

AN INVESTIGATION INTO CERTAIN PROBLEMS CONNECTED WITH THE  
TEACHING OF RELIGION IN THE "OLD" CITY OF HALIFAX.

A Thesis written in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Arts.

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## ABSTRACT

### An Investigation into Certain Problems Connected with the Teaching of Religion in the "Old" City of Halifax

The thesis deals with the religious instruction of students in grades seven, eight and nine in Catholic schools in Halifax - i.e. public schools that have been traditionally designated for use by the Catholic population. The development of the Archdiocesan Office of Religious Education, in the period 1964 - 1972, as well as the views of its first leaders, are described. A comparison is made between their views and those of teachers who offer religious instruction in the schools. The teachers were surveyed by means of a questionnaire. The findings reveal the situation as it existed in the 1971 - 1972 school year.

From the study many problems become evident, including such fundamental ones as:

- (1) the problem of communication between teachers and religious education leaders;
- (2) the problem of obtaining qualified instructors who are properly motivated, to teach religion;

Recommendations tend to center around one point - religious instruction must be taken more seriously than it is at present. Properly qualified teachers should be sought, and those teachers who do not perform an adequate

job, or those teachers who might do harm to pupils by their lack of religious belief, should be required to discontinue their involvement in the religion program. It is also recommended - consistently with suggestions from teachers and religious education leaders - that religious studies should be made a regular (i.e. credit) course, on the same footing as the other junior high courses, such as English, mathematics, gymnastics and music.

Gerald R. McElhiney

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## PREFACE

This thesis was undertaken because this author felt very keenly the need to discover if problems in religious education existed on a level that had been judged to be quite critical. Teachers of religion, whether clergy or lay, acknowledge the fact that religious instruction presents certain problems. But the seriousness of these problems may not be fully understood. The information gathered in the following pages indicates the position of religious instruction for the 1971-72 school year in the "old" city of Halifax, (that area of Halifax predating the annexation of Spryfield, Jollimore-Purcell's Cove area, Armdale, Fairview and Rockingham, in 1968).

In the Halifax City system, which gives satisfaction to both Protestants and Catholics, the latter group has been afforded certain privileges which give them the equivalent of separate schools. The analysis was limited to the ten Catholic junior high schools in the area, with their seventy teachers of religion, and to the religious authorities responsible for the religious instruction given in them. Through personal observations, this author believed that religious instruction did present certain problems from grades 7 to 9 not found at the elementary level. The observations and suggestions made by teachers and religious authorities would, however, have implications for other levels

and other areas.

More specifically, the purpose of the study was to determine the attitudes of teachers toward the teaching of religion, what teachers taught, and what methods they employed. These would be compared and contrasted with the religious education objectives of the Catholic Archdiocese of Halifax as expressed by its Religious Education Commission, its Director of Religious Education, and its Co-ordinator of Instruction of Religion for Halifax City.

The resource material did give evidence that the religious aspect of education in Halifax had been scrutinized and evaluated. However, Terrence Burns' thesis concerned basically the study of Catholic schools from their origin to the beginning of the free schools. It placed particular importance upon the special circumstances surrounding the establishment of the free schools and the necessity of the Catholic schools to be made an intergal part of the system.<sup>1</sup> Richard MacLean in his thesis discussed the influence of Protestants and Catholics through the administration of the Halifax Public School System. Mr. MacLean compared the schools with respect to such things as the number of pupils being taught in relation to the number of teachers instruct-

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<sup>1</sup> Terrence Burns, "Public School Education of Catholics in the City of Halifax 1817-1900". (Unpublished Master's thesis, School of Education, Saint Mary's University, 1962).

ing, and the physical facilities available.<sup>2</sup>

Other such writings, even though not concerned with Halifax City religious education, discussed the theory of religious instruction, and thus supplement this thesis. Rev. John W. O'Brien devoted his study to the philosophy and ideals that all religious educators should follow in the teaching of religion.<sup>3</sup> Many of these principles could be seen in the approach the local Religious Education Commission took toward the teaching of religion. Even a few recommendations of O'Brien paralleled those presented to the Graham Royal Commission in 1971, (discussed in detail in Chapter III), as well as this author's own evaluation. Also, in this field, Sister Helena Stewart brought out quite clearly in her thesis, the importance of a good religious programme and the theory and education needed to successfully teach it to pupils.<sup>4</sup> The thesis includes an in-depth study of programmes for religious instruction.

The present writer's study is broken down into five

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<sup>2</sup>Richard MacLean, "The Halifax Public School System - A Consideration of the Religious Factor 1900-1966." (Unpublished Master's thesis, School of Education, Saint Mary's University, 1967).

<sup>3</sup>Rev. John W. O'Brien, "The Organization and Administration of a Parish High School of Religion." (Unpublished Master's thesis, Department of Education, Loyola University, Baltimore, 1968-69).

<sup>4</sup>Sr. Helena Stewart, "An Inquiry into Religious Education Instruction in the Vancouver Parochial Secondary Schools." (Unpublished Master's thesis, Department of Education, Seattle University, Seattle, Washington, 1969-70).

chapters. Chapter I concerns itself with the growth and development of the organization responsible for religious instruction in the Catholic schools of Halifax, the Office of Religious Education. This is necessary from the point of view of demonstrating where the policies for teaching religion have arisen, who was responsible for such decisions, and what progress has been made by this organization over the years. Chapter II illustrates the theory of teaching religion through a review of courses devoted to the understanding of Christ and the methods of presenting principles of religion. The love Christ had for all is the principle to be stressed by those teaching religion, the programmes<sup>5</sup> emphasize. It is important to see in later observations (Ch. IV and V) whether the programmes are the effective guides they claim to be for those who implement the theory. Or, are the ideals presented in the course outlines not adhered to or properly understood by the teachers of religion? Chapter III discusses the problems and successes in the teaching of religion, as seen by the Directors of Religious Education (Fr. A.M. O'Driscoll and Sister Romaine Bates), and the first Co-ordinator (Sister Monica Story). Also, in Chapter III, submissions made to the Graham Royal Commission in December 1971 by religious groups of all denominations summarize several problems in the relig-

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<sup>5</sup>Program Brochures include Canadian Catechism Programme, Witness-Discover, Hi-Time, Discussion Courses for Young People and Living With Christ-Course One.



ious instruction field. In Chapter IV, the views of teachers on religious education, gathered by the use of a questionnaire, are presented. Their comments, too, are given to stress their position on religious instruction. The last chapter is a summation and evaluation of existing conditions. It states the problems, suggests possible alternatives, and presents recommendations. The recommendations, it is hoped, will have considerable value as they affect teachers, pupils and ultimately the relevance of religion in the schools.

This study then has three intended functions: (1) it is helpful to this author as an individual teacher in the system, (2) it may further enlighten members of the Archdiocese, both teachers and religious administrators, on the position religion occupies at the present, and (3) it serves as a field study contributing to the total picture of religious instruction in school settings everywhere.

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## CHAPTER I

## THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OFFICE

Religious instruction has existed in the Halifax City School System for a great many years. Traditionally all Catholics attending a Roman Catholic school (Primary to Grade 12) received instruction in their religious beliefs. This instruction was not, however, organized into a compact system involving the unity of priests, teachers and pupils. Then the appointment, on April 3, 1964, of Reverend Albert M. O'Driscoll as Director of Religious Education signalled the beginning of a new era in religious education in the Archdiocese of Halifax.<sup>1</sup> With this announcement it was interesting to note that Archbishop Gerald Berry of Halifax did not release Fr. O'Driscoll from his post as parish priest or as Director of Bishop Burke House, a residence for young men aspiring to the priesthood. Father O'Driscoll brought first class credentials to his new job, including the usual sound theological training. At the same time, Reverend W. Donald Campbell<sup>2</sup> was

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<sup>1</sup>Letter dated April 3, 1964, from Gerald Berry, Archbishop of Halifax, to Fr. A.M. O'Driscoll, St. Dennis Rectory, East Ship Harbour, Halifax County, Nova Scotia. Reverend A.M. O'Driscoll was born and educated in Newfoundland. He attended Saint Mary's University and Holy Heart Seminary, Halifax. He holds a Masters Degree in Religious Education from Loyola University in Chicago.

<sup>2</sup>He was later succeeded by Rev. Albert Roach; then by Mr. Kevin Moyhihan as Assistant Director of Religious Education.

appointed Vice-Director in charge of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine. His special duties included the setting up of a religious education programme ~~for the parishes without~~ Catholic schools.

One of the new Director's first tasks was to coordinate efforts. A head office was set up at the Newman Centre, Windsor Street, Halifax, as the Office of Religious Education. Miss Eileen Burns became Secretary. Co-ordinators were chosen so that the program would become more cohesive. A regional office was established in Amherst, for all Cumberland County, and a Co-ordinator was appointed in Spryfield,<sup>3</sup> Halifax County, N.S., where it was estimated that two to three hundred pupils attended Sunday School from a total of twelve to thirteen hundred Catholic children and adolescents. The number of pupils receiving instruction grew to twelve hundred being taught one hour a week after annexation. The increase may be attributed to some extent to better organization. The expansion of areas to be covered continued to Bridgewater and Fairview, as the need for a religious education organization grew.

The next major step in organization took place in September, 1966, when Sister Monica Story<sup>4</sup> was brought from

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<sup>3</sup>Interview with Fr. A.M. O'Driscoll, October 13, 1971.

<sup>4</sup>Sister Monica Story received her early training at Oxford High School, England. When she finished her High School in Guelph, Ontario, Sister went on to receive a B.A. from the University of Montreal and obtain a M.A. from Fordham. She taught in Montreal and Vancouver (for a short time).

Montreal to direct the Come to the Father programme, which had been selected as the prime one for pupils in grades primary to eight in the Archdiocese. Her services to the Diocese were made free of charge as a contribution to religious education by her Community, the Sisters of the Sacred Heart.<sup>5</sup> Sister Story had been teaching the new programme in French<sup>6</sup> and was considered an expert on the subject. She was given the title of consultant for the Canadian Catechism and co-ordinator for Halifax City.

At the time Father O'Driscoll took over as Director, a "Board of Advisors"<sup>7</sup> was established to assess religious education needs. It was a loosely-knit organization with no clearly defined objectives. Then in December, 1968, a major development occurred. Father A.M. O'Driscoll had suggested names to Archbishop James Hayes to form a steering committee<sup>8</sup> made up of people representing education, parents, the Church, and the Office of Religious Education. The Archbishop, in

<sup>5</sup>Fr. A.M. O'Driscoll's comment in a letter to this author, dated February 10, 1972.

<sup>6</sup>Come to the Father is actually Book I of eight books in the Canadian Catechism Programme, but, in the material that follows, it will be synonymous and interchangeable with the term Canadian Catechism Programme.

<sup>7</sup>Minutes of the Board, 1964. Those listed included Sister Shelia Moore, Donald Weeren and Michael Merrigan.

<sup>8</sup>Minutes of Religious Education Commission, December 1968. The Steering Committee was composed of Rev. R.J. Murphy, Sister John Hugh, Mrs. Joanne Nugent, Mrs. Gordon Mader.

turn, established the committee, which selected the names of persons to form a Commission. The Archbishop appointed fifteen members to this Commission,<sup>9</sup> which officially went into operation in January, 1969, and was known as the Commission of Religious Education. The role of this Commission can be stated in these terms:

The Religious Education Commission has as its main concern the promotion of Religious Education in the Archdiocese. Its function is to be of service in this field and to study modern trends in the total life of the area, which in turn may affect the education of our people, more particularly, the youth. Its aim is to facilitate the work of religious education on every level, to give support to any who are working in this field.<sup>10</sup>

The function of the Commission is to oversee the Religious Education Office and report to the Pastoral Council (ultimately the Archbishop) concerning funds for operational expenses and religious education developments. The Religious Education Commission, at regular monthly meetings, is studying, and becoming more aware of, changing times and the needs of the pupils. It is supporting efforts to make religious education more meaningful in the school situation, as for example, through presentations to the Graham Royal Commission on

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<sup>9</sup>Minutes of Religious Education Commission, January 1969. Those chosen to the first Commission include: Mr. Herman Timmons, Mr. M.V. Merrigan, Mr. Emmett Currie, Mr. Joseph McSweeney, Dr. Edward Ryan, Mr. Louis Moir, Dr. John Savage, Rev. R.J. Murphy, Rev. W.D. Campbell, Sister Sylvia Rice, Sister Lucille Ferron, Mr. Francis Phillips, Mrs. Rita Bburassa, Mrs. Joanne Nugent.

<sup>10</sup>"The Archdiocesan Bulletin", December 5, 1971.

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Education, Public Services and Provincial-Municipal Relations, which met in Halifax, December 1971 (details in Chapter II).

