grant Maintained school was allowed to decide its own formula, without even having to seek approval, it would be impossible to provide for all pupils and therefore the proposals themselves would become a threat to parental choice.

If the bishops wish to reinforce their positions and try to delay what, at one point, was rapidly appearing to be the inevitable, then they need to take a leaf out of Bishop Chadwick's 1869 book and take the issue directly to the parents through both the pulpit and the Catholic media or, as in the case of Bishop Beck, through the ballot box. The Government's legislation initially ensured that the battleground shifted beyond the governing bodies and was once again been placed firmly in the territory of the parents. The most recent reforms are set to take the power from the parents and give it to the managers. Given the financial implications of the Act, and the undoubted benefits to the parishes, one must question whether the bishops have the stomach for the fight and whether the clergy are united in their condemnation of GMs. Whichever, it is quite obvious that most of the recent communications have adopted a distinct air of reservation about them. Whatever the truth, the diocese at present seems to be in a state of limbo and it will be interesting to see who is prepared to make the first move but also whether Catholic parents, who in this region have as yet to be tested, are willing to accept it. But one also needs to question the commitment of the parents



today. In the past the Bishops were able to gain their support without too much difficulty chiefly through being able to depend upon the support of the Irish immigrants but today that support no longer exists and the parents that really matter, committed Catholic parents, appear to be a lost generation. The sad truth is that if appeals were to be made through the pulpit today, the majority of Catholic parents would not be there to hear them.

From the turn of the 19th century Catholicism has grown from extremely humble beginnings to become a major religious force in this country. Many Catholics credit the Church's insistence upon creating and controlling its own schools as the underlying reason for that progress. But it has been a journey for the schools that has been fraught with controversies, challenges and, at times, what appeared to be insurmountable difficulties: difficulties which have arisen from legal, political and economic influences. The Catholic Church established her own schools because she considered them as a privileged means of promoting the formation of the whole man for at great cost and sacrifice its forebears were inspired by the teaching of the Church. In County Durham the clergy responded to the needs of the time and place by establishing local schools to address the needs in each situation. However relentless the progress, a remarkable feature of Catholic schooling in the previous two centuries is that it continued, in the main, without any real coherent national policy, or by employing any genuine diocesan developmental strategies. As a result, many of the challenges that confronted early Catholic schools are still evident today and have yet to be fully addressed.

While, at first, Catholic schools received various public grants, often merely conceded, they later began to enter into agreements, conventions and contracts which guaranteed both the preservation of the special status of the Catholic school and its ability to perform its function adequately. Such agreements have been reached through the good offices of the respective governments, which have

recognised the public service provided by Catholic schools, and through the determination of the bishops and the Catholic community. Unfortunately that partnership, and the cooperation it generated, is now being seriously threatened.

In many respects the real problem facing Catholic schooling continues, that is, to identify and lay down the conditions necessary for it to fulfil its mission. It is a problem that has recently been taken up by the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education since 1977 and in this country an attempt to address such issues has been made through such valued works as "Our Schools and Our Faith". But a basic philosophy for Catholic schools is demanded today more so than at any other time throughout the history of Catholic schooling and it is one which requires clear, positive, thinking which can be understood by all. If the necessary measures are to be taken to ensure the continuation of Catholic schooling then the clergy, bishops and parents, must display the same unity, courage, perseverance and co-operation as exemplified by past generations.

In this day and age, perhaps more than ever, it is vital that the Catholic Church continues to mobilise her educational resources in the face of increasing materialism, pragmatism and the technocracy of contemporary society, for Catholic schools still attempt to retain and promote Christian values in the modern age. As such, the Catholic school has a valuable, if not essential role, to play in any national school system, for they perform an essential and unique service not only for the Church herself but also for society in general. This is why the Church continues to place such importance upon its schools. This conviction is no more evident today than at Tudhoe, Durham, where a new Catholic primary school is being built to replace the first Catholic Poor Law school more than one hundred and twenty five years after the foundation of the original.

## **CATECHESIS.**

The social and technological advances of the post war period have had a serious influence upon Christian belief and practice. This has been particularly evident over the last two decades where the Catholic Church is feeling the repercussions of society's progress in the form of a dramatic decline in Mass attendance.

The 'age gap', and 'drift' that the Catholic church is currently experiencing is a reflection of the difficulties of leakage experienced over a century ago. But Mass attendance is one of the key problems that the Church must quickly address if it is to survive, and its heritage and investment not to be wasted. The latest estimates concerning Mass attendance in the diocese of Hexham and Newcastle suggest that there could be a total collapse by the year 2010. (156)

Catholic schools have now been a feature of the educational scene for more than one hundred and fifty years. They were founded and developed primarily to ensure that the Catholic laity had a grounding in religious knowledge and practice. By employing the principle that "Faith comes by hearing" it was generally believed that by giving children these experiences at an early age that they would grow in faith. Religious learning at school, it was expected, would be sufficient to carry children through adult life and it was upon this foundation that the Church invested so much on schooling.

During the previous century Ireland was to play a central role in the development of schooling, for one of the direct results of the arrival of the immigrants was that it brought about a shift of emphasis in the schools. Furthermore it provided many religious teaching orders and priests to educate the immigrants and fulfil the Catholic vision. It is no coincidence that in recent times Catholic schools

appeared to have lost some direction at the same time as the withdrawal of those teaching orders.

