Teacher Faith Education for *A Secular Age*: Issues in and Insight for Alberta's Catholic Schools

by

Dean C. Sarnecki

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Secondary Education
University of Alberta

Abstract

In this philosophical study the author investigated the reality of religious pluralism and secularism and their effects on Catholic education in Alberta to provide insight into improvements for teacher faith formation. He used Charles Taylor's (2007) work, *A Secular Age*, as a lens through which to examine both belief and unbelief in today's world and his language surrounding secularism and belief. As the academic literature has shown, several educational issues consistently compel controversy among Canadians and publicly funded Catholic education. A detailed examination of the most significant conflicting issues is necessary for faith formation in a diverse, secular space of education in the province. The author examined four issues examined: (a) defining religious education in the secular age, (b) analyzing varying viewpoints of the purpose of human being and Catholic education, (c) ecology and care for creation and Catholic schools as possible points of congruence, and (d) the courts as the battleground of a culture war between secular society and Catholic schools. Building upon these chapters and the literature about faith formation, he presents the implications and recommendations for Catholic education in Alberta and offers insight into the future of Catholic teachers' formation, professional development, and opportunities for teachers' formation as Catholic witnesses.

Key words: Catholic education, teacher formation, Charles Taylor, secularism, religious education

I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity. . . . Choose life so that you and your descendants may live. (Deuteronomy 30:15, 19b)

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect. (Romans 12:2)

Acknowledgements

Dr. Jim Parsons, after every basketball game we coached against each other, over 10 years would ask when I was going to start my doctorate program. When he taught my daughter Emilie at the University of Alberta, Dr. Parsons encouraged her to get me started. This frequent invitation to work together was the reason for this project – it would never have happened without him, and I am forever grateful.

Dr. Matt Hoven has been a colleague and friend for over 20 years. His knowledge, support, and encouragement were indispensable for the completion of this project. He was a constant source of inspiration and positivity, especially during my periods of doubt. I will never forget his gentle prodding and assistance. He receives credit for seeing me through to completion.

The Alberta Catholic School Trustees Association, my employer at the time supported this work. There are too many trustees, superintendents, and bishops involved to mention; but special thanks to Presidents Tony Sykora and Adriana LaGrange, and Michelle Collett and Lorraine Chellakudom who encouraged me in this project while I worked full-time

Many friends served as cheerleaders, in particular: Michael Hauptman, Fr. Stefano Penna, Paul Corrigan, Jamie McNamara, Mike Paonessa, Dr. Eugenia Kowalczyk, Kevin and Dr. Mona-Lee Feehan, Anna Loparco, Dr. Robert Murray, Terry Letwin, David Wells, and Mike Patin.

My mother, Theresa Sarnecki—a lifelong learner who forever encouraged—okay, pushed—education on her children; She has loved and supported me, and I am forever grateful for all that she has done. I wish that Dad were here for this. Dr. John Sarnecki, Dr. Mary Catherine Harrison, and Drs. Daniel and Jocelyn Bachman served as academic models. I have a

great support network that includes aunts, cousins, in-laws, nieces, and nephews—too many to name. My in-laws, Domenico and Maria Amelio, who passed away while I was writing this thesis, treated me as a son, supported me always, and I am forever grateful.

Finally, my children, Michael, Jennifer (and Mike), and Emilie: I love them dearly and I am very proud of them and what they have accomplished as professionals and people. Antonia: This could not have happened without her encouragement, support, and love. You believed in me even when I didn't—what else can anyone ask for? Thank you.

Table of Contents

Glossary

Age of Authenticity: A term that Taylor (2007) used to define the post-1960s era in which spirituality was decentralized and deinstitutionalized, leading to a personal spirituality and individualist belief system that each person chooses. The notion of expressive individualism arises from the relativism and uniqueness that began during the Enlightenment and became part of the social imaginary of the present.

Apostolic exhortation: Type of communication from the Pope that encourages people (not only Catholics, but also all people) to consider a serious issue and respond. It does not necessarily define Church doctrine (E.g., *Laudato si', Gaudete et exsultate, Evangelii nuntiandi,* and *Catechesi tradendae*).

Catechesis: Forming Christians includes many forms and stages of teaching. Catechesis is for those who accept belief in Christ and leads into a deeper understanding of the teachings of the Church and relationship with Jesus.

Catechist: According to the *Directory for Catechesis* (Pontifical Council for the Promotion for the New Evangelization, 2020), a catechist is "a witness of faith and keeper of the memory of God," "a teacher and mystagogue," and an "accompanier and educator" (para. 113). Through baptism, all Christians are called to share and witness faith; catechists are especially called to be formed and ready to witness at all times. Teachers in Catholic schools might also be catechists. Generally catechists are specifically trained, often teachers, who share faith in parishes and schools. Ideally, all Catholic teachers would be catechist, but this is not the case..

Catholic: From the Greek *Katholikos*, which means "pertaining to the whole" or universal. Capitalized, it refers to the Catholic Church centered in Rome and led by the Pope.