When Fr. A.M. O'Driscoll accepted his post in 1964, the duties of Director of Religious Education were not clearly defined.<sup>11</sup> Now, however, the Director's place is made quite clear:

I would suggest that the Director of Religious Education . . . be the Executive officer of the Commission and that he be responsible for the implementation of policies determined by the Commission. In this way, he would be in charge of carrying out the Diocesan Religious Education Program. Other persons in the Diocese with whom this responsibility is shared, would be accountable to the Director and through him, to the Commission.<sup>12</sup>

One of Fr. A.M. O'Driscoll's first efforts as Director, besides that of organizing a Religious Education Office, centered on a critical evaluation of the Come to the Father series. The background information, as O'Driscoll saw it, convinced him that this indeed was the best course for Halifax City schools. In Europe, as Fr. O'Driscoll explained, there seemed to be a great need for religion. The effect of war had been an increase in family breakups and in lack of rapport between parents, children and teachers. These problems seemed to have reached a high level, but little interest was shown

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<sup>11</sup>Fr. O'Driscoll stated that he had no clear guidelines to follow. Interview, October 13, 1971.

<sup>12</sup>Letter to Fr. A.M. O'Driscoll from Archbishop James M. Hayes, February 7, 1969. (A month after formation of Religious Education Commission).

in religious instruction. Gradually, this attitude began to affect Canada.

Methods for the teaching of religion were not on a high plane. Courses were given at Loyola (Chicago), Ottawa University and Fordham (N.Y.) in religious education and those who graduated were qualified, according to Fr. O'Driscoll. Yet, that was as far as it went. There was no follow-up in the school situation. Improvements did not occur.

Then with Vatican II, the church made changes. Religious educators in French Canada, saw that in Europe the need for a new approach to religion, with a new content, was being recognized. The Europeans were acknowledging that pupils were not meeting Christ as he appeared and lived among them. So educators went to France and Belgium and studied in a team at catechetical schools, such as the one located at Remagen. As a result, French Canada established the Come to the Father series, based on the new behavioral sciences. Fr. O'Driscoll mentioned that English Canada then began to see the value in this system, and began to translate and make it acceptable to English students. English speaking teams were established to work with French educators and The Canadian Catechism was developed, covering Grades One to Eight. This programme was accepted by the dioceses of Halifax and Antigonish. Father F.J. Abbass, Director of Religious Education for the Antigonish Diocese, was one of those who held the same views as Father A.M. O'Driscoll.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Background views as seen by Fr. A.M. O'Driscoll on the topic of Come to the Father.



This series, The Canadian Catechism Programme, makes these claims:

The aim of this programme is to help the child enter into a personal relationship with each of the Three Divine Persons; to teach the child at his own psychological age level and to take into consideration his personality, his own way of thinking and his cultural setting. The program attempts to bring together the total parish - the child, the parents, the school and the local church - into a catechetical participation according to their role, rights and gifts. While all of us accept that no one programme is the answer to all our needs, the Canadian Catechism has proved itself to be one of the finest Catechetical programmes available today.<sup>14</sup>

At the time of implementation of this programme, details of which appear in the next Chapter, Fr. O'Driscoll brought in "resource" people. One was Father Barry Wheaton<sup>15</sup> (teacher of Scripture, Holy Heart Seminary, Halifax, N.S.) who gave lectures on Scripture used as background in the teaching of the new course. Another essential resource person was Sister Francoise D'Arcy, one of the authors of the Gatechism, who came to Halifax to give lectures and operate a workshop for religious and lay teachers in the area.<sup>16</sup>

Then annexation took place, with Halifax acquiring the suburbs of Spryfield, Jollimore-Purcell's Cove area, Armdale, Fairview and Rockingham, and a further problem had to be

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<sup>14</sup>The Canadian Catechism Programme, 1970-1971 brochure. (Griffin House, Toronto, Canada).

<sup>15</sup>Father Barry Wheaton has since become the head of the Theology Department, Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax, N.S.

<sup>16</sup>Interview with Fr. A.M. O'Driscoll, October 13, 1971.

resolved. Was the arrangement prevailing in the "old" city to extend into the new city? The question generated much public interest and debate, the details of which need not be recorded here. The issue was resolved, at least temporarily, in the so-called "McQuinn Formula" put forward by Robert McQuinn,<sup>17</sup> following consultation with the clergy of the various denominations. A recapitulation of this "McQuinn Formula" was found in School Board minutes under the following two headings:

(1) Adoption of a plan for religious instruction in schools in the annexed areas for a one-hour period per week; the plan guaranteed to offer at least four electives - Roman Catholic Instruction, or other Christian instruction, or instruction in other Faiths, or a study period, at no increased cost to the School Board.

(2) Implementation of the plan to commence in September 1969, and the trial period to last as long as it is necessary to assess adequately its effectiveness.<sup>18</sup>

The proposal was accepted by the School Board. In the "old" city of Halifax, the Roman Catholic religion is taught five days a week, for one-half hour in the morning before academic classes begin. In the annexed areas, religion is taught one hour a week.<sup>19</sup> This is done during the school day, at different time periods. Parents and other volunteers have

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<sup>17</sup>Then Chairman of Halifax School Board.

<sup>18</sup>Excerpt from Halifax School Board Minutes - November 28, 1968 - McQuinn Proposal.

<sup>19</sup>As of 1971-72 school year.

been recruited in the annexed areas to give this instruction.

As of September, 1971, Father A.M. O'Driscoll resigned his post as Director to take up other positions, one of which was that of pastor of Saint Joseph's Parish in Halifax. He had made a significant contribution to the organization of the religious programme in the City of Halifax. His successor was Sister Romaine Bates.<sup>20</sup> Her main task in the beginning was to familiarize herself with the Office, and then to expand and develop its operations further. In this she has had the advantage, as Father O'Driscoll had, of having been a member of this Halifax community and knowing the people.

The present organization of the Religious Education Commission, the Office of Religious Education and its subsid-ing units (Table I) indicates the extent of organization and development that has been accomplished in a relatively short time. Table II lists the membership of the Religious Educa-tion Commission for the 1971-72 year.

Now that we have seen how the Religious Education Office was established and the headway it has made in the last seven years, let us turn to the courses of instruction in this field to understand the philosophies of religious education that have affected the organization and instruction of religion in Halifax.

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<sup>20</sup> Appointment by letter dated March 5, 1971 from Father Lloyd Robertson, Vicar of Religious Education. Sister Bates re-ceived her early training in the Halifax City Schools - St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Patrick's High School. She received her B.S. from Mount Saint Vincent University and M.Ed. from Boston College.

TABLE 1

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OFFICE FOR HALIFAX  
ARCHDIOCESE 1971-72

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COMMISSION

Sub-Committees

CURRICULUM AND TEXTS

GOVERNMENT-LIAISON

FINANCE

STAFF AND PERSONNEL

FACILITIES

DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Sister Romaine Bates

Secretary:

Miss Mary MacDonnell

CONSULTANT: CANADIAN CATECHISM

AND

HALIFAX CITY CO-ORDINATOR

Sister Monica Story, R.S.C.J.

CO-ORDINATOR OF SPECIAL

EDUCATION: Miss Peggy O'Neil

(Continued on following page)

(CONTINUED)

NAMES OF CO-ORDINATORS	AND AREAS COVERED
Sister Anne Fahey, S.C.H. _____	Cumberland County
Sister Elizabeth Trainor, S.C.H. _____	Spryfield
Sister Pamela Yell, R.S.C.J. _____	Rockingham & Fairview
Sister Lucille Feron, S.C.J. _____	Bridgewater _____ Caledonia _____ Liverpool
Sister Shelia Moore, S.C.J. _____	Sackville _____ Windsor Junction
and Sister Patricia Theriault, S.C.J.	
Sister Agnes Burroughs, S.C.J. _____	Lakeside
Sister Margaret Nightingale, S.C.J. _____	Dartmouth (Burnside) _____ Sheet Harbour
Sister Mary E. MacDonald, C.N.D. _____	Truro

TABLE 2

MEMBERS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COMMISSION FOR  
 HALIFAX ARCHDIOCESE, AS OF NOVEMBER, 1971

Most Rev. James M. Hayes Rev. Lloyd Robertson	Archbishop of Halifax Vicar of Religious Education
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Rev. Msgr. R.J. Murphy Rev. W.D. Campbell Mr. M.V. Merrigan Mr. L.E. Moir* Mr. Douglas Power Mr. Frank Phillips	OFFICE TERM ENDS 1972
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Sister Ann Catherine Mrs. Joseph Chaisson Mr. R.A. Cluney Mr. Lloyd Knickle, President Mrs. R.F. Strum, Secretary Mr. Peter Vriend, Treasurer	OFFICE TERM ENDS 1973
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Rev. A.M. O'Driscoll Mr. David MacDonald Mr. John Whitehouse Mrs. Frank Barton Mr. W.J. Gorman Mjr. R.B. O'Sullivan	OFFICE TERM ENDS 1974
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\* Resignation published in the "Archdiocesan Bulletin"  
 December 5, 1971.

## CHAPTER II

## A SURVEY OF PROGRAMMES

The function of this chapter is to present a variety of programmes - their philosophy, their content, and their potential value to the student of this era. The Come to the Father series (The Canadian Catechism Programme), Witness/Discover, Discussion Courses for Young People, Hi-Time and Living With Christ - Course One are considered, these being the key courses taught at the present time (1971-1972 school year). This synopsis of material is important in order to bring out, and suggest possible solutions to, the problem of what teachers actually teach in contrast to what they might teach at their grade level if the guides were followed properly. The evaluation will appear in Chapter V.

According to the publisher, "the Canadian Catechism Programme had been developed in Canada in collaboration with Office Catéchistique Provincial, Montreal, and the National Office of Religious Education, Ottawa, and the Office National de Cathéchèse, Ottawa, under the general approval of the Canadian Bishops".<sup>1</sup> Its aim, as presented in the opening chapter, is to help a pupil become personally aware of, and have a personal relationship with, God in His Three Persons.

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<sup>1</sup>The Canadian Catechism Programme, (1970-1971) brochure (Griffin House, Toronto, Canada), p. 1.

It attempts to unite the four forces in the education process - the child, parents, school and church. The value of the Come to the Father series can be seen in its seven unique features. (The following points will be mentioned by Sister Story in Chapter III. Her comments will be of particular value because they will relate to the practical application of the theory).

- 1) The Canadian Catechism Programme is psychologically oriented to the age level of the child; takes into consideration his world, his personality, and his natural way of knowing.
- 2) The Canadian Catechism Programme leads the child into a living and personal relationship with each of the Three Divine Persons. This Trinitarian perspective and the "experienced" actions of the Three Persons are basic to the programme.
- 3) The Canadian Catechism Programme is taught in a climate of joy, building as it does on the personal relationship of the child to the Persons of God - to the awareness of God's loving presence and loving concern for them.
- 4) The Canadian Catechism Programme uses the Living Word of God as a focal point and thus makes the child aware of a Living God with whom he has a Personal relationship.
- 5) The Canadian Catechism Programme uses the child's experience to help him discover the signs of God in his life. The child is brought to his religious understanding through consciousness of certain aspects of his everyday world - in other words, through signs he can recognize and comprehend.
- 6) The Canadian Catechism Programme brings about a gradual transformation of the children in a classroom. It brings forth a social consciousness through a community relationship of faith, prayer and love.
- 7) The Canadian Catechism Programme offers a combination of physical and mental activities to help the child better understand the message and more actively respond. Prayer in thought and in deed, in silence and in voice, alone and in the group - is a major part of the programme, as is the use of art as a tool of religious initiation.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid, p. 2.



Books Seven and Eight of the series are intended for use in the corresponding grades. In Book Seven, the pre-adolescent (12-13 years) is invited to see the "new" world around him. As the brochure indicates, it is time for this pupil to become more sensitive to values, to have ideas and interests of his own, and to begin a movement towards a new way of living.

The Catechesis is concerned throughout this course with helping the student to make judgments and form his own Christian values. He is invited to look at persons, creation, space exploration, intelligence, adventure, misfortune, freedom, love, law, justice, evil and with his own sense of realism and in faith to begin to make these value-judgments. The Catechesis is rooted in Scripture. The student is led to read the events in his own life as a Christian by comparing them with the permanent values contained in the Old and New Testaments.<sup>3</sup>

Then in Book Eight, A New Look at Life, the theme grows to the point where Christians say "yes" to the whole of Life. Life is admired, accepted and loved. The course explores life pulsating all around us. It penetrates into obstacles which have been encountered and overcome in the history of the world. From this, the student learns to find the profound and deepest meaning in his life. This includes the understanding that Jesus Christ is the fullness of life and life is a gift of God.

As a final statement, the publishers of the programme make this claim:

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid, p. 4.

In order to remain in a state of courageous renewal, the programme will always be in a state of revision, research and pilot. The revisions will be based on real pastoral needs and insights within the program itself and in the Church today. The chief concern will always be for the student, parent, teacher, and priest to enter more fully into the spirit and personal relationship with each of the Three Divine Persons.<sup>4</sup>

A second major course is Witness/Discover. Its programme theme guides students to an awareness of the person and the presence of Jesus. "The programme's format employs the topical, the current, and the familiar aspects of modern life to present the person and message of Christ; to help students discover Jesus - who He is, how we know Him, and how His life affects ours."<sup>5</sup> The programme itself is presented in weekly lessons in a periodical format. It is divided into three levels:

- 1) Discover for Grades One to Three
- 2) Witness Intermediate for Grades Four to Six
- 3) Witness Junior High for Grades Seven to Nine

In Grades Seven through Nine, the programme evokes the spirit of Pentecost - to enable students to make Jesus more fully present in their lives. The lessons and activities help discover the value of Christian community by building community within the classroom.