Originally Catholic schools had been evangelical in outlook, but the increase caused by immigration meant that the schools could become exclusively Catholic and, as such, places of catechesis. To fulfil this mission the clergy obviously felt that the only means to success was to secure the services of religious orders and as a result went to great lengths to encourage their involvement. Such emphasis and importance was placed upon catechesis that in the new found parishes where no school had yet been built the priests themselves took an active part in teaching the children.

As the Irish immigrants were in the process of becoming established in the communities a ghetto mentality was forming along with an increase in religious fervour. The Catholic schools therefore provided direct competition to the exclusively Protestant workhouses and the remaining Anglican and Methodist schools in what can be regarded as a battle for souls. Unfortunately the Catholic church was hampered in its goal by a lack of qualified staff and a rapid increase of pupils which outstripped its resources.

Whereas many European countries adopted an education system similar to the Irish model, the attitudes and policies of the ultramontanists ensured that Catholic schooling in England would continue, albeit in a rather insular manner and, as such, they played a major role in creating the dual system in England. Unlike the Protestants, the ultramontane Catholics bridged all the class barriers and engaged themselves in charitable works. They created groups such as the St. Vincent De Paul Society and in doing so they employed themselves on a very basic personal level similar to the pioneering priests of the earlier part of the century. In this way they continued the commitment to the poor which had by this period become the

very hallmark of Catholicism. This approach was also encouraged in the schools and Catholic schools, to this day, are still recognised as placing strong emphasis upon acts of charity.

In an address by Bishop Hogarth to a congregation at St Mary's, possibly the opening ceremony in 1851, the following statistics were given, verifying the re-emergence of Roman Catholicism as a major religious force in the North East. In 1824 there were only 18 priests covering the whole of the Hexham and Newcastle diocese, but by 1851 the numbers had grown to 44 and were presumably rising - testimony to the rise in the Catholic population. 1851 in itself is an important year for it provides us with statistics for the whole of the population of the diocese of Hexham and Newcastle, the number of Catholics within Durham but, perhaps of greater importance, the census provided statistics regarding the nature of worship in Sunderland.(157)

With regard to evangelism and catechesis the schools' policy certainly appeared to be paying dividends for the Church. In this respect the census of worship of 1851 is of vital importance for it attempted to assess the numbers attending churches and chapels on Sunday the 30th of March of that year. The census provides us with a comprehensive picture of the religious character of the North East. One of the most startling results was that organised religion was remarkably strong in mid-nineteenth century Sunderland. The results, organised by John Candlish, indicate that something like one third of the town's population attended at least one service that Sunday - a percentage which most probably, if it is to be believed, was the high point of religious activity on Wearside. Doubt, however, has been expressed as to the accuracy of the figures because the survey had been announced previously, and an element of 'pew poaching' was suspected even by Candlish himself.

When a decade later, in 1861, Candlish held another similar survey, this time unannounced, it provided a number of interesting comparisons. Some congregations such as the Parish Church, St John's Chapel (Church of England), and St Peter's, Monkwearmouth, had their numbers reduced to less than 20%; others, for instance the Wesleyans and Baptists, had shown steady improvement, but the Catholics in a decade had risen from a questionable 950 to 3170, making it almost double the size of the next largest congregation - that of St Michael's, Bishopwearmouth.(158)

If all the indications provided by census of the time are to be believed then the Church's policy for schools appears to have been very successful for Mass attendance had never known such high percentages. This period has been recognised as the 'golden age' of Mass attendance and may well be viewed by many as a product of religious indoctrination in the schools. Alternatively it may be explained by the fact that there was a greater number of Catholics concentrated in a few regions with limited places of worship. Whatever the truth, it would be wrong to dismiss the impact of Catholic schooling upon Mass attendance in the mid nineteenth century.

As Catholic schools placed the utmost emphasis upon catechesis and religious instruction it was inevitable that pupils would be examined in religious instruction on a formal basis. Further to this, these instructions assumed greater importance by becoming part of diocesan policy. The diocesan Northern Catholic Calendar of October 1872 provides evidence as to the extent of the use of examinations in the region's Catholic schools. This month saw the first competitive exam of pupil teachers with seventy two examined and prizes awarded at a special ceremony at the end of the academic year which was to become an annual event. By 1874 the number examined had risen to 164 with selected pupils being examined in each year group.(159)



Diocesan examination statistics for Catechism and Religious Knowledge from 1873 provide interesting information regarding the constitution of the various departments within the school. While the number of boys compared to girls attending school is quite similar, the number of departments between the two bear no comparison and deserve further examination. The above figures represent the 77 schools, other than private schools, that existed in that year with 63 being subjected to government inspection and 14, presumably the Poor Law schools, being charity schools, exempt.(160) Two years later the Northern Catholic Directory ran an article outlining the religious as well as the educational developments. By this time ultramontane influences were beginning to take effect and the increase of religion in the form of feeling and devotion, the immense growth in services, churches, missions, the attendances at confessions and communion was acknowledged. The churches and chapels of the period became adorned with statues and were much more devotional, and bishops and priests had become better known. The Catholic Emancipation Act of 1833 and the vast increases in the Catholic population had led to a new confidence and authority, something which could not have been imagined at the turn of the century.