Congregation for Catholic education: One of several congregations (ministries or departments) of the Catholic Church responsible for the oversight and mission of Catholic schools throughout the world as governed by canons 793-806 of Canon Law (Canon Law Society of America Canon Law Society of America, 1983).

Cross-pressure: In the writings of Charles Taylor (2007) this idea refers to the variety and "pressures" that stem from spiritual options, including the tension of living in a world/ society that pulls a person to immanentization despite having heard the whisper of transcendence.

Ecospirituality/ecopedagogy: The understanding or sense of an interrelationship between humanity and creation, including the realization of religion to "rediscover" its connection to nature; a movement from critical theory (as found in Freire and Boff) that calls for education to include a form of ecological awareness and formation.

Enchantment: The ability to be and state of being enraptured and engaged with transcendence and a sense of wonder; a world filled with spirits and beings and interconnectedness that is alive with magic. Taylor (2007) claimed that the world has "flattened"; the sense of wonder and awe, delight and fascination has diminished. Society has removed the "spell" of the enchanted world.

Exclusive humanism: Unlike other eras when it was unimaginable for the general public to see the world through an immanent lens, exclusive humanism suggests that a human life can have meaning and purpose without resorting to the divine or transcendent.

Evangelization: Literally, the announcement of the Gospel (good news) and the first proclamation to those who have not heard of Christ, the "good news" of salvation. It often refers to the proclamation to unbelievers or those who have never heard the

message of salvation but cam refer to the call to the ongoing growing in faith of all Christians.

Fragilization: Presented with a variety of beliefs and given the option to choose a person's belief system, an individual's beliefs can become fragile or questionable in the face of options.

Hermeneutics: A method or theory of interpretation, especially of literary documents, including the Bible and other religious writings.

Immanent frame: A constructed social space that frames our lives wholly in the natural (vs. the supernatural) world. It is the physical and material universe within which we all live. It precludes the possibility of transcendence.

Laity: All members of a religious organization or a church who are not clergy or ordained. In Catholicism, all members are laity except some men who are ordained as deacons, priests, or bishops.

Modernity: Often used to describe the period in history that follows the Reformation and begins with the Renaissance, Age of Reason (17th century), and the Enlightenment (18th century). This period is marked by the decline of the transcendent, a reliance on science and logic in the natural world, and a move to the centrality of the individual. Many social scientists consider the modern era to have ended in the 1930, followed by the postmodern period. These social scientists would describe the present age as simply "the present," whereas some (Taylor included) would claim that it is still modernity.

Postmodern: A movement across many fields, including philosophy, art, architecture, and the social sciences, that marks the transition from the modern to the fall of the modern notion

of science, narrative, and objective truth to the growing sense of skepticism, moral relativism, hyperindividualism, and rejection of all things modern.

Religious orders (religious): In the Catholic tradition, some men and women choose to form groups around the charism of a particular founder of a religious community to live a communal life style of prayer, obedience, discipline, and service. In Western Canada, many religious orders, including the Oblates (Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate), Grey Nuns (Sisters of Charity of Montreal), and the Faithful Companions of Jesus, founded and staffed Catholic education institutions.

Secularism: It is difficult to define secularism because it is often understood in a particular context. Secular(ism) can be the removal or separation from the public sphere of religion and belief to a sociological understanding of the replacement of religion and belief in society (superstition) with logic and reason (science).

Social imaginaries: The sensibilities and background assumptions that humans live out our aspirations. They shape what we take for granted in giving sense to our everyday practices. Social imaginaries are the ways in which we understand and imagine our existence in society, how we interact with others, and the expectations that we normally meet; as well as the common understanding of groups of people that makes the common, widely shared practices, values, and beliefs the legitimate understanding of the majority of the group or culture (Taylor, 2007, pp. 171-172). It can also refer to the structures that underpin society, including morality and justice.

Transcendence: Modernity suggests that the world is all there is. We are locked in an "immanent frame" that is limited to the natural world. Transcendence for Taylor (2007) was more than the religious notion of the divine, but pointed beyond our self-interest, an

interconnectedness to the entire cosmos, and that which directs us to the supernatural (p. 20). Rather than define transcendence or transcendent, Taylor used language such as "something beyond," (p. 16), "transformation beyond ordinary human flourishing," (p. 430), and "communion with (love of) God" (p. 278), for example.

CHAPTER 1: FOCUS OF THE STUDY

In legislative documents, a preamble provides the purpose, aims, and justification for an act of legislation. The Alberta Education Act (Province of Alberta, 2012) outlines the premise for education in Alberta in seven statements, one of which reads:

> WHEREAS the Government of Alberta believes in and is committed to one publicly funded education system that provides a choice of educational opportunities to students and that honours the rights guaranteed under the Constitution of Canada in respect of minority language and minority denominational education through the dimensions of public, separate and Francophone schools. (p. 12)

The Education Act clearly articulates the existence of a single, pluralist system of education that preserves the right of religious minorities to separate school education. This legislation not only recognizes but also guarantees the rights of the religious minority to educate and form children in a manner consistent with the views of their parents and their religious beliefs.