The Witness programme puts before students a taste of life that is real and recognizable.

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid, p. 5.

<sup>5</sup>Witness/Discover (1972-1973) brochure. (Witness/Discover, Dayton, Ohio).

It assumes a learning atmosphere of openness, creativity and respect for student opinion. Discussion and inquiry are essential to the success of the program. Experiences, insights, speculations - complete with mistakes - should be allowed to flourish openly in the classroom.<sup>6</sup>

Teachers are given guides. The prime goal of these guides is to help teachers enrich their own learning opportunities so that they may enter classrooms a little more aware, sure in their own attitudes but respectful of students' attitudes. By following such a guide, the teacher can instill in the pupil the principles as listed in Table 3.

TABLE 3

LESSON THEMES AND AIMS OF WITNESS JUNIOR HIGH<sup>7</sup>

THEME	AIM
1) We have different talents.	To consider what talents are needed; what talents we need.
2) We need to trust one another.	To examine the need for trust.
3) We are loved.	To discover the love of the Father as Jesus did.
4) We need to be responsible.	To consider the importance of making more decisions and assuming more responsibility.
5) We pray.	To discover the value of prayer.
6) We must struggle with selfishness.	To discover the spirit of penance.
7) We need to forgive one another.	To examine our need for the sacrament of Reconciliation.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

With regard to Discussion Courses for Young People, the programme is divided into five courses: The Liturgy, The Sacraments, The Bible, The Virtues and Quest. These courses are intended to put various elements of the Christian message in terms of the life that young people are living at this moment.

The format of each of the courses is based on the principle of free group discussion. They are designed to get young people and adults talking about specific and general areas of religion and to encourage them to evaluate their own attitudes toward and comprehension of traditional religious beliefs and practices.<sup>8</sup>

The courses are not intended to replace more formal, doctrinal approaches to the learning of religious principles, says the brochure. Rather the experimental approach leads to doctrine so that everything eventually hinges on it.

To point up the function of the courses within the programme, the following table gives a brief synopsis of each one:

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<sup>8</sup>Discussion Courses for Young People brochure (1972-1973).  
(Fides Publications, Inc., Notre Dame, Indiana).

TABLE 4

FIVE DISCUSSION COURSES AND SYNOPSIS OF COMPOSITION.<sup>9</sup>

The Liturgy	It is a course on liturgical renewal. It explores aspects of renewal, such as, why the changes? The meaning of sacrifice. Worship of Mass, Mass in daily life. The key to this and all programmes is <u>discussion</u> . Students should grow in the understanding of the worship of the Church.
The Sacraments	This is concerned with Christ making Himself present in the sacraments, but doesn't discuss the sacraments as such. Some examples include the value of suffering, anointing the sick, and maturity through Confirmation. It shows how a sacramental life can result in a stronger sense of duty as Christians, and a genuine brotherhood towards all.
The Bible	This discussion concerns itself with the understanding of the Bible - what it is, what it can do for us, what it means to us. It emphasizes basic recurring biblical themes - sin, redemption, the covenant, the kingdom - and relates them to contemporary scenes. Young people are introduced to God's message. They are made to see that it is the message for all men.
The Virtues	The <u>Virtues</u> considers various characteristics of the mature person, relating them to contemporary life and the special world of the teenager.
Quest	This last programme discusses growth. It includes physical growth, as well as growth in knowledge, in faith and in maturity. As with <u>The Virtues</u> , modern parable stories are reviewed and this is related to the pupils' own life experiences.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

The fourth programme to be reviewed is Hi-Time. In the 1972-73 Hi-Time brochure, Monsignor John F. Murphy<sup>10</sup> states that the formation of a high school catechetical programme in the 1970's is no small challenge. Catechists and parents have become discouraged in recent years and are tempted to give up. Hi-Time, a weekly text, is dedicated to a continued effort to meet the needs of modern youth. To listen to the voice of the Catholic church and to guide others in listening is its task. The course gives modern Catholic youth the opportunity to build on all great Catholic traditions, and the information necessary to face the challenge of everyday life.

Monsignor Murphy also notes that the maturation process in youth demands careful attention and guidance. He states that there has been a marked decline in response to traditional Catholic practices, and that Hi-Time helps foster and enhance the faith and hope of young Catholic readers.

Faith and hope are clearly survival factors. Modern youth, for all their opportunities in an affluent society, are too often grim and humorless; they do not enjoy life; they are restless and unhappy.<sup>11</sup>

The Hi-Time series is divided into four parts: Awake (Freshmen), Challenge (Sophomore), Venture (Junior), and Horizon (Senior). Grade nine in "old" Halifax City (High

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<sup>10</sup> Religion Editor of Hi-Time. Censor Librorum for the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. Pastor, St. Bruno Church, Doveman, Wisconsin.

<sup>11</sup> John F. Murphy, The Philosophy of Hi-Time in a Changing World. 1972-73, Course Outline, Hi-Time (Hi-Time Publishers, Milwaukee, Wisconsin). p. 4.

School freshmen in the United States) has the Awake course. This program is divided into three trimesters - fall (Sept. 22-Nov. 17), winter (Dec. 1-Feb. 16), and spring (March 2-May 4). Each trimester offers a choice between two courses. The material discussed includes the topics of self-identity, independence, rationalization, rebellion, judgment, self-acceptance, responsibility and anxiety. For example, maturity demands that a person learn how to handle feelings of rebellion. Or, maturity requires the presence of openness and the absence of self-deception (realization).

The following sample table will outline an abbreviated weekly course over one fall trimester to show its aims.

TABLE 5

AWAKE, COURSE ONE: WEEKLY COURSE OUTLINE<sup>12</sup>

Date and Issue	Title	Main Idea	Doctrine	Adolescent Psychology
Sept. 22	1 Adventure in Change	Theology of Creation	Adolescence	During adolescence a person needs to accomplish six tasks.
Sept. 29	2 I'm Me.	Christ as Revelation	Self-Identity	Task 1: The adolescent needs to establish a relatively stable self-identity.
Oct. 6	3 One is a Crowd	Grace as Relationship	Relationships	Task 2: The ability to relate to others unselfishly is fundamental to religious commitment.
Oct. 13	4 A Great Discovery	Freedom of Conscience	Masculinity Femininity	Task 3: A teenager can establish his own identity without rejecting his parents.
Oct. 20	5 Don't Tread on Me	Authority of Service	Independence	Task 4: The adolescent moves gradually from dependence on parents to independence and personal responsibility.

<sup>12</sup>1972-73 Course Outline, Hi-Time, (Hi-Time Publishers, Milwaukee, Wisconsin), p. 6.

(Continued on following page)



TABLE 5

(CONTINUED) AWAKE, COURSE ONE: WEEKLY COURSE OUTLINE

Date and Issue	Title	Main Idea	Doctrine	Adolescent Psychology
Oct. 27	6 Gentle Rebels	The Church's Living Tradition	Rebellion	Task 5: Maturity demands that a person learn how to handle feelings of rebellion.
Nov. 3	7 Checks and Balances	Forming Conscience	Judgment	Task 6: Adolescence is a time to form moral principles.
Nov. 10	8 Laugh a Little	Cooperation in Redemption	Integration	In accomplishing the six tasks of adolescence, a person cooperates with God's gift of salvation.
Nov. 17	9 Trimester exam and special feature.	Mailed with issue 8.		

This leads to the final course to be summarized - Living With Christ - Course One, a Christian Brothers publication. The aim of the course is to come to grips with a human understanding of Christ in a way that will be deeply meaningful for first year high school pupils. "It is an attempt to bring into focus - and to challenge - various understandings of Christ so that the student can give some real thought to his own understanding of Christ."<sup>13</sup> The authors of the guides believe that knowing Christ is a lifelong project, not the work of one year. To establish a knowledge of Christ the first principle of the text is to show the many images of Christ, not just one single image. The key question seems to be: "Who is this Jesus Christ?" And since pupils don't seem to know at this point, images are presented. These images are presented in eight books entitled Images of Christ, Physician, Word, Second Adam, High Priest, Man, Light of the World, and Searching for an Image of Christ. Having been given the understanding of various images of Christ, the pupil can construct his own dynamic image of him. "Stress is on the individual's formulation of his own image, given the data available and the need to understand Christ in terms of life today and its challenge."<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Teaching Guide, Living With Christ - Course One, Chapter 1, Images of Christ, p. 1. (Saint Mary's College Press, Winona, Minnesota).

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p. 7.

Now that we have described the principal courses used in the religious education programme, the views of the teacher and Religious Education Office must be sought. This is necessary to ascertain the actual value of such courses in the Halifax setting. One may ask, for example, whether or not those involved in the teaching of the courses know or appreciate the underlying rationale.

## CHAPTER III

THE VIEWS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION  
OFFICIALS AND ORGANIZATIONS

The aim of this chapter is to report views on religious education expressed by a number of religious education leaders and by several organizations and groups. The religious education leaders are those connected with the Office of Religious Education (Father A.M. O'Driscoll, Sister Monica Story, and Sister Romaine Bates)<sup>1</sup>, and Canon H.L. Puxley, a well-known Anglican authority on religious education. The organizations and groups are those that submitted briefs concerning religious education to the Graham Royal Commission on Education, Public Services and Provincial and Municipal relations, which met in Halifax, December 1971.

The teaching of religion is unique in many ways. The difficulties encountered in the presentation of this subject to young people are distinct and numerous. This chapter will attempt to illustrate some of the difficulties and present recommendations for improvement, as stated by the individuals and groups named above. This author does not entirely share all the views expressed and he will present his own appraisal in Chapter V.

Concerning the success of religious instruction in the school situation, Father O'Driscoll stated that the Come to

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<sup>1</sup>Supra, Chapter II, pp. 1,2 and 9.

the Father series is of considerable benefit to the religious education of pupils from Grades one to eight. He believed that teachers are doing a satisfactory job, for the most part. The programme should not pose any great problems because the manuals for presentation are adequate.<sup>2</sup>

The Come to the Father series, as it applies to all grade levels (Grades one to eight), embodies two principles that facilitate the pupils' religious development. The application of these should overcome most difficulties teachers might have with the "context of the learning situation", said Father O'Driscoll. He outlined the principles in the following manner:

(1) In the teaching of religion, the individual instructing should be a witness to the faith. The teacher believes what he teaches, and sets the example, such as that of going to Mass. Time must be devoted to setting an example. Teachers do not have to be completely knowledgeable about religion, but they should practice what they believe.<sup>3</sup> The pupils pick up the teacher's example by osmosis. If the pupils see the teacher do a charitable act, or make a sacrifice, they know

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<sup>2</sup> Interview with Father A.M. O'Driscoll, October 3, 1971 and Sister Monica Story, November 4, 1971.

<sup>3</sup> Father A.M. O'Driscoll related that one such man, Burns Adams, French teacher at St. Patrick's High School, was held in great respect by his pupils. Actions, such as wearing the color tie that corresponded to the day in the church year, showed his commitment to what he believed personally.

he does what he preaches. As priests are also instructors of religion, they should be aware of this characteristic.

(2) In the teaching of religion, the individual instructing should make a genuine effort to accept children as they are. There is a variety of social backgrounds within any city. As a result religious and moral issues are perceived differently. Additionally, in all social classes, family life in the religious sense is good and bad. (Of the twelve to fourteen hundred pupils in the lower grades of the Catholic schools in Halifax, two hundred go to Mass, says Father O'Driscoll). Teachers must recognize that parents still, for the most part, control their children's lives. The teachers, therefore, must remain sensitive to the home values of the child and must abandon the earlier function of being an agent for principles laid down in the abstract by church authority (e.g., there is no salvation outside the Catholic Church).

Sister Monica Story, believing that the manuals for the Come to the Father series depict the sacramental approach, listed five advantages of the series. These tended to parallel the unique features of the course as listed in The Canadian Catechism Programme (Chapter II):

(a) It is trinitarian. It describes the Father as the maker, the Son as the Brother of mankind, and the Holy Spirit as the One who helps us understand and love Jesus.

(b) It is active. Pupils talk and respond. (This is an improvement. Pupils are more ready to use dialogue in

higher grades if they have had the series).

(c) It is a parish effort. It involves everyone - priests, teachers, parents and children.

(d) It teaches love and trust instead of fear. A child is naturally loving and this tendency should be encouraged by every means possible.

(e) It progresses with the child's ability to progress.<sup>4</sup>

In the teaching of religion, there are, however, many problems that must be considered, according to Father O'Driscoll, Sister Story and Sister Bates.

The fact that teachers no longer can be assumed to be willing or able to conduct religious instruction is a major problem in the Junior High Schools. Father O'Driscoll noted that teachers gratuitously teach religion in school. In the past, it was accepted by all parties that teachers in the Catholic schools would render this service in addition to their regular, remunerated duties. Today, however, an applicant for a teaching position is not even asked to record his religious affiliation, much less to state whether he is willing to teach religion classes. One can merely attempt to feel out his religious tendencies. In Father O'Driscoll's view, there should be a change in the method of recruiting teachers of religion.