The afore-mentioned article finished with this rather self-satisfied quote: "Thus unquestionably in the last quarter of a century under a re-established hierarchy, great things have been done".(161) Great things had certainly been accomplished, and the bishops were able to exert a new found power and popularity, but also to make great appeals during this period.

Cardinal Manning alluded to the problems of Poor Law schools and inspection in his Education Pastoral of 1866 where the biggest problem, as he saw it, was cost so he quickly established the Westminster Diocesan Education Fund which, in actual fact, was a 'crisis' fund. At this time only one in three Catholic children were actually attending Catholic schools with the majority of them being under

eight year old. The greatest Catholic lay leader of the period, Thomas William Allies, summed up the approach of the Poor School Committee which reflected the Catholic tone and determination of the day by stating " There can be no sound education without religion; As is the teacher so is the child; As is the trainer so is the teacher."(162) The long term importance of such an approach becomes apparent against the secularist background of the discussions on the Butler Bill in 1943/44.

The rise of Ultramontanism undoubtedly had an affect upon the government's attitude towards the Catholic body and probably caused it to view its schooling with some suspicion. On the other hand however, the tension it created may have served to strengthen the church's resolve to cling to its schools and to ensure they remained exclusive. But during this critical period it was arguably the ultramontanization of the Church that made it a success. Gilley suggests that the new gaudy shrine chapels with their altars and statues and smells of incense and melted beeswax projected a sense of the sacred and mysterious which was increasingly lacking in the tabernacles of Nonconformity.(163) Furthermore, ultramontane clericalism gave the Church a firm dogmatic structure that underpinned its pastoral success. The priest was recognised as the immediate servant of His Holiness in Rome and had become a figure of authority while the Pope's picture had become a regular feature of thousands of domestic, classroom and presbytery walls. In a sense, that authority was both popular and voluntary but it was reinforced by the suppression in 1907 of the Modernist movement led by the Anglo-Irish Jesuit priest George Tyrrell by Pope Pius X.

According to Gilley, Manning not only strengthened Roman authority in England over bishop and priest and layman; he also helped to create the ethos of the priest as the remote and awesome but compassionate representative on earth of the most high God.(164) Manning's most influential work was *The Eternal*



Priesthood, which is notable not only for its high Ultramontane doctrine of the authority of the priest, but for its uncompromisingly otherworldly demand that the priest lead a life of utter dedication and holy poverty like his Lord. The outcome of Manning's influence was that the Catholics presented the only substantial working class Church in the country. Gilley proposes that the magnitude of Manning's influence, and the Catholic Church's approach to the working classes, can be recognised in the difference of fortune between the Anglican and Roman Churches this century.(165)

But the 'golden age' of Mass attendance was not to last long for the Church authorities soon became aware of the problem of "leakage". In a move to address the problem the Catholic Catechism was introduced into its schools and was later to become examinable. The ever present problem of finding suitably trained teachers continued but the introduction of the Catechism demanded that this specialist teaching should continue to be principally conducted by religious orders.

Manning suggested that there were two main causes of the 'leakage' of Catholic children into what he called "infidelity". He suggested that there were insufficient places available in the Catholic schools, for reasons of poverty in an age of voluntary effort, and the non-Catholic atmosphere of the Reformatory and Industrial and other schools run by the Home Office and Poor Law Guardians for the poor and delinquent.(166) This, he must have reasoned, was having a detrimental effect upon Mass attendance and he devoted much of his time and energy towards the task of rescuing Catholic children from the Protestant workhouses.

The decline of religious practice which had previously hit the Anglicans and Non-conformists was increasingly becoming evident in the Catholic sector during the later part of the nineteenth century. Rates of churchgoing were higher among the Irish than among the English working class, but compared poorly with the very high rates of practice among the native English Catholics. (167) What helped the Church in the long term was the emergence of partly Irish Catholic neighbourhoods with their own schools, churches and pubs, and with a large core of committed churchgoers. Although a large fringe of 'bad' Catholics existed on the fringe, missions were held to draw them back into the community. Catholic children, meanwhile, who attended non Catholic schools were reported as being ignorant of the very basics of the faith and unable to recite the "Hail Mary" or the Catholic version of the "Lords Prayer".(168) Manning must have been greatly disheartened at this indifferentism as he had recourse to write to one of his priests extolling his concerns: concerns which had previously been addressed in a similar tone almost thirty years earlier in the Cardinal's address regarding the urgent need for the provision of poor schools.

Manning's concern echoed the concerns of Bishop Chadwick's earlier appeal. He reported that not only were these Catholic pupils missing out on a good Catholic education by sending them to the board schools, but they were being exposed to the danger of losing both their faith and their morals.(169) Manning went further to say that, in doing this, their parents were sinning against God! He then appealed to the consciences of the parents by referring to the sacrifices of their forefathers and the fidelity that the Irish had displayed in keeping the faith of the Irish people pure to that day. He completed his epistle with a severe warning to any parents who dared to send their children to a Board school and suggested that they must obey the voice of the Holy See.(170) Manning's struggle for higher education reflected his convictions regarding Catholic schooling in general and the arguments he propounded echoed those of previous Catholic educational

statements whereby the main issue was the danger to 'faith and morals' that attendance at such establishments would provide. Sadly, even though Manning had worked ceaselessly for the Catholic education cause throughout his reign, criticisms were levelled upon his death that despite all his efforts, English Catholics were still bereft of any clear guidance as to how to deal with the intellectual problems of the time.(171) Manning, it appears, seems to have fallen into the same trap that had ensnared Catholic clerical leaders throughout that century in that they were so concerned with establishing schools and colleges locally that no clear-cut national policy, other than the 'schools first', for the education of Catholics was formulated.