Indeed, Father O'Driscoll saw the great "problem of

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<sup>4</sup>Interview with Sister Monica Story, November 4, 1971.

faith" among teachers as being a key drawback. To experience difficulties in teaching religion is not unique. Everyone, even the religious, has to adapt to change within the Church. However, teachers who do not wish to teach religion because of their beliefs should be respected, and be freed from instructing. This would help to end the anomaly of people teaching religion who do not go to Church any more, or who feel they must preach against the Church, as happened in cases known to Father O'Driscoll.

A second problem to be considered applies only to the grade nine level. Grade nine, being in an unique position, creates a problem for the development of a course that is both adequate and consistent with previous methods of religious instruction. As noted above, Father O'Driscoll stated that teachers are doing an adequate job with the Come to the Father programme from grades one to eight. Teachers have made a reasonable attempt to acquaint themselves with the series, and have grown more confident as time progressed. On the other hand, there is no set religion programme in grade nine and teachers in the Halifax area are doing a multitude of diverse things.<sup>5</sup> (Courses followed are discussed in Chapter II).

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<sup>5</sup> For example, beginning with Sister Bates' responsibility for directing religious teaching, in September 1971, Father Bernard O'Neil of St. Theresa's Parish in Halifax, has begun a pilot programme in Grade Nine at Oxford Street School, called Search.



The absence of a set programme stems from the fact that in other areas, as in the United States, Grade Nine is the first year of High School. Come to the Father takes pupils from Grade One to Eight, and Hi-Time, Discovery or lecture courses take them through high school. In our system, Grade Nine is the in-between year with no definite curriculum.

Another difficulty in the teaching of religion is the change of attitude necessary on the part of teachers. As Father O'Driscoll put it, the old method of teaching religion was a comfortable one. It was known that a teacher would read from a book or give questions and answers to be memorized at home. The next day, accomplishment depended on whether or not the pupil could answer a question. There was no challenge to the teacher. Then the method was changed to a completely flexible one. If a student, observed Father O'Driscoll, broaches a topic, the teacher should be open to discuss it, because so often the pupil has problems that are tremendously important to him.

Religion classes should be prepared like any other subject. However, in the classroom situation, if some issue arises, the teacher must be flexible enough to adjust to the situation. One cannot separate life from religion, because faith is a way of life.

Whether on the students' or teacher's initiative, there must in any case be discussion so that religion becomes relevant to the persons in the group. The teacher's approach is thus more personal and subjective than it might be in a

"fact orientated" course like history or geography. The teacher must be open to "the movement of the spirit", according to Father O'Driscoll.

When Sister Monica Story arrived in Halifax to introduce Come to the Father she too saw the newness of material and approach to religion as a major problem. Difficulties arose for parents, teachers and clergy in looking at religion in a new way. In the schools the laws of the Church had been "taught" much like any other subject - doctrine was explained and answers recited - but the new programme ~~should be~~ in "Christian living". It entailed a positive, creative approach, with the individual learning a new prayer to God.

In the interview conducted with Sister, it was quite clear that she saw priests as having an important role as instructors as well as advisors to teachers and parents on religious education. This correlated with Father O'Driscoll's views. The problem, observed Father O'Driscoll, is that very often priests go into a school, not knowing the methodology of the programme. As a consequence they undo what the teacher has been doing. He added that priests tend to lecture in the way they were taught their religion when they were in school. It is a "personalistic" approach that permeates the Canadian Catechism - knowing God as a person. Priests still seem to be most concerned with "content". It must be pointed out that change will not occur immediately. Even those who do damage in teaching religion, whether priest or teacher, cannot be

uprooted, unless they personally desire to withdraw.

Communication between teachers and priests is excellent in some cases, poor in others. While depending on the priests to a degree, it also rests on the attitude towards religion on the part of principals and teachers. Father O'Driscoll related that some priests actually fear going into some schools because they are not accepted and it is made quite obvious.

One fact to be considered is that, in the first year or so, the teacher does not have confidence that comes with being familiar with the programme. Therefore he may tend to view a priest as an intruding critic.

Just as teacher-priest communication is essential, so too is teacher-parent communication. Specifically, both parties must share an awareness of religion as an adult concern. Unless parents and teachers realize that religion is as much an adult as an adolescent concern, there is no sense in talking about it to youngsters, stated Father O'Driscoll. Students cannot be fooled today. If, for example, parents do not go to Church, then why should children? Furthermore, the motive of adults who attend Church is important. The idea of going to Mass because not to do so would be a mortal sin, is no longer put forward in the religion class. With the new approach, the reason for going to Mass is that students have a relationship with God and, through the Mass, can deepen that relationship. This must be impressed upon pupils by teachers and parents.

At present, according to Father O'Driscoll, the educators tend to see parents as not interested in religious activity, except for the special ceremonies, like First Communion or Confirmation.

Priests, teachers and parents have been involved in religious education meetings in the past. In Father O'Driscoll's view, there were causes for the decline in interest and enthusiasm at these meetings.<sup>6</sup> A saturation point was reached where no new developments or ideas were forthcoming;<sup>7</sup> therefore, those teachers who participated lost interest. In addition, teachers felt it was not their field of education or it was not as important as the academic courses they were teaching. More basically, at the time of meetings, interest in religious education on the part of teachers was not at a high level.

Agreeing in principle with what had been said by Father

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<sup>6</sup>By the summer of 1969 and 1970, when Atlantic area conferences on the new approach were held in Halifax, of approximately three hundred who attended each session, only a dozen or so represented the Halifax region.

<sup>7</sup>As an illustration indicative that even priests experience a sense of repetitiveness, Father O'Driscoll related that Father Martin Jeffrey, the priest co-ordinator for the Canadian Catechism across the country, and its National Director, had been invited to participate at one of the priest "teach-ins" concerning religious education. Although he had an excellent rapport with his audience, many priests had heard similar ideas before and erroneously concluded that they knew all he would say. The number of people in attendance at the session declined as the seminar continued.

O'Driscoll, Sister Bates<sup>8</sup> stressed the need to find "secure people" to teach religion. In the "old" city of Halifax, said Sister Bates, a great number of homeroom teachers do not seem at ease in teaching religion. They tend to magnify their own religious difficulties to a point where they do not do justice to the principles and attitudes which the programme seeks to convey. To have in all classrooms religious instructors who are at ease is, however, a most difficult goal to achieve.

To conclude the views on religious instruction held by the three religious educators, their recommendations for improvements are developed in the following paragraphs.

Sister Story saw for the future the recruiting of experienced religion teachers who would attend continuing teaching and courses. They would be paid as religion specialists.

This leads to the problem of finances. More money is needed to engage religious instructors for the Halifax area. At present funds come from collections in the Catholic Churches and are consolidated and distributed by the Pastoral Council and Chancery of the Archdiocese. No funds are supplied by the Department of Education.

Furthermore, Sister Bates believed that there are not enough "professionally qualified" teachers of religion and something positive should be done about it. Religion should

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<sup>8</sup>Interview with Sister Romaine Bates, October 28, 1971.

be taught at University on an equal level with other subjects.

Father O'Driscoll responded to a question about changes he would like to see in the following manner. If one has the tool to work with, such as a manual, the work is much easier. There should in addition be a variety of supplementary resources available.

With reference to the traditional system of teaching religion for twenty minutes before school in the morning, Father O'Driscoll would prefer to see two or three sessions of religion a week, or one hour a week during school hours as in the annexed areas of Halifax.<sup>9</sup> This has been done at Saint Patrick's High School, where religion is optional. The method was successful when a small number of teachers worked as a team. Each taught a particular topic, moving from class to class. This method should be applied to the lower grades. It would cut down on teacher preparation and add more variety to the course.

One controversial point brought up by Father O'Driscoll bears considerable thought. He suggested that in order to appreciate the value of religious education, it may be necessary to go through a period of no religion in the schools. Then, at a future date, it would be introduced as a fresh

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<sup>9</sup>Sister Story was very aware of the time-slot problem in teaching religion. To have a time, as before normal class periods, or an hour during the day, will not make everyone happy. The choice of an ideal time is very difficult.

subject into the system.<sup>10</sup>

A religious education leader from another Christian tradition acknowledges some of the problems and shares some of the views held by Fr. O'Driscoll, Sister Story and Sister Bates. Canon H.L. Puxley<sup>11</sup>, an Anglican, who has investigated religious education in the Maritimes, remarked on the indifference to religious instruction and saw a great need for reintroducing religion as an academic course, and for professional training of the teachers. Notwithstanding the gentleman's agreement in Halifax City and the McQuinn Formula in the annexed areas, Puxley concluded that there should be an agreed syllabus for Roman Catholics and non-Roman Catholic pupils. The objective of such a syllabus would be "to teach Christianity instead of just religion". It would incorporate values education. Puxley felt, too, that religious instruction at the high school level should be at the option of the student,

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<sup>10</sup> Interview with Father A.M. O'Driscoll, October 13, 1971. "I think that (in high school) we are going to have to go through a whole period of no religion at all, before we ever begin to appreciate its value again. Many of these kids have reacted to too much religion. There are kids today, who, I am sure, would like to have a relationship with God, who just don't go to Church anymore. And it's the thing today just to revolt and be against the establishment and yet deep down there is a big difference between the expressed need and the felt need, and they keep it to themselves."

<sup>11</sup> Former President of King's College, Halifax, and Director of the Ecumenical Institute of Canada at the time of his study. The study is entitled, Religion in Public Education in Canada's Maritime Provinces - Report on a Visit in April, 1971.

despite the pressure that might be applied by parents.

Puxley noted that there is a problem of paying teachers for religious education. It is not a part of the prescribed teaching load. There should be religion specialists even in the elementary school, because among elementary classroom teachers there are those who would object to being required to give religious education.

In the spirit of the above commentators, proposals have been made to upgrade the status of religious education in the schools. When the Graham Royal Commission on Education, Public Services and Provincial-Municipal Relations convened in Halifax in December 1971, briefs were presented by various organizations on the subject of religious education. The following is a synthesis of reports submitted to the Commission.

Historically, there is no denying that religion is a fundamental part of our cultural heritage. From the Canadian Bill of Rights, the following affirmation:

The parliament of Canada [affirms] that the Canadian Nation is founded upon principles that acknowledge the supremacy of God . . . that man, and institutions remain free only when freedom is founded upon respect for moral and spiritual values and the rule of law:

. . . 12

Roman Catholics have been unwilling to accept any system of education which eliminated religious culture. They have

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<sup>12</sup>From brief presented to the Graham Royal Commission on Education, Public Services and Provincial-Municipal Relations by W.G. Henderson, Chairman, Education Commission, Cape Breton Regional Council of Churches. December 1971.



demanded the right of including religion in the schools as a special subject as well as a method or approach in dealing with all other courses. Even today, the Education Act of Nova Scotia specifies that teachers are required to encourage in pupils by precept and example a respect for religion.<sup>13</sup> The Declaration of Religious Freedom of the Second Vatican Council states:

Men of different culture and religions are being brought together in closer relationships. There is a growing consciousness of the personal responsibility that every man has. All this is evident. Consequently, in order that relationships of peace and harmony be established and maintained within the whole of mankind, it is necessary that religious freedom be everywhere provided with an effective constitutional guarantee and that respect be shown for the high duty and right of man freely to lead his religious life in society.<sup>14</sup>

Underlying the briefs to the Commission are two assumptions. They are the proposition that religion is a very important determining factor in the creation of culture, and the proposition that within our society a most influential agency is the public school. At the same time the briefs recognize problems that are challenging these assumptions. These include:

- (a) Society is reeling under so many pressures that it is threatening to 'go under'.
- (b) Answers that seemed to satisfy in times past now are challenged openly and often laid aside.

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Brief to Graham Royal Commission by Halifax Diocesan Pastoral Council, December 1971.

- (c) The moral values which formerly guided individuals and communities no longer are society's support.
- (d) Adults are openly admitting that they dread the thought of the future unless something is done, and done quickly.
- (e) Some say: "Turn to the Church", but it is freely admitted by many responsible for the education of the young . . . that many young people, and their families, have no effective relationship with a Church.<sup>15</sup>

There is the additional problem of growing impersonalism.

The very person for whom the educational system has been established, is being quickly forgotten in this massive machinery of the Department of Education, school boards and large school complexes with highly structured schedules.<sup>16</sup>

Seeing these difficulties, recommendations were made in the briefs. They are as follows:

- 1) Religion should be a part of the accepted curriculum in school;
- 2) Courses in religion should be accepted for academic credit as other subjects are;<sup>17</sup>
- 3) Religion should be taught at the University level in order to produce teachers with real competence in the subject.

<sup>15</sup>Brief to Graham Royal Commission on Education by Halifax-Dartmouth Council of Churches, December 1971. (Roman Catholic and Non-Catholic (Protestants) participated).

<sup>16</sup>Brief to Graham Royal Commission on Education by Private Citizens, presented by Rev. Donald J. MacDonald, December 1971.

<sup>17</sup>Time magazine of October 18, 1971 (p. 48) stated that religious studies "is now the fastest growing graduate field at secular Universities (U.S.A.) . . . more doctorates (335 last year) are now granted in religion than in philosophy, art, music, speech or any language."