During this difficult period Catholic schools were not only reaffirmed as the foundation stone of Catholicism but also generally perceived as delivering sound education. This conviction was to be seen in a number of statements from both church leaders and politicians alike. W.E. Forster, in shades of Kenneth Clarke during the 1990s, stated that in creating compulsory education he did not wish to "destroy anything that was good". While both Manning and Chadwick extolled the virtues of Catholic schools with the former suggesting that it was a sin for Catholic parents to neglect their duty in sending their children to Catholic schools. This emotional blackmail, the battle for body and soul, and the argument for religious freedom and choice was central to the Catholic defence then, as it is today, in its conflict with the government.

Whatever the authorities thought, in an atmosphere of competition reminiscent of today, Catholic schools flourished while adjusting to the new demands at a time when many other schools failed and were forced to close in the demand for efficiency. The fact that Catholic schools survived against the trend is a testament to the quality and commitment of the teachers who exercised quality control through the implementation of examinations. Religious instruction, which was

central to the Church's schooling and a vital instrument in ensuring a theological atmosphere existed in its schools, also underwent examination and interestingly in those days, as with today, was not under the jurisdiction of State inspectors. But in an increasingly secular age, despite the emphasis placed upon Church schools and Catechesis, the church was beginning to experience the problem of leakage. Such was its reliance upon its schools for sustenance that the Church has continued to pursue this approach to this day in the face of mounting criticism. As we progress towards the end of the twentieth century serious questions are being asked regarding the effectiveness of Catholic schools as places of nurture.

Battersby, writing in 1950, echoed recent concerns regarding the effectiveness of Catholic schooling. "The general situation of Catholic Secondary schools today is one which causes grave concern. The efforts made over the last hundred years have been tremendous, yet the results fall far short of the requirements. They are even inferior to what they could be". He saw the main problem as being both inadequacy and lack of diversity. Battersby also brought to attention the number of non-Catholics occupying Catholic schools which had been highlighted by a report of a Special Committee set up by the hierarchy in 1948.(172) At the time the number of non-Catholics in Catholic schools was 12 per cent which for the following fifty years appeared to be the accepted norm. What becomes apparent is that the lessons of previous generations had still not been learnt for, as with the criticisms that had been laid upon the ultramontanes, Manning in particular, almost a hundred years earlier, there was still no coherent national policy for Catholic schooling. Battersby laid the blame for the sorry state of Catholic schooling firmly at the door of the hierarchy; "The cause is to be found in the haphazard development of the system whereby the initiative has been left to the clergy and the religious orders without guidance from a central authority".(173) Reflecting the problems that sporadic developments had caused the previous century he suggested that it was imperative to prevent the continuance of this

unguided development in the future for he saw these ad hoc arrangements as one of the root causes of Catholic schools having to accept non-Catholics.(174)

With regard to the problem of leakage, the Church in all its history, has never faced such a crisis as today's Mass attendance figures indicate. While the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle suggested that there was no one answer to the fall of Mass attendance, he did express alarm at the relatively high age of people in church and significantly mentioned the fact that many school age children were not attending.(175) Given the massive importance and investment this diocese has placed upon its Catholic schools these figures must be extremely worrying for the hierarchy. Bishop Griffiths, the recently appointed head of the diocese, charged that the weakening of family life and an increase in materialism and other modern 'notions' were the underlying causes of the fall in Mass attendance.(176) His concern must have been heightened by the knowledge that other religions such as Hinduism and Islam more than doubled their attendances but, more worryingly, there appears to be a drift from the established Christian churches to the independent Pentecostal, Baptist and Afro-Caribbean churches.

The impact of social change is best revealed in the latest figures concerning Mass attendance. A recent survey (177) claimed that more than a million people had stopped regular Mass attendance over the past fifteen years representing a 23 per cent national fall. This was also a true reflection of Catholic Mass attendance where it was estimated that there was a drop from 2.53 million in 1975 to 1.95 million in 1990-- about 23 per cent. In the Hexham and Newcastle diocese between 1978 and 1990 the fall was 27 per cent although the most recent figures suggest a slowing down with the year from 90 to 91 having a drop of just one per cent.(178)

While this is certainly not a modern phenomena, the Church must examine why the young are turning their backs on the Church and whether anything could be done to return to the 'Golden Age' of the mid 19th century? Dr Peter Clarke, lecturer in The History and Sociology of Religion at Kings College, London, said in 1990 "Thousands of young people from all over the country, are turning away from the established churches, not necessarily joining new movements, but seeking other sources of spiritual experiences."(179) It was evident, he suggested, that many young people would leave their churches by the time they reached twenty and the reason for this was that these churches placed too much emphasis on religious practices and not enough on spirituality. This, perhaps, is the crux of the problem. Fr. Joe Lloyd, training officer for the Catholic Youth Service, spoke of youth searching for a community to which they belong and a faith which provides them with answers, but he also highlighted the fact that many young people found new religions more vibrant and exciting than their own parish liturgy.(180)

With regard to developing Catholic communities one must question whether, by adopting the policy of creating large Catholic comprehensive schools, the Church has destroyed the opportunity for parish community growth. Comprehensive schools, because of their nature and wide catchment areas, suffer from a loss of identity within the parish community and it could be argued that they have taken both the financial and personnel resources out of the parish while providing little of community value in return.

However it would be wrong to blame everything on the schools. The hierarchy, in partnership with parents, created them, invested in them and surely must therefore make the most of their resources. If recent examination league tables are to be used as a measure of achievement many Catholic schools do an excellent job in educating but they also place great emphasis upon developing pupils' spirituality

as seen by school mission statements and the esteem and funding given to religious studies. Unfortunately many staff share the frustration that once pupils leave their charge, both the home and the parish fail to support their efforts. Frequently the schools are used as a scapegoat for the Church's problems, yet the Catholic school is often 'out on a limb' and the real problems are to be found in the Church structure and ritual.

In this day and age the Church is being regarded as more and more irrelevant by society but also among church attenders. Perhaps the effects of Vatican Two, and its emphasis upon personal conscience, are now beginning to filter through. Vatican Two gave the Church a new vision, a new direction based on love rather than fear. The traditional fear of, and the discipline of the Church authority, was removed and the laity, for the first time, were encouraged to use their skills and to question Church teaching. The Catholic school was at the forefront of this new found freedom but was caught in the tension that existed between the progressives and the conservatives who resisted change. As a consequence Catholic schools laboured without clear direction until the diocese of Arundal and Brighton produced a working document "Time For Building" in 1976 followed by the "Easter People" in 1980; the latter being regarded as a land mark in modern Catholic Education. However, schools were slow to progress through this difficult transitory period and it was not until 1985 that a pro-active policy for Catholic education was developed, culminating in the establishing of the National Catholic Education Service in 1991.

During the same year the bishops of England and Wales collectively endorsed a pastoral letter which was read out in all parishes on Education Sunday. In paragraph 13 the letter declares that Catholic schools must emphasise "values such as respect for others, forgiveness, trust, freedom and justice. They will represent the partnership that exists between school, home and parish".(181) But

is this a real representation or reflection of both our society and the homes that exist within it today? One could also question if this is a genuine partnership with all sides taking an equal active role? The role of the school has always been carefully scrutinised by both the parents and the clergy. On the other hand, the nature of the home has changed so much in recent years that it is now dangerous to make any real judgements or assumptions regarding the quality of the religious, spiritual or moral guidance delivered therein, if, that is, there is any at all. Furthermore the Catholic ghettos have all but disappeared with only a few remnants remaining but, in reality, they retain very little influence. Interestingly little close scrutiny has been made concerning the role and value of the Church in this partnership.

In the nineteen nineties many regard the continuous fall of church attendance as an indication that the established churches have lost their relevance in the modern world. Timms suggests that one aspect of the eighties enterprise culture was that "people are no longer accepting a single set of values from the church or any other established body".(182) This "culture", according to Bishop Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, led to apathy, alienation and anxiety. Apathy, he suggested was a form of loss of real faith which stemmed from the new society that we live in.(183) Dom Raphael Appleby, addressing the National Council of Priests in 1991, suggested that the Church must "change her image and her preoccupation with sex and begin to evangelise herself". He also criticised the Church for being 'over sacramentalised' where all the people are 'baptised yet few are evangelised'.(184) Here, perhaps, lies some direction for the future for Catholic schools, although it could be argued that evangelism, through open enrolment, is already a key feature of Catholic schools in the nineties.



In the recent past, parishes, like Catholic schools, have been self-perpetuating because for many people religion had real meaning. Many, if not the majority, of 'lapsed' Catholics always felt the need to return perhaps as a 'form of insurance'. But it would be dangerous to make such an assumption about the lost generations today. If Appleby is correct and people no longer have a 'fear of Hell', will they eventually return to the fold? More importantly what kind of signal regarding religious belief and practices are they sending to their children? Can we expect future generations to see the value, other than educational, of sending their children to Catholic schools? Already Catholic schools are being faced with clients who have little commitment, being products of 'religious dilution', in that for many only one parent is nominally Catholic. The days when the majority of our pupils came from "true' Catholic homes are gone and very soon they will become a minority. While the Church still refers to the partnership of home, school and parish, it is the school which is increasingly the main provider of moral values and religious practises and, in this respect, can be seen to be compensating for the inadequacies of the other two members. In many regards this is placing an unfair burden upon Catholic schools and leaving them with an impossible task. Society has changed, the Church has changed, yet the expectations that the Church has of the role of its schools appears little altered.