- 4) The youth identify with school groups, more than with parents or Church, so that there is a need to approach religion in a new way through teacher training. This would alleviate teachers' uneasiness in religion class;
- 5) There should be more family-school participation in religious education.
- 6) When a choice is made between efficiency and humanity in education, the question should be weighed carefully and temperate humanity be chosen;
- 7) Systems analysts should be called in to probe for the affective and humanitarian elements in our education system;
- 8) Smaller school units should be maintained and enriched where they already exist and in future planning over-large units should be avoided.<sup>18</sup>

In sharp contrast to several of these recommendations, one brief suggested that "religious and values education should not be presented as a separate course in the curriculum, but should be dealt with in all courses whenever a suitable opportunity arose in the classroom."<sup>19</sup>

Lastly, many of the briefs made mention of an ecumenical approach to religious instruction. These quotations<sup>20</sup> demonstrate this new attitude:

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- <sup>18</sup> Summary of briefs to Graham Royal Commission on Education, December 1971 by the following:
- (a) Halifax-Dartmouth Council of Churches.
  - (b) Catholic Women's League.
  - (c) Halifax Diocesan Pastoral Council.
  - (d) Cape Breton Regional Council of Churches, by Chairman Willis G. Henderson.
  - (e) F.J. Abbass, Director, Office of Religious Education, Diocese of Antigonish.
  - (f) Private Citizens, presented by Rev. Donald J. MacDonald.

<sup>19</sup> Halifax Mail Star, Tuesday, December 14, 1971.

<sup>20</sup> From briefs as listed in footnote 18.

- (a) The Council (Pastoral Council of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Halifax) believes that a religious and values program could be worked out on an ecumenical basis in such a way as to provide equal opportunities for students of all faiths . . .
- (b) A religion course would not be to 'impose dogma' on anyone, and progress has been made on devising an ecumenical approach to the subject in Newfoundland and Ontario . . .
- (c) The ecumenical movement has revealed a lot more significant issues of agreement than disagreement.

This chapter has attempted to outline certain basic difficulties, as well as certain successes, and possibilities for improvement, that characterize the teaching of religion. It represents the point of view of what might be called the religious education leadership as embodied in Catholic religious education administrators, in an Anglican authority on religious education, and in organizations and groups that have made policy recommendations in religious education. To see how these points of view relate to the problems perceived by the teacher of religion, we must turn to the judgments expressed by this sector of the educational community.

## CHAPTER IV

## THE VIEWS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TEACHERS

Because teachers occupy a central position in the religious education process, it is vital to ascertain the views of this sector. For this purpose a survey by questionnaire<sup>1</sup> was conducted among teachers of religion in the "old" city of Halifax.

The questionnaire was distributed personally to principals after the author had secured their permission, as well as that of Mr. Arthur Conrad, Director of Education for the Halifax City Schools. The principals distributed the questionnaires to their staff. Teachers did not have any obligation to answer the questionnaire in general or any specific question. No coercion of any sort was used. Within a week to ten days, all questionnaires were collected.

As regards distribution, within the "old" city of Halifax there are ten Catholic Junior High Schools. The following table indicates the number of questionnaires given to all the Junior High School teachers (grades seven, eight and nine) of religion and the number returned with the answers completed.

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<sup>1</sup>The questionnaire is reproduced in Appendix A at the end of this text.

TABLE 6

## DISTRIBUTION AND RETURNS OF QUESTIONNAIRE BY SCHOOLS

SCHOOL	NUMBER DISTRIBUTED	NUMBER RETURNED
Alexander MacKay	1	1
Oxford	9	8
Saint Agnes	8	8
Saint Thomas Aquinas	6	2
Saint Catherine's	9	9
Saint Francis	6	5
Saint Joseph's	8	5
Saint Mary's	3	3
Saint Patrick's	11	11
Saint Stephen's	9	7

From the table it can be established that fifty-nine (59) questionnaires out of a possible seventy (70) were completed. This constituted an 84.3% return. An inspection of Appendix B, which summarizes the questionnaire results, indicates a low non-response rate for all but a few items - a sign that teachers were truly interested in stating their views.

The writer began the drafting of the questionnaire by formulating eleven questions concerning the teaching of religion based on personal experience. Further information was gathered from discussions with seven teachers of different ages and length of teaching experience. Subsequently a set of objective type questions, now numbering twenty-five, was formulated. These questions were then tested orally with eight religion teachers, some of whom had been among those previously interviewed. The set of questions was then revised to number thirty-two, and passed on to Professor Francis

Phillips and Professor Phyllis Keen,<sup>2</sup> for appraisal. Questions were still found inadequate and had to be revised. At final tally, forty-two questions appeared on the questionnaire.

In reporting the questionnaire results, it must be made quite clear that names of schools, as well as answers given by specific teachers, will not be isolated. The purpose is to demonstrate the attitudes and practices of teachers as a group towards religious education. Strengths and weaknesses within particular schools are not relevant to this study.

With regard to the preliminary questions, of the fifty-nine teachers who filled out the questionnaire, eighteen taught grade seven, eighteen taught grade eight, and twenty-three taught grade nine. Fifteen teachers had been religious instructors for 1 - 3 years; twenty, for 4 - 10 years; twenty-four, for over ten years. The time periods gave a rough indication of the number of experienced and relatively inexperienced teachers. It was anticipated that experience would be a variable with a significant bearing on the responses, but this did not prove to be the case. Also sex differences were believed to be of some influence; however, the subsequent comparison of the twenty-six male and the thirty-three female respondents showed that this belief too was erroneous. Nine

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<sup>2</sup>At this time Professor Phillips was my thesis director; Professor Phyllis Keen, also on the staff of the Faculty of Education at Saint Mary's University, had had considerable experience in questionnaire development.

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persons indicated that they were or had been, members of a religious order. It was thought that they might see the problem of teaching religion differently than the lay teachers. Again, however, no significant findings could be derived from the distinction.

The last of the preliminary questions disclosed some useful data:

If you teach grade seven or eight religion, do you use the Come to the Father series?

- (a) yes                      (b) no

If you teach grade nine religion, indicate what series or text you follow.

The replies to the first question showed that 72.2% do not use the Come to the Father series. With regard to the religion course in grade nine, the replies included these:

- (a) Living With Christ - series of eight courses - Christian Brothers Publication.
- (b) Witness - a weekly publication on religious themes.
- (c) Hi-Time - a series of weekly pamphlets on religious themes.
- (d) The Bible.
- (e) Search - a pilot programme at Oxford School.
- (f) The Liturgy, The Sacraments, The Virtues  
A Discussion Course for Young People.  
Fides Publishers, Inc.

From the first item in the questionnaire proper it was discovered that the large majority of teachers taught religion because they were required to do so as a part of their teaching load, or because it was expected of them as Catholics. Only a small minority (thirteen per cent of teachers) taught



religion because they genuinely desired to teach it.<sup>3</sup>

If teachers had a choice, twenty-four per cent would teach religion, thirty-four per cent would definitely not do so, and thirty-four per cent only some of the time. Eight per cent gave no answer. Should teachers teach religion at all? The answer to this was clear. Nineteen per cent thought yes; thirteen per cent answered no; sixty-one per cent replied that teachers should do so only if they desired to.

For a majority of the teachers - sixty-four per cent - adherence to Catholic Church rules was not a necessary condition for the imparting of religious instruction. A significant minority - twenty-nine per cent did affirm that there was a necessity for following such regulations.<sup>4</sup>

It was the consensus, from most responses, that it is enough to be a good Christian, rather than a good Catholic, in order to teach religion. It was the belief of 55 per cent, however, that it would be better if the teacher were a good, practicing Catholic.

Concerning the actual teaching of religion, it was shown that teachers did prepare lesson plans for religion classes,

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<sup>3</sup> <u>Percentages</u>	(a) Required as part of teaching load	32%
	(b) Genuinely like to teach religion	8%
	(ab) Both of above checked	5%
	(c) Expected as Catholic teacher	32%
	(ac) Both of above checked (a) and (c)	16%

<sup>4</sup> <u>Percentages</u>	(a) Necessary to follow Catholic rules	29%
	(b) Not necessary to follow Catholic rules	40%
	(c) Did not matter between (a) and (b)	24%

but, in most cases, not consistently. Roughly only one-fifth did so regularly. Six teachers admitted they did not prepare plans for the religion period at all. Generally teachers believed that it was necessary to prepare for religion class at all times, even though this ideal was not followed. One fourth of those who answered thought it was important to prepare for only some of their classes.

However, it was encouraging to compare the time spent in preparation of the religion courses with the time spent in preparation of the academic courses. Overwhelmingly, teachers prepared equally for religion as they did for academic courses. (It must be understood that the amount of preparation for academic courses decreases with teaching experience. Should this practice apply to religious studies? Obviously teachers have this belief.) No one, however, prepared more for religion than his academic courses.

Other questions threw additional light on the conscientiousness of the teachers with respect to religious instruction. The prevailing view (sixty-six per cent of the teachers) was that textbooks, questions asked by students, and current happenings, supplied a great deal of the material for religion class. A few teachers used all resources mentioned in question seventeen. Approximately nineteen per cent admitted that class was an adlib affair. From responses to question twenty-seven, it was established that sixty-nine per cent of teachers use their religion class strictly for religion, while twenty-

four per cent admitted that religion period was occasionally used as a study period.

From the pupil's point of view, religion period was not a waste of time according to a large majority of the teachers. In question twenty-five, seventy-nine per cent agreed that their pupils appeared to learn something from the period to practice in daily life. Seven per cent of the teachers believed that the pupils learned nothing of value and five per cent of the teachers felt that pupils learned a great deal. The follow-up question showed that fifty-eight per cent of the teachers noticed a change in some students because of religious principles learned. Twenty-two per cent found no change in students and, of note here, sixteen per cent gave no answer.

Whether or not teachers are educationally qualified to teach religion was another concern of the questionnaire. Most teachers did not think that they were as qualified to teach religion as their academic subjects. Only twenty-nine per cent did feel as qualified<sup>5</sup>, although a larger percentage (forty-seven per cent) did feel qualified at times<sup>6</sup>. In replying to a related question, half of the respondents revealed that they were qualified only to the extent that

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<sup>5</sup> <u>Percentages</u>	(a)	Do feel qualified in religion as in academic courses	29%
Item 35	(b)	Do not feel qualified in religion as in academic courses	69%
<sup>6</sup> <u>Percentages</u>	(a)	Feel qualified to teach religion	22%
Item 37	(b)	Do not feel qualified to teach religion	29%
	(c)	Feel qualified at times.	47%

they were Catholics, while thirty per cent thought they were qualified because of taking special courses.<sup>7</sup> In summary, only about three in ten teachers felt that they were genuinely qualified to teach religion.

It would appear from this finding that many teachers need a substantial upgrading of their religious knowledge. For many the background is present, as indicated by their claim of being qualified to the extent of being a Catholic, and more specifically, by an item in which forty-seven per cent claimed to have background knowledge equivalent to that in their academic courses. However, the foundation has to be built up at least to the point where a substantial majority see their current competence in the field as equivalent to that in their other subjects.

Most teachers recognized that a method for teaching religion was needed. Approximately one-half did not consider their method adequate when compared to the method used in their academic subjects. Forty-four per cent did feel that their method was adequate - a figure suggesting greater confidence with respect to method than with respect to content, for which, as noted above, the corresponding percentage was approximately thirty.

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<sup>7</sup>Percentages (a) Qualified to a great extent to teach religion through courses 30%  
 Item 36 (b) Qualified to the extent of being a Catholic 56%  
 (c) Not qualified at all. 7%

The teachers were asked whether, in order to upgrade their knowledge in religious education, they would undertake training, either in the form of an in-service program, or in the form of religious education courses. The response indicated that forty-five per cent were not interested in any such training. When alternatives were cited for upgrading religious knowledge, the teachers who were in favour of such training indicated that they would consider some propositions. The time factor was vital to their decision. If there were a convenient time individual teachers would look upon the idea as feasible. Remuneration for their time while attending courses was a factor that would influence some sixty per cent of those interested in taking courses. (However, for the actual classroom teaching of religion, most did not wish any pay for the service rendered<sup>8</sup>).

Attention will now be focused on the actual teaching of religion in the classrooms. In response to question sixteen, fifty-eight per cent of teachers based the theme of the religion class mainly on religious ideas as applied in Christian living. Five per cent based their class mainly on Catholic Church doctrine. Thirty-two per cent spent an equal time on doctrine and Christian living.

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<sup>8</sup> <u>Percentages</u>	(a)	Want to be paid for teaching religion	20%
Item 13	(b)	Do not want to be paid for teaching religion.	72%

In presenting views to pupils concerning morals, a substantial majority of teachers seemed quite free to discuss any matter. Only three in ten thought that they were not free to discuss everything with regard to morals. In such discussions, are pupils willing to discuss and ask questions on any topic? The answer by teachers to this question revealed that, in general, pupils did ask questions of many types on all topics, whenever the situation demanded. A very small number of teachers found that pupils did not ask questions on some religious topics.