While the task over the past two hundred years has remained the same, to educate and retain Catholics within the Catholic community, over the past twenty years there has been a radical change of emphasis. Schools are no longer to be regarded as Catholic garrisons, supporting a ghetto system, instead they have adopted a missionary role, perhaps the missionary arm of the Church. This shift probably transpired because the Church realised that the pace of change in society during the sixties was such that it was losing the battle to conserve its traditions. However, this approach may have inadvertently contributed to the demise of the local Catholic community. The cost may be reflected in the breakdown of

traditional parish life with the loss in many areas of Catholic youth and social clubs which provided a sense of belonging, moral stability and security. One cannot over estimate the value to the Church of its social arena. Man is social by nature and, while he 'cannot live on bread alone', it is through social inter-action that he becomes fully human. The abandonment of this sound practical community base, along with the lack of local commitment to the poor, bolstered by the vagueness of Vatican Two has caused the Church to lose its direction and led to its present crisis. In the space of thirty years the Catholic church has, in many respects, erased much of the progress it made during the last two centuries and the qualities which made it attractive to so many have been discarded. In this respect the Catholic church in this country is assuming a more respectable middle class face which barely resembles the Church of the 1830s. Then the Church was so successful because it reached out in practical ways to the working classes in a manner that many other established religions failed to do. It embarked upon school building programmes regardless of the cost and sacrifices, an age where priests were truly 'men of the people'. Now the working classes seem to be neglected by the Church, other than providing voluntary limited services through the likes of the SVP. The evangelisation of the troubled inner cities and no go areas is being left to the spirit led churches such as the Baptists and Pentecostals. Is it any wonder that these are the most successful today because they have taken up the torch that the Catholics have put down? They act while the Church dallies over moral decisions that few adhere to.

Is it realistic therefore, for the Church to expect to be able to redress the balance and change society through its schools? After all, the Church's influence is limited, representing approximately 10 per cent of all schooling in this country. One has to ask if the Church's insistence upon the provision of Catholic schools, that have the 'Communion of saints' at the very heart of its concept of family and community, presents any serious challenge to a society driven by material

objectives, economic ambition and competition? No doubt, and quite rightly in my opinion, the Church will argue that someone has to be a steadying force if society is not to go off the rails completely. In this respect it is still prepared to invest in its schools with the hope that somehow pupils will receive a sound spiritual bedrock for the rest of their lives. Sadly this 'grass-roots Catholicism' would not be so ambitious if the Church employed a cohesive policy that extended throughout Christian life as 'Signposts' suggested, but it still does not. Increasingly our comprehensive schools stand in isolation from their parishes and the Church in general. Further to this, despite attempts to create greater dialogue between the comprehensive schools and their feeder schools, the recent adoption of 'open door' policies has increased this sense of isolation. One must ask whether Catholic teachers are solely responsible for their pupils becoming the 'saving leaven' in the wider community?(185)

Traditionally, in this country, the catechesis of the young who are baptised has been concentrated in or associated with Catholic schools. But the growth and development of the Catholic system of education in England and Wales has been carried out in an uneven manner. While it started from an explicit belief in Jesus Christ as saviour, the evolution of Catholic schooling has been greatly influenced by the changing pattern of secular education, by the developing status of the Catholic church, as well as by other social and political changes. Schools remain vitally important to the Church and their development is a significant part of the Church's mission. However, 'Signposts' recognised that they are not the whole of that mission and one needs to question if the Church has been wise in concentrating such a disproportionate amount of its resources on this one single enterprise. With regard to catechesis of the young, careful consideration must be given to other opportunities beyond the classroom. 'Signposts' also recognised that by the 1980s the Catholic system of education had become so closely tied to the secular system that it was hard to see wherein lies its essential difference and

felt that it was time to examine what was the distinctive nature of Catholic schools. In 1977 the Church produced a document from Rome entitled 'The Catholic School' which addressed this issue and educational issues once again became the main item on agendas for the Catholic Bishops' Conferences. Rome eventually followed up 'The Catholic School' with 'The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School' and this paved the way for a number of publications in the mid nineteen eighties which included 'Evaluating the Distinctive Nature of Catholic Schools', 'Our Faith and Our Schools' 'Our Faith Story' and 'Opting Out; Our Catholic Schools Today'.

The distinctive nature of Catholic schools is already under threat through the imposition of the National Curriculum and open enrolment so a wholesale move to Grant Maintained status has the potential to destroy the partnership and surely create an uncertain future for Catholicism in England and Wales. Very few Catholics regard our schools as resounding successes if considered as places to propagate the faith but, if nothing else, like parish life, they are self perpetuating and many offer excellent education provision if the present examination league tables are to be considered as a true measure of standards. However, the Catholic church cannot have failed to notice the advances made by the 'Spirit-led' faiths and perhaps the Church authorities, aware of the changing nature of its schools, realise that recent legislation has meant that for many they are no longer effective in fulfilling the role for which they were initially intended. The hierarchy at this juncture therefore may be prepared to release the schools to redirect funds which would allow them to pursue alternative methods of catechesis more appropriate for a society rapidly approaching the twenty first century. They argue that if the Church is to expand then the schools need to become more outward looking and evangelic in their approach to religious practices.

Many Catholic schools currently command the utmost respect but they also face serious challenges in today's modern pluralistic society; challenges that have been exacerbated by recent government legislation. Further to this many, within the Church, have criticised the schools for their financial cost and blamed them for accelerating the current decline of Mass attendance. But this should not be presented as a valid argument because the Church has been aware of the problem of "leakage" ever since it took control of its schools in the middle of 19th century. One could justifiably argue that the leakage experienced during Manning's reign was no different from today's, in that both periods reflect the age and society that they belong to and there is little evidence of Manning blaming schools for the leakage. Furthermore, Catholic schools have been criticised as having outlived their time and are regarded by some as institutions that were a necessary substitute in the past but have no place at a time when civil authority assumes responsibility for education. Throughout the last two centuries the relentless move towards greater state control and the establishment of a neutral and monolithic system has persistently threatened Catholic schooling.