Items thirty to thirty-four of the questionnaire were devised to discover how teachers handled questions in the religion period. The responses indicated that fifty-one per cent of teachers believed they did not adequately answer the questions pupils asked. On the other hand, thirty-nine per cent felt that they did an adequate job. Ten per cent did not reply.

In answering a pupil's question on which the Catholic Church's position and the teacher's personal opinion differed, thirty-two per cent would give the Catholic response, and forty-seven per cent would give both. Emphasis would tend to be placed more on the Catholic Church position, but thirty-three per cent of teachers would equally emphasize both positions. Only two per cent would emphasize their personal opinion.

In cases where the teacher's personal opinion differs

from the Catholic Church's position, there is the possibility of inner conflict in making the decision as to how to answer the pupils. The responses to item thirty-four indicated that seventeen per cent of the teachers did experience conflict, forty-seven per cent did not, and twenty-seven per cent did so some of the time. These percentages correspond quite closely to those yielded by item nine, which posed the problem of whether or not personal beliefs cause any difficulty in the teaching of religion. Fifty-five per cent had no difficulty; seventeen per cent had; twenty-six per cent had from time to time.

On the question of the Religious Education Office (items eighteen to twenty-two and items thirty-eight and thirty-nine) it was established that ninety per cent of the teachers were aware of its existence, while ten per cent were not. Forty-nine per cent of the teachers, however, believed that communication is lacking between themselves and the Office.

Only twenty-nine per cent had ever requested assistance. On the other hand, thirty-two per cent had received assistance from the Religious Education Office without asking. Teachers tended to believe that assistance should be given without its being asked for.

Forty-three per cent of teachers saw the desirability of contact with the Office of Religious Education throughout the year in order to be kept informed on developments in the religious education field. Thirty-seven per cent saw no need for such contact.

Assistance from parish priests in religious education was dealt with in items forty, forty-one and forty-two. Twenty per cent of the teachers had frequent visits from the parish priests to give instruction to pupils; forty-seven per cent had a visit now and then; and twenty per cent never had a visit.

Since classroom visits are not the only way in which the parish priest can be involved in the religious education process, two questions, more general in nature, dealt with the matter of the assistance provided by the priest. Thirty-two per cent of the teachers replied that they were receiving assistance from the priests in religious matters. Forty-five per cent said that they had never received such assistance. Eighteen per cent said that they had occasionally received assistance.

Forty-nine per cent of the teachers consider that the guidance of priests in the school situation is inadequate; twenty-seven per cent feel it is adequate; and sixteen per cent think it is adequate only in certain cases.

Constructive observations, suggestions, comments and criticisms concerning the questionnaire were encouraged.<sup>9</sup> The results were of particular value in clarifying the positions expressed in the body of the questionnaire. It must be emphasized however, that the comments mentioned in the

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<sup>9</sup>Selected quotations are reproduced, for purpose of illustration, in Appendix C.



following paragraphs represent personal views of individual teachers, and the comments should not be generalized to include all teachers.

Some teachers said that church bodies are confused and in some cases uninterested in offering constructive advice. Others felt that this is understandable to a degree for the church is going through change. Comments were also made to the effect that parents are in most cases uninterested, passing the responsibility for teaching religion on to the school teachers.

Many of the teachers who commented stated that they have some basic views on what is right and wrong and they attempt to get these across to students by word and example. They think that they make an honest effort.

Teachers also believe that they should be promoting religious values. "Religion should include everyone, not just Catholics, Jews or Baptists."<sup>10</sup>

Regarding religion within the schools, one comment echoed the position of many and bears acknowledgement:

I would like to see religion continued in the schools, but perhaps it should be voluntary for both students and teachers. We are asking students to accept ideas and values, which many of them honestly disagree with. We have just not found the method of 'getting through'. It seems that our world and ideas differ greatly.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Direct quotation from comments received from individual teacher.

<sup>11</sup>Direct quotation from comments received from individual teacher.

Teachers seem to need help of some type. Even many of those who are trying to do an adequate job, feel that they are being continually criticized and eventually get upset. Because religion is so important, qualified teachers or specialists should be enlisted. As one respondent stated, "There should be a qualified interested person at the helm - a paid director - preferably lay."<sup>12</sup>

It is made quite evident that many feel that too much time is allotted to teaching religion and there is too little material and guidance in teaching religion. If there were alterations in time, a multi-media approach in staggered periods throughout the school day, and more clergy and parental involvement, the situation would be vastly improved.

Specifically, teachers suggested that if religion is to be part of the programme, the time 8:40 to 9:10 should be changed, as many students are not mentally prepared at this time of the morning. Religion could be given three days a week - perhaps Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays - instead of five.

Many of the doctrinal religion classes lead directly into the realm of values as stated in this account:

It [religion class] usually begins with a religious theme, but boils down to social questions from a Christian point of view. E.g., 'Thou shalt not kill' leads to a discussion of abortion. This is the best method of communicating with my class with-

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<sup>12</sup>Direct quotation from comments received from individual teacher.

out complete boredom being the result.  
(Practicability stressed with theological viewpoints.)<sup>13</sup>

On the other hand, there are those teachers who believe that the teacher and church should stress more doctrine. Conflict is created on this issue because pupils "have a vague, meaningless idea that you should love God and your neighbours."<sup>14</sup>

A number of teachers have problems with Catholic dogma. However, they do not want to influence their students - they believe students should form their own philosophies and receive spiritual guidance in a qualified manner. Some of the same teachers suggest that they be excused from the function of teaching religion. Then there are those who fear that there may be unfavourable reaction to their expressed views:

Today's young teens want answers to questions (and know enough to see through evasion, but not enough to understand any reasons for evasiveness). I can't answer because of fear of reaction of some parents and . . . some supervisory personnel.<sup>15</sup>

Another group of teachers finds it very difficult to accept changes in the church, but go along reluctantly. They realize that this is a poor attitude.

This chapter has attempted to highlight what teachers

<sup>13</sup>Direct quotation from comments received from individual teacher.

<sup>14</sup>Direct quotation from comments received from individual teacher.

<sup>15</sup>Direct quotation from comments received from individual teacher.

view as the strong and weak points of the teaching of religion in the school system. In the next chapter an assessment of positions expressed by the teachers and by leaders in the religious education field will be attempted. The problems will be stated, alternatives examined, and personal observations added in the hope of suggesting constructive action that might be taken to better the situation.

## CHAPTER V

## ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The foregoing chapters have had as their purpose a description of the present status of religious instruction in the Catholic junior high schools of the "old" city of Halifax. Recognition should be given to the positive aspects of religious instruction, such as the teachers' own view of their efforts, and the teachers' estimate of the impact of instruction on their pupils. On balance, however, the situation is very serious. The large proportion of teachers with weak motivation, training and commitment presents a threat that must be countered vigorously. It is well to recall Father A.M. O'Driscoll's observation that perhaps the school system may have to go through a period of no religion before its true value is appreciated.

The situation as described in this thesis is not unique to the "old" city of Halifax. For example, Father John Murphy, of the Hi-Time series, who has travelled nationally in the United States, shares the same basic views as Father O'Driscoll discussed in Chapter III.

This concluding chapter will try to assess the religious education situation, and attempt a projection for the future.

The questionnaire made it obvious that the motive for teaching religion is inadequate. Some teachers are willing to carry on as they do at present, admitting for the most part that they are not skilled religion teachers. Some

teachers seem to appreciate religion in an idealistic manner but, in point of fact, they do not generally wish to practice what they believe to the extent of getting fully involved with the programme. Only thirteen per cent teach religion because they genuinely like to do it. If given a free choice only twenty-four per cent would teach religion on a regular basis, while thirty-four per cent would do so now and then; another thirty-four per cent would not do so at all.

Most teachers prepare, seemingly, for religion class to the same extent as they prepare for their academic courses. But surely religious thinking is evolving more radically, and hence the religion lesson requires more preparation. The emphasis has shifted from strict doctrine to the law of love, from negative to positive motives - love instead of fear -, from passive submission to active participation. Over the last few years teachers have not gone to religious education in-service meetings to the extent that they should. Forty-five per cent of those teaching religion are not even interested in in-service religious training. It is quite clear that many teachers do not wish to teach religion or take the time to become more qualified. Being a Catholic or Christian appears to be the extent of their qualification. Most teachers believe that they are not qualified educationally in religion. Appreciation of guides for instruction of religion is not evident. The theory discussed in Chapter II does not seem to be utilized to the extent the courses call for.

This is not surprising if the teacher is not interested or qualified.

Priests feel unwelcome in some schools because of the negative attitude teachers openly display towards them. Many teachers believe that the priest is not active enough or helpful to them, and this, of course, ultimately affects the individual student. For example, it was shown by the questionnaire that approximately half of the teachers think that on religious matters, guidance on the part of the clergy is inadequate.

The qualifications of priests as they relate to the teaching of pupils are of paramount importance. If a priest is knowledgeable on a subject, respect results. Problems of communication between priest and teacher may indeed find their roots in the lack of a background in the teaching of religion - and the resulting insecurity - in one or both of the parties.

Those in the Religious Education Office do not seem to be fully aware of the situation. They have helped teachers in the past, but there has been no concerted effort made to keep teachers who are interested up-to-date. As Father O'Driscoll mentioned, "a saturation point was reached, where no new developments or ideas were forthcoming. Attendance and enthusiasm at meetings declined."

Also, Father O'Driscoll introduced the Come to the Father series as the programme to be used in Halifax, because it had a good background of success in other areas

of Canada. He believes that teachers have made a reasonable attempt to get to know the programme. It follows the pupil as he progresses, and discusses God in a new light, i.e., as the God of Love. On the surface that is all quite satisfactory. But, the fact remains that a great many junior high teachers do not teach this series even though it was singled out as the most promising programme by the Office of Religious Education.

There is a more general problem of the interpretation and use of the courses and course outlines available for the classroom. The authors of the various religion courses (Chapter II) discuss methodology, content and ideals, but this does not seem to have registered with enough teachers. For example, teachers suggest that the courses be revised without noting that continued revision is, in fact, a key principle advocated by the authors of courses. Nineteen per cent of the teachers indicate that their religion period is an ad-lib affair, and in classes moral issues are discussed in a haphazard manner. This implies ignorance of the fact that moral topics are organized in an acceptable way in the programmes of religious instruction discussed in Chapter II. The connection with doctrine is shown in the programmes, yet teachers say doctrine does not exist in religious instruction any more.

Those in the religious education field realize that funds, as well as the number of co-ordinators, are at a



minimum. For instance, there is but one co-ordinator and supervisor for the Halifax area, Sister Monica Story. Teachers should be aware of this predicament, in order to understand why their demands on the religious education personnel may seem to be futile or inadequately met. Even the Religious Education Office, formed in 1964, is relatively new, and implementation of ideas in a changing religious era, may need more time to develop.

As stated in the introduction to this thesis, the purpose of the undertaking was to evaluate religious instruction in the Catholic Junior High Schools of "old" Halifax. To accomplish this, the reactions of teachers towards the subject, and the actual teaching philosophy and techniques of teachers, were surveyed. The views of religious education leaders were also solicited. As a result, this author proposes that the following recommendations be considered and acted upon. The manner of implementing the proposed programme in all its aspects could be the product of a subsequent work.

(1) It is imperative that teachers, pupils and parents be involved in and committed to the teaching and learning of religion. Religious beliefs should proceed from the basis of a commitment to action, and not from a set of static principles "in print". The premises of any of a number of

programmes, as seen in a previous chapter,<sup>1</sup> should be acted upon, for they are the root of a successful approach to the teaching and learning of religion.

(2) The teaching of religion should be voluntary. Repeating to some extent what has been implied earlier in this chapter, it is apparent that some teachers do not feel committed to the role of religious instructor. Others admit that they cannot reach the pupils and convey to them the basic principles or values of religion. Still others openly disbelieve or have faith difficulties with the material they are presenting. Those who teach voluntarily should have a strong sense of purpose, as well as the enthusiasm to teach with the same vigor and strength that they apply in regular academic subjects.

(3) The teachers of religious values and doctrine should be professionally qualified. Those unwilling to devote the time needed to become properly qualified should discontinue as religious teachers. It was suggested by teachers and religious education officials that courses be given at the university level, so that a future religion educator could become knowledgeable in the subject. In-service training could be held on a regular basis to upgrade theory, methods of approach and resource materials. If religion were taught

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<sup>1</sup>These programmes are discussed in considerable detail in Chapter II.

by qualified, enthusiastic teachers, then lesson plans and resources used would be of much higher quality. Students would then hopefully come to recognize this quality and hence take religious education more seriously.

(4) The acceptance of a religion course would probably also grow if its teaching time could be interspersed with academic school subjects; that is, the timetable should be flexible enough to permit religion to be taught at times other than the traditional first period of the day. Further studies and surveys would be necessary in order to arrive at a consensus regarding both the amount of time and the best time for religious instruction.

(5) The foregoing recommendation implies that religion be a regular school subject along with English, mathematics, gymnastics, music and the other subjects of the curriculum. This was suggested rather forcefully by submissions to the Graham Royal Commission in December, 1971. It would then acquire an added value to pupils and teachers and not be seen, as it sometimes is now, as time that may be used as a free period for another, academic course. (Extra monetary rewards for teaching religion would not be involved, for it would be a regular academic subject).