At the time of the 1944 Education Act it was assumed that any daily act of worship would be Christian by nature but also there was an expectation that the churches would play an active and leading role in this sphere through the "Agreed Syllabus" for religious education. Chesters suggest that in this way the whole state maintained sector was thought to share in the churches' task of Christian education.(186) The Catholic church however, has seen its relationship with its schools in a different light and has consciously set out to develop a distinctive and separate system of church schools. By doing so the Catholics expected the schools to work in partnership with both parents and parish but, in recent years, the viability of this partnership has been called into question. Increasingly, the distinction is being drawn between the schools' educational concern with religious education and the faith building concern with catechesis. One needs to question

whether the Catholic church has placed too much emphasis upon its schools as places of evangelisation. Other denominations, such as the Anglican church, have seen the parish as the principal means for initiation of children into the faith community.

Unlike the Catholics, the Anglicans never made any commitment to provide a school place for every Anglican child but the results of this approach has meant that the provision of Church of England schools is more patchy than the Catholic enterprise. On the other hand, the non-Catholic churches have laid great store on the use of Sunday schools or the equivalent. Chesters suggests that the experience provided by the Sunday schools proves beyond doubt that this system has not encouraged the majority of children to become adult worshippers. Furthermore, the only likely contact a child has with the Church today is most likely through the liturgy since the other traditional routes are no longer available. (187) He also recognises that the home is the most significant place for Christian nurture particularly for the young child. But this approach demands that we turn the clock back and give the home the traditional role it held before the advent of schools and the development of children's education work in the church. But is this realistic today when Church attendance is falling rapidly? Such a move also assumes that there are sufficient numbers of parents capable and willing to take on such a task.

One relatively successful scheme employed by the Catholic church has been the use of parents as Catechists for first communion preparation classes. While this has certainly involved many parents there is little evidence that such a scheme has made any impression regarding consistent Mass attendance. Unfortunately the many changes in the nature of Catholic primary schools, and the 'open market' philosophy has encouraged parents to view schools as commodities, with many failing to hold any religious conviction or commitment.

The concept 'catechesis' has always been central to religious education in Catholic schools and certainly the clerical pioneers of the last century, such as Wilkinson and Hogarth, regarded the school as the natural habitat for such concern. Rossiter suggests that while the interpretation of religious teachers remains relatively unchanged, there has been a subtle shift in both focus and emphasis in catechetical theory away from the school towards pastoral ministry in the church with adults. This shift of emphasis situates catechesis within the community of faith and liberates catechesis from an unhealthy dependence on a 'schooling-instructional paradigm'. (188) Within the Catholic church the Rite for Christian Initiation of Adults programme has been operating for some time and has its roots in the 'Signposts' recommendations whereby catechesis was the responsibility of the whole faith community and not just the schools. But the experience of RCIA to date, while very commendable, has made little impression on the number of worshipping adults and neither will it stop the drift from Mass attendance. The Catholic hierarchy itself can be accused also for failing to make the most of this resource for it has plowed little money or time into this particular venture

Rossiter may hold the solution for he proposes that the time is right for a clearer differentiation between religious education and catechesis as far as the school is concerned. He suggests that such a move would allow for more creativity and creative development of both aspects and sees that a 'creative divorce' may be the very thing to promote more catechesis.(189) This approach is already employed in public schools where religious education requires differentiation from catechesis. Much ambiguity exists today as to the use of the word and many use the words 'catechesis', 'catechetics' and 'religious education' as synonyms. Rossiter defends the tendency of the Catholic church to employ the use of catechesis and religious education interchangeably for he claims that official documents are written from the perspective of the faith community.(190) This he sees is not a fault of the documents but a problem caused by a failure to

adequately transpose their essentially catechetical aims and ideas for application within the school setting. In truth the precise realm for catechesis in the formal school religious curriculum is rarely defined.

Rossiter offers that close clarification of the concept catechesis situates the activity firmly in a pastoral, voluntary, adult orientated, faith sharing context.(191) Such an interpretation denies the claim that the compulsory classroom is a suitable, or even desirable, situation for catechesis. Clearly the Catholic church needs to examine its premiss for religious education in this light. A reformulation should seek to develop the effectiveness of both the catechetical and educational aspects of education in faith while avoiding the current situation whereby the two are set together under the umbrella of religious education. Without doubt one of the key problems for Catholic religious education is that formal classroom teaching is not necessarily conducive to catechesis.

The shift of emphasis in religious education away from catechesis has arisen for a number of reasons. But one of the chief reasons today is that many religious teachers demand that their subject be treated with equal status to others on the curriculum and consequently, to justify this stance, they approach the subject in a purely academic manner. Such an approach demands that they concentrate on teaching knowledge and understanding while neglecting the affective dimension. On the other hand there is a danger with over emphasising the pastoral nature of religious education for this brings the danger of destroying the subjects credibility in the eyes of children. But a further problem exists today, for it is very difficult to recruit religious staff capable of giving Christian witness or empowered with the skills necessary for catechesis. Unfortunately religious teachers continue to appear to be working in one context while invoking theory from another. Unless Catholic teacher training colleges place greater emphasis upon catechetical skills this deficiency will continue.



The conclusion to be drawn is that there is a need for greater emphasis on an educational rather than on a faith-developing paradigm for the classroom curriculum. Rossiter advocates a revision of the foundations for Catholic school-based religious education which would seek a more substantial educational basis for the activity to dialogue with its long standing counterpart. This is a valid point for, even where the overall aim for a Catholic school is education in faith, religious education ought to be more clearly differentiated into the relatively separate aspects, education in religion and catechesis. Until this divorce takes place much confusion will remain as to the nature and purpose of religious education but also to the basic philosophy regarding the *raison d'etre* of Catholic schooling.

Despite all the past challenges, Catholic schools today continue to play a central role in the saving mission of the Church even though much confusion exists. After one hundred and fifty years of Catholic schooling perhaps it is time that the clock was turned back and catechesis became the central function of religious education.

## **CONCLUSION.**

When examining the development of Catholic schooling since 1800 it becomes very clear that the Catholic Church's schools policy changed during the course of the nineteenth century. From the initial inspiration of providing local based schooling for Catholic children as places of Catechesis, the Church moved to the idea of schools providing complete Catholic environments. This perhaps was a necessity if the Catholic community was to survive for without the schools the Catholic identity would have been lost. The reasons for this change are revealed in the light of ultramontane theories of the relationship between Church and State, the Church's reaction to liberalism and anti-clericalism, and the challenge of the various compulsory education acts with the ensuing growth of State intervention in education.

In recent years it is not by coincidence that both the Archbishop of Canterbury and Cardinal Hume have, independently of each other, become embroiled in the educational debate. Neither have entered this forum for political reasons nor for government bashing. The common ground for both of them was their concern for the direction that education was being taken by the Government. There has been no conspiracy but an attempt to promote rational discussion on this issue of the utmost importance.

As the Churches were the first to provide schools, and have over the last two centuries invested much money and resources into them, they have a genuine right to involve themselves in any debate on education. Because of the partnership between Church and State, there has been a degree of parental choice and some subsidising by the Church of the national educational system. Church schools,

too, have ensured that the place of religion remains central to the educational task in a Christian society.

Both the Cardinal and the Archbishop have expressed their concern as to the damage 'opting out' will do to the established system. The Government, in this latest of a series of confrontations over the past two centuries, has arrogantly foisted on parents, without any serious consultation, a policy which has the potential to undermine all previous sacrifices and advances. Both Church leaders are justifiably concerned that a broader vision for education is being rejected for the narrower vision of equipping pupils with the skills to find employment in today's high-tech society. Christian education insists on developing, in full, the whole person, which includes the spiritual as well as intellectual and social dimension. It aims to promote personal fulfilment and the eternal destiny of each individual.

Unfortunately the general public's response has been somewhat disappointing and, in this respect, the media has failed to bring to light the true concerns of the churches. But undeterred the churches, particularly the Catholics, have put up considerable resistance. In truth however, the fact that many schools continue to resist the lure of GMs may be accredited to the general suspicions associated with a weak government rather than the impact that Church leaders have made upon the public at large in an increasingly secular age.

Since Vatican II the Catholic schools policy in England has been increasingly called into question. The enormous expense, linked to the fact that there is little statistical evidence to support the view that attendance at Catholic schools will lead to church attendance, along with the alarming pace of 'leakage' has raised many doubts regarding the effectiveness of the schools programme. Not for the first time have serious reservations been expressed concerning both the necessity,

and future, of Catholic schools. Today new ingredients have been added to the Church/State debate in the form of 'opting out' and 'open enrolment' and both display the potential to prove very divisive for the Catholic church. But throughout all the debates the Church has been found wanting for it has never provided a clear, coherent, accepted Philosophy of Catholic education. Despite this the Church will continue to draw on all its support to fight the latest government challenge and, at the present time, it seems likely that, once again, the Church will retain control of its schools. But what will the future hold?

Owing to financial restraint and demographic changes there will undoubtedly be fewer Catholic schools. A direct challenge to Catholic schools may arise if other religious groups are allowed to establish their own schools which cannot be denied much longer. Further problems may surface if the Government decides to abolish transport relief for Catholic children or if it carries out its threat to make all voluntary schools accept GMS.

As to the nature of Catholic schools in the future there must surely be two avenues it can go down. Either the Church must insist that its schools remain 'introvert', totally and exclusively Catholic, or 'extrovert', becoming community schools. The first option may still be possible in some areas but in others financial demands have already ensured that the dye is cast and it would be very difficult for the Church authorities to recreate what really would be a narrower concept than the ultramontane one. If this option was chosen then the hierarchy would do well to consider Rossiter's case for the reformulation of religious education and catechesis. The most realistic option for the Church however, must be to choose the second, or extrovert, option for this provides a combination whereby the Church can carry out its evangelisation while accommodating all the necessary government initiatives. In many respect this type of community school reflects the

basic philosophy of pre-ultramontane schooling as witnessed throughout the North East during the early period of the nineteenth century.

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