(6) Communication between religious education officials and lay teachers of religion should be strengthened for the sake of unity of purpose. Constructive criticisms would then be more likely to be received in the spirit in which they

were offered.

(7) Finally the content of the instruction given in the classroom should be under constant review in order to ensure continuity of theme, methods and materials. This would place added emphasis on the teaching guides as a main source in instructing religion.

APPENDIX A

THE PURPOSE OF THIS QUESTIONNAIRE IS TO OBTAIN INFORMATION CONCERNING THE TEACHING OF RELIGION, OR THE RELIGIOUS TRAINING OF PUPILS FOR A THESIS THAT I AM IN THE PROCESS OF WRITING.

NAMES OF SCHOOLS, TEACHERS INVOLVED OR OTHER SUCH INFORMATION NOT SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED, ARE NOT NECESSARY AND WILL NOT BE USED. IF YOU DO NOT WISH TO ANSWER A PARTICULAR QUESTION, LEAVE IT OUT. SPACE HAS BEEN LEFT AT THE END OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE SO THAT ANY PERSONAL COMMENTS OR OPINIONS MAY BE EXPRESSED BY THE INDIVIDUAL WHO IS COMPLETING THE QUESTIONS.

YOU MAY ANSWER ONE OR MORE THAN ONE BY CIRCLING THE APPROPRIATE LETTER(S) OF EACH QUESTION.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND THOUGHTFULNESS IN ANSWERING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE. IT WILL BE OF GREAT USE TO ME. I LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR ANSWERS.

YOURS TRULY,

GERALD R. MCELHINEY.

PLEASE CIRCLE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING LETTERS IN ANSWERING EACH OF THESE PRELIMINARY QUESTIONS:

1. WHAT GRADE LEVEL DO YOU TEACH RELIGION?  
(a) SEVEN (b) EIGHT (c) NINE
2. HOW MANY YEARS HAVE YOU BEEN TEACHING RELIGION?  
(a) 1-3 YEARS (b) 4-10 YEARS (c) OVER 10 YEARS.
3. ARE YOU MALE OR FEMALE?  
(a) MALE (b) FEMALE.
4. ARE YOU A MEMBER OF A RELIGIOUS ORDER OR HAVE YOU EVER BEEN?  
(a) YES (b) NO
5. IF YOU TEACH GRADE SEVEN OR GRADE EIGHT RELIGION DO YOU USE THE COME TO THE FATHER SERIES?  
(a) YES (b) NO

IF YOU TEACH GRADE NINE RELIGION, IN THE BLANK PROVIDED PLEASE INDICATE WHAT SERIES OR TEXT YOU FOLLOW.

(Continued on following page)

APPENDIX A

(CONTINUED)

PLEASE CIRCLE ONE, OR MORE THAN ONE IF NECESSARY, IN EACH OF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS.

1. DO YOU TEACH RELIGION?
  - (a) BECAUSE IT IS REQUIRED OF YOU AS A PART OF YOUR TEACHING LOAD
  - (b) BECAUSE YOU GENUINELY LIKE TO TEACH RELIGION
  - (c) BECAUSE IT IS EXPECTED OF YOU AS A CATHOLIC TEACHER
  - (d) OTHER (SPECIFY)
  
2. IN YOUR OPINION DO YOU HAVE TO FOLLOW AND OBEY CATHOLIC CHURCH RULES IN ORDER TO TEACH RELIGION PROPERLY?
  - (a) YES
  - (b) NO
  - (c) DOESN 'T MATTER
  
3. IN YOUR OPINION IS IT ENOUGH TO BE A GOOD CHRISTIAN, NOT A GOOD CATHOLIC, IN ORDER TO TEACH RELIGION TO PUPILS?
  - (a) YES
  - (b) NO
  - (c) ONE IS AS GOOD AS ANOTHER
  
4. IN YOUR OPINION IS IT BETTER IN TEACHING RELIGION
  - (a) TO BE A GOOD PRACTICING CATHOLIC
  - (b) TO BE A GOOD CHRISTIAN, BUT NOT PRACTICE ALL CATHOLIC CHURCH RULES
  - (c) TO BE NEITHER
  
5. FOR RELIGION CLASS
  - (a) DO YOU PREPARE LESSON PLANS A GREAT DEAL
  - (b) DO YOU PREPARE LESSONS SOME OF THE TIME
  - (c) NOT AT ALL
  
6. DO YOU FEEL THAT IT IS NECESSARY TO PREPARE FOR RELIGION CLASS?
  - (a) YES
  - (b) NO
  - (c) SOMETIMES
  
7. DO YOU PREPARE
  - (a) MORE FOR ACADEMIC COURSES THAN FOR THE RELIGION COURSE
  - (b) MORE FOR RELIGION COURSE THAN FOR ACADEMIC COURSE
  - (c) FOR ACADEMIC AND RELIGION COURSES THE SAME AMOUNT

(Continued on following page)

APPENDIX A

(CONTINUED)

8. IS YOUR GENERAL BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE IN RELIGION ON A LEVEL WITH THE BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE IN YOUR ACADEMIC COURSES?
- (a) YES
  - (b) NO
  - (c) BOTH THE SAME
9. DO YOUR PERSONAL BELIEFS CAUSE ANY DIFFICULTY IN THE TEACHING OF RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLES?
- (a) YES
  - (b) NO
  - (c) SOMETIMES
10. WOULD YOU BE INTERESTED IN TAKING COURSES, OR IN TRAINING TO UPGRADE YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE SUBJECT?
- (a) YES
  - (b) NO (IF NO, GO TO QUESTION 13)
  - (c) UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS
11. WOULD YOU TAKE THESE COURSES IF GIVEN AT A CONVENIENT TIME FOR YOU?
- (a) YES
  - (b) NO
12. WOULD YOU TAKE COURSES IN RELIGION IF YOU WERE PAID FOR YOUR TIME?
- (a) YES
  - (b) NO
13. WOULD YOU WANT TO BE PAID FOR TEACHING RELIGION?
- (a) YES
  - (b) NO
14. DO YOU BELIEVE THAT YOU NEED A METHOD FOR TEACHING RELIGION AS YOU HAVE IN OTHER ACADEMIC COURSES?
- (a) YES
  - (b) NO
  - (c) DON'T NEED ONE
15. DO YOU HAVE A METHOD THAT YOU CONSIDER ADEQUATE IN RELIGION AS COMPARED WITH OTHER SUBJECTS YOU TEACH?
- (a) YES
  - (b) NO

(Continued on following page)

APPENDIX A

(CONTINUED)

16. IS THE THEME OF YOUR RELIGION CLASS
- (a) BASED MAINLY ON CATHOLIC CHURCH DOCTRINE?
  - (b) BASED MAINLY ON RELIGIOUS IDEAS IN CHRISTIAN LIVING?
  - (c) BASED ON AN EQUAL AMOUNT ON DOCTRINE AND CHRISTIAN LIVING?
17. DO YOU USE MAINLY
- (a) A BOOK TO TEACH FROM?
  - (b) A SET OF PERSONAL NOTES TO TEACH FROM?
  - (c) QUESTIONS ASKED BY STUDENTS, OR CURRENT HAPPENINGS, TO GET RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLES ACROSS?
  - (d) THE ADLIB METHOD (WHATEVER HAPPENS?)
18. DO YOU KNOW THAT THERE IS A RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OFFICE THAT GUIDES TEACHERS AND IS AVAILABLE TO HELP YOU?
- (a) YES
  - (b) NO
19. HAVE YOU EVER ASKED THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OFFICE FOR ASSISTANCE?
- (a) YES
  - (b) NO
20. HAVE YOU GOTTEN ASSISTANCE FROM THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OFFICE WITHOUT ASKING FOR IT?
- (a) YES
  - (b) NO
21. SHOULD YOU HAVE TO ASK FOR ASSISTANCE BEFORE THEY GIVE IT TO YOU?
- (a) YES
  - (b) NO
22. SHOULD YOU BE IN CONTACT WITH THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OFFICE FREQUENTLY THROUGHOUT THE YEAR TO KNOW WHAT IS GOING ON IN THE RELIGIOUS FIELD?
- (a) YES, THERE IS A NEED
  - (b) NO, THERE IS NO NEED FOR IT
23. IF YOU HAD A CHOICE, WOULD YOU TEACH RELIGION AT ALL?
- (a) YES
  - (b) NO
  - (c) ONLY SOME OF THE TIME

(Continued on following page)



APPENDIX A

(CONTINUED)

24. DO YOU THINK TEACHERS SHOULD TEACH RELIGION AT ALL?
- (a) YES
  - (b) NO
  - (c) ONLY IF THEY WANT TO
25. IN YOUR OPINION DO STUDENTS IN YOUR RELIGION CLASS
- (a) APPEAR TO LEARN SOMETHING FROM THE PERIOD TO PRACTICE IN DAILY LIFE?
  - (b) LEARN NOTHING THAT IS OF USE TO THEM IN THEIR DAILY LIFE?
  - (c) LEARN A GREAT DEAL TO APPLY IT TO EVERYDAY SITUATIONS?
26. DO YOU NOTICE A CHANGE FOR THE BETTER IN THE STUDENTS BECAUSE OF RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLES THEY HAVE LEARNED?
- (a) A CHANGE IN MOST STUDENTS
  - (b) A CHANGE IN SOME STUDENTS
  - (c) A CHANGE IN NO STUDENTS
  - (d) A CHANGE IN ALL STUDENTS
27. HOW IS RELIGION PERIOD SPENT?
- (a) STRICTLY ON RELIGION?
  - (b) STUDY PERIODS AT TIMES?
  - (c) A FILL-IN PERIOD ON ANY SUBJECT?
28. DO YOU FEEL FREE TO DISCUSS ANYTHING WITH REGARD TO MORALS?
- (a) YES
  - (b) NO
29. GENERALLY SPEAKING, ARE PUPILS WILLING TO DISCUSS AND ASK QUESTIONS ON ANY RELIGIOUS TOPIC?
- (a) YES
  - (b) NO
  - (c) NOW AND THEN
30. DO PUPILS ASK QUESTIONS THAT YOU FEEL YOU DO ANSWER INADEQUATELY OR NOT AT ALL?
- (a) YES
  - (b) NO

(Continued on following page)

APPENDIX A

(CONTINUED)

31. IF YOU CAN'T ANSWER A QUESTION ON RELIGION ASKED BY A PUPIL, WHAT DO YOU DO?
- (a) TRY TO FIND AN ANSWER TO BE GIVEN AT A LATER DATE
  - (b) FAKE AN ANSWER, NOT BEING SURE OF CHURCH POSITION IN THE MATTER
  - (c) GIVE YOUR OWN PERSONAL POINT OF VIEW ON THE MATTER
  - (d) PASS IT OFF WITHOUT ANSWERING
32. IF AN ANSWER DOES NOT AGREE WITH YOUR PERSONAL OPINION, WHAT ANSWER WOULD YOU GIVE?
- (a) YOUR OWN PERSONAL OPINION
  - (b) THE ANSWER AS GIVEN BY THE CATHOLIC CHURCH
  - (c) BOTH
33. WHICH WOULD YOU PUT MORE EMPHASIS ON IN RESPONSE TO PUPIL'S QUESTION?
- (a) ANSWER AS GIVEN BY CATHOLIC CHURCH
  - (b) YOUR OWN PERSONAL OPINION
  - (c) BOTH
34. HAVE YOU HAD ANY CONFLICT PERSONALLY IN MAKING YOUR DECISION TO GIVE THE ANSWER TO PUPILS?
- (a) YES
  - (b) NO
  - (c) SOMETIMES
35. DO YOU FEEL AS QUALIFIED TO TEACH RELIGION AS YOU ARE QUALIFIED TO TEACH OTHER ACADEMIC COURSES?
- (a) YES
  - (b) NO
36. ACADEMICALLY ARE YOU QUALIFIED
- (a) TO A GREAT EXTENT IN THE TEACHING OF RELIGION THROUGH SPECIAL COURSES
  - (b) ONLY TO THE EXTENT THAT YOU ARE A CATHOLIC
  - (c) NOT AT ALL
37. DO YOU FEEL QUALIFIED TO TEACH RELIGION?
- (a) YES
  - (b) NO
  - (c) AT TIMES

(Continued on following page)

APPENDIX A

(CONTINUED)

38. DO YOU FEEL THAT THERE IS COMMUNICATION BETWEEN RELIGIOUS EDUCATORS AND TEACHERS OF RELIGION?
- (a) YES (IF YES, OMIT QUESTION 39)
  - (b) NO
  - (c) AT TIMES
39. IF THERE WERE EXCELLENT COMMUNICATION BETWEEN RELIGIOUS EDUCATORS AND TEACHERS, WOULD YOUR ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE TEACHING OF RELIGION CHANGE?
- (a) YES
  - (b) NO
40. DOES THE PARISH PRIEST VISIT YOUR GRADE LEVEL TO GIVE INSTRUCTION TO PUPILS?
- (a) YES, QUITE FREQUENTLY
  - (b) NOW AND THEN
  - (c) NOT AT ALL
41. DO YOU GET ASSISTANCE ON RELIGIOUS MATTERS FROM THE PARISH PRIEST?
- (a) YES
  - (b) NO
  - (c) AT TIMES
42. DO YOU CONSIDER THE GUIDANCE OF PARISH PRIESTS ON RELIGIOUS MATTERS ADEQUATE TO YOU IN THE SCHOOL SITUATION?
- (a) YES
  - (b) NO
  - (c) ONLY IN CERTAIN CASES

SPACE HAS BEEN LEFT AT THIS POINT SO THAT ANY CONSTRUCTIVE PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS, SUGGESTIONS, COMMENTS OR CRITICISMS COULD BE ADDED IF YOU FEEL THAT IT WOULD CLARIFY ANY HAZY POINTS YOU MAY HAVE CONCERNING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.

APPENDIX B

Table to Indicate Breakdown of Answers  
to Individual Items on Questionnaire

Question	Tabulation of Answers Given Per Item	Percentage of Answers Given Per Item	Answers not Given - In Percentage Form	Total Number of Answers Given
1	(a) 19	(a) 32%	5%	56
	(b) 5	(ab) 5% (ac) 16%		
	(c) 19	(b) 8%		
	(d) 1	(c) 32% (d) 2%		
2	(a) 17	(a) 29%	7%	55
	(b) 24	(b) 40%		
	(c) 13	(c) 22% (ac) 2%		
3	(a) 36	(a) 59%	5%	56
	(b) 11	(b) 20%		
	(c) 9	(c) 16%		
4	(a) 33	(a) 55%	12%	52
	(b) 17	(b) 29%		
	(c) 2	(c) 4%		
5	(a) 12	(a) 21%		59
	(b) 41	(b) 69%		
	(c) 6	(c) 10%		
6	(a) 36	(a) 59%	2%	58
	(b) 6	(b) 10%		
	(c) 16	(c) 27%		
7	(a) 49	(a) 82%	<del>2%</del>	58
	(b) 9	(b) 16%		

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(CONTINUED)

APPENDIX B

Question	Tabulation of Answers Given Per Item	Percentage of Answers Given Per Item	Answers not Given - In Percentage Form	Total Number of Answers Given
8	(a) 28	(a) 47%	2%	58
	(b) 26	(b) 44%		
	(c) 3	(c) 5%		
9	(a) 10	(a) 17%	2%	58
	(b) 33	(b) 55%		
	(c) 15	(c) 26%		
10	(a) 12	(a) 20%	2%	58
	(b) 27	(b) 45%		
	(c) 18	(c) 31%		
11	(a) 26	(a) 44%	49%	30
	(b) 4	(b) 7%		
12	(a) 16	(a) 27%	53%	28
	(b) 12	(b) 20%		
13	(a) 12	(a) 20%	8%	54
	(b) 42	(b) 72%		
14	(a) 47	(a) 80%	8%	54
	(b) 5	(b) 9%		
15	(a) 26	(a) 44%	8%	54
	(b) 28	(b) 48%		
16	(a) 3	(a) 5%	5%	56
	(b) 34	(b) 58%		
	(c) 19	(c) 32%		

(Continued on following page)

(CONTINUED)

APPENDIX B

Question	Tabulation of Answers Given Per Item	Percentage of Answers Given Per Item	Answers not Given - in Percentage Form	Total Number of Answers Given	
17	(a) 19 (b) 2 (c) 10 (ac) 9 (ad) 5 (abd) 2	(cd) 1 (d) 5  (bcd) 1 (abc) 1 (abcd) 3 (acd) 1	(a) 32% (b) 4% (c) 17% (ac) 16% (cd) 8% (abd) 4%	(cd) 2% (d) 8%  (bcd) 2% (abc) 2% (abcd) 5% (acd) 2%	59
18	(a) 53 (b) 6	(a) 90% (b) 10%	2%	59	
19	(a) 17 (b) 41	(a) 29% (b) 69%	2%	58	
20	(a) 19 (b) 37	(a) 32% (b) 63%	5%	56	
21	(a) 14 (b) 40	(a) 24% (b) 68%	8%	54	
22	(a) 25 (b) 22	(a) 43% (b) 37%	20%	47	
23	(a) 14 (b) 20 (c) 20	(a) 24% (b) 34% (c) 34%	8%	54	
24	(a) 11 (b) 8	(a) 19% (b) 13%	7%	55	
25	(a) 47 (b) 4	(a) 79% (b) 7%	7%	55	

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## APPENDIX B

Question	Tabulation of Answers Given Per Item	Percentage of Answers Given Per Item	Answers not Given - in Percentage Form	Total Number of Answers Given
26	(a) 1 (b) 35 (c) 13 (bc) 1	(a) 2% (b) 58% (c) 22% (bc) 2%	16%	50
27	(a) 41 (b) 14 (abc) 1	(a) 69% (b) 24% (abc) 2%	5%	56
28	(a) 40 (b) 18	(a) 68% (b) 30%	2%	58
29	(a) 24 (b) 8 (c) 26	(a) 41% (b) 13% (c) 44%	2%	58
30	(a) 30 (b) 23	(a) 51% (b) 39%	10%	53
31	(a) 22 (b) 1 (c) 13 (ac) 19	(a) 37% (b) 2% (c) 22% (ac) 32%	7%	55
32	(a) 4 (b) 19 (c) 28 (bc) 1	(a) 7% (b) 32% (c) 47% (bc) 2%	8%	54
33	(a) 31 (b) 1 (c) 20	(a) 53% (b) 2% (c) 33%	12%	52
34	(a) 10 (b) 28 (c) 16	(a) 17% (b) 47% (c) 27%	8%	54
35	(a) 17 (b) 41	(a) 29% (b) 69%	2%	58

(Continued on following page)

APPENDIX B

(CONTINUED)

Question	Tabulation of Answers Given Per Item	Percentage of Answers Given Per Item	Answers not Given - in Percentage Form	Total Number of Answers Given
36	(a) 18	(a) 30%	7%	55
	(b) 33	(b) 56%	7%	
37	(a) 13	(a) 22%	2%	58
	(b) 17	(b) 29%	5%	
38	(a) 6	(a) 10%		56
	(b) 29	(b) 49%		
39	(c) 21	(c) 36%		35
	(a) 16	(a) 27%		
	(b) 19	(b) 33%		
40	(a) 12	(a) 20%	40%	57
	(b) 28	(b) 47%	4%	
41	(c) 16	(c) 27%		56
	(ab) 1	(ab) 2%		
42	(a) 19	(a) 32%	5%	54
	(b) 27	(b) 45%	8%	
	(c) 9	(c) 16%		
	(dc) 1	(dc) 2%		
	(a) 16	(a) 27%		
	(b) 29	(b) 49%		



APPENDIX C

The following quotations are intended to illustrate varying attitudes of teachers on the teaching of religion. All appeared as comment at the end of the questionnaire where criticisms, comments, suggestions or observations were encouraged.

I don't mind what I am doing presently, but I am not interested in changing. I feel that I can impart concepts of man's dignity and respect for others and an awareness of the needs of others and that we have a responsibility towards others.

I hope the results of your questionnaire will be passed on to the Religious Education Office or the Commission, or the Archbishop. In Junior High there is a desperate need. This age group needs contact with a priest, both as a friend and a priest on a continuous basis. I would like to see Religion continued in the schools but perhaps it should be voluntary for both students and teachers. We are asking students to accept ideas and values, which many of them honestly disagree with. We have just not found the method of 'getting through'. It appears that our world and theirs differ greatly.

1. Too much time is allotted to teaching religion.
2. Too little material and/or guidance is given for teaching religion.
3. Too many teachers who are not qualified to teach religion by background and/or interest are forced into this role.
4. Too little interest shown by parish priests in the religion taught in the schools.
5. Too little interest is shown by parents in the teaching of religion. Parents should be involved in the actual teaching.
6. Less time, trained catechists, a multi-media approach in staggered periods throughout the school day, and more clergy and parental involvement would vastly improve the teaching of religion in the schools.

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APPENDIX C

(CONTINUED)

Two years ago a Sister from the Religious Education Office came to help us at our school. She would come at least once a month at 8:30 a.m. It was helping some of us and others found that she had a wonderful background to teach religion, which we didn't have. She assisted at these gatherings and one day she told us that some parent or parents had called in and told her that some teachers were not teaching religion but had study periods, etc. Those of us who were trying hard were rather upset. To me because religion is so important, I think someone qualified should teach, then that person would more than likely want to teach it. Also 8:40 a.m. in the morning is rather a poor time. Not too many of us can get fired up on a subject that we don't feel like teaching (because not qualified) at that time!

It has been stated that students in Grade Nine do not want Religion. I have found that they do want it. They are interested if the material related to their everyday living. The Hi-Time (Awake) issued weekly provides this opportunity. It is current and stresses the importance of "living as a Christian". Our relationship with God and those with whom we come in daily contact.

1. On the questionnaire. I wasn't too struck on the questions (their wording) where there is opposition between the teacher and Catholic Church views - especially the Christian vs Catholic angle. I didn't find a particularly suitable answer available. The comments I made are sincere - hope they don't foul up your thesis.

2. On the subject. I am actually quite concerned about the teaching of religion, as you have probably noticed. Here are my main points.

(a) Question 24 - No teacher should be forced to teach religion. Naturally people do their best when doing what they want to. If they are forced their effectiveness is reduced - no matter what they are doing.

(b) The set-up of the religion courses - content, approach, time allotment, teaching aids, etc. - is ineffective now. It needs an overhaul.

(c) There should be a qualified, interested person at the helm - a PAID director - preferably lay.

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APPENDIX C

(CONTINUED)

He should always keep in touch with his religion teachers.

(d) The courses should be set up so that a minimum of extra work is to be done by the teacher. He is paid to teach academic courses and not religion. They will get priority. It's expecting too much to expect him to add to what is already a full load. The course should be a pre-planned one.

To teach in Halifax City we must state our religion, if Catholic we must teach Religion five days a week. I disagree with that. Course we must teach does not have enough "doctrines" in it. It is based on the idea of "being oneself" without any trace of hypocrisy. That is good but it is left to the teacher to do the necessary proof of this in the life of Christ. That requires a great deal of preparation - time element. Students know the assistant priest as a real friend. That is a very good beginning for the teacher.

Not enough attention is given to the teaching of religion in areas where the home environment does not support the teaching of the Catholic Church. It is here that the Religious Education Office could be of great assistance because the broad concepts of moral values as taught by the Church may not be the mode of living at home and the children are caught in the middle. How can the two be reconciled is the problem the classroom teacher has to face. Help is sorely needed.

Money is being wasted by Office of Religious Education on textbooks. They are not tapping the most important resource - the people who are living a true Christian life - of course - they are becoming fewer in number as each day passes.

I am not against religious education, only the way it is administered in "Catholic schools". Formal religious education is the responsibility of parents and the Church. Catholic teachers have the same task as all Catholic laymen and that is, to teach by their example.

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APPENDIX C

(CONTINUED)

I feel that I am more of a Christian than a Catholic because I do not believe in the Pope and dislike his aloofness and arrogance. I avoid any discussion on this or any other points that I feel so strongly about. I want my students to form their own philosophies and I don't want to prejudice them. For this reason I find teaching religion very difficult, but I feel my students need spiritual guidance. I would like to be able to touch on morals because many students in my area do not get any guidance at home.

The point of religious instruction is not really stressed in my classes. It usually begins with a religious theme but boils down to social questions from a Christian point of view. Ex. "Thou shalt not kill" leads to a discussion of abortion. This is the best method of communicating to my class without complete boredom being the result. Practicality stressed with theological viewpoints.

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- (b) Catholic Women's League
- (c) F.J. Abbass, Director, Office of Religious Education, Diocese of Antigonish
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- (d) Living With Christ - Course One, Saint Mary's College Press, Winona, Minnesota. 1972-1973
- (e) Witness-Discover, Witness-Discover, Dayton, Ohio. 1972-1973.

## Interviews

- (a) Sister Romaine Bates (present Director of Religious Education for the Halifax Archdiocese) October 28, 1971 and February 10, 1972.
- (b) Father A.M. O'Driscoll (former Director of Religious Education for the Halifax Archdiocese) October 3, 1971 and October 13, 1971.
- (c) Sister Monica Story (present Consultant for Canadian Catechism and Halifax City Co-ordinator) November 4, 1971.

### Minutes

- (a) Minutes of the "Board of Advisors" of the Office of Religious Education, 1964.
- (b) Minutes of Religious Education Commission, December, 1968 and January, 1969.
- (c) Halifax School Board Minutes, November 28, 1968.

### Letters

- (a) From Gerald Berry, Archbishop of Halifax, to Fr. A.M. O'Driscoll, dated April 3, 1964.
- (b) From Fr. A.M. O'Driscoll to this author, dated February 10, 1972.
- (c) From Archbishop James A. Hayes to Fr. A.M. O'Driscoll, dated February 7, 1969.
- (d) From Fr. Lloyd Robertson, Vicar of Religious Education to Sister Romaine Bates, dated March 5, 1971.

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