The establishment of a dual education system—the existence of public and separate schools based on religion—in the North-West Territories in 1875 led to the coexistence of divisions with differing worldviews, beliefs, and perspectives in Alberta. The dual education system, based on religion, allowed and protected both Catholic and Protestant churches to maintain their religious character and education. However, over time, schools that were originally Protestant (and the majority public) went through a period of rapid secularization in the 20th century, which essentially created a system of Catholic separate and secular public schools.

Secular society has evolved, and moral, sociological, anthropological, and religious views, many of which were historically deemed immutable, have changed and diversified, which has led to conflicting ideologies and beliefs. Since the Protestant Reformation and Enlightenment, the increased diversity among religious groups, the rise of nonreligious

worldviews, and the animosity among them have all intensified. The result has been significant clashes with regard to the role of religion and belief in the public forum. New legislation, cultural opinions, and the interpretation of human rights, religion, and the ideologies that underpin these issues, collide, often explosively and publicly.

In addition, the theological and anthropological teachings and beliefs of Catholic Christianity are at times diametrically opposed to many of the current social ideologies and culture. The media, from traditional print to social media, have become strongly polarized. The result is the creation of a diversity of understandings and visions of the world and a plurality of values and beliefs that have led to tension in society (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2013). Publicly funded Catholic education in Alberta has become one of the battlegrounds where many of these ideological conflicts are fought.

In Alberta, thousands of teachers daily teach, form, and evangelize nearly 200,000 students in Alberta Catholic schools (Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association [ACSTA], 2020). Catholic school authorities hire close to 400 teachers who are new to the profession each year, and many more join Catholic schools from outside Alberta or transfer within Alberta from public schools. Catholic leaders—including trustees, administrators, parents, and church leaders—have expectations not only for expertise in pedagogical methodology and faith permeation across the curriculum, but also for teachers in Catholic schools to share the faith and values of the institution and continue their ongoing personal formation as members of Catholic educational institutions.

Alberta has a variety of teacher education programs with a range of perspectives and worldviews that prepare teachers for Alberta classrooms. Secular institutions include the University of Calgary, University of Lethbridge, Mount Royal University, and Concordia

University (previously Lutheran); and universities with religious affiliations that encourage, permeate their classes, or require coursework in religion, such as Kings' University (Christian Reformed), Burman (Seventh Day Adventist), Ambrose (Christian Missionary Alliance and Church of Nazarene), and St. Mary's University (Catholic). The non-sectarian University of Alberta is affiliated with St. Stephen's College (United Church of Canada) and St. Joseph's College (Catholic), and the Faculty of Education accepts certain theological courses toward the completion of an education degree.

No matter the relationship, availability of courses, and spiritual-formation activities, because of the limited opportunity to incorporate them within limited timetables, few students who graduate from teacher-preparation programs in Alberta have the theological or spiritual preparation to effectively witness the faith necessary or are equipped academically to provide faith instruction and leadership in Catholic schools. The influence of modern culture, including social media and school curricula, at both the K-12 and postsecondary levels, often reflect values and beliefs inconsistent with Christian beliefs and Catholic teachings. This cultural milieu is far more powerful than any single course in Christian theology, morality, and scripture that students in university preparation programs take. Pope Francis (2020) recently reminded teachers—those responsible for education and the formation of youth—that "their responsibility extends also to the moral, spiritual, and social aspects of life" (para. 114)[1]. Are our teachers, both preservice and experienced, formed to share their faith responsibilities as Catholic teachers?

Research Question

By their witness and their behaviour, teachers are first in importance to impart a distinctive character to Catholic schools. It is therefore essential to ensure their continuing

[1] Catholic Church documents are divided into paragraphs, not pages, and "para." refers to the paragraph number in the document.

formation through some form of suitable pastoral provision. The aim must be to animate them as witnesses of Christ in the classroom and tackle the problems of their particular apostolate, especially regarding a Christian vision of the world (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977, para. 78).

In this study I sought to inform stakeholders, Catholic education leaders and families, and the general public on the obstacles, issues, and possible best practices and strategies to educate and form Catholic teachers in university preparation programs; as well as on the need for the ongoing professional development of teachers and administrators in Catholic schools. The guiding questions are as follows:

1. What principles, in light of colliding perspectives and rapidly changing societal expectations and values in Alberta, can inform the preservice preparation and professional development of Catholic teachers?
2. How can Catholic education engage a rapidly changing, secularizing world, offer alternative perspectives, and assist those who uphold the importance of religious faith in the faith formation of teachers?
3. In light of these questions, how can the language and thought of Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor on secularism and belief provide a lens through which to inform Alberta's pluralistic educational system?

Catholic Education as Public Education

All education, whether Catholic or public, is values loaded and biased in favour of a particular perspective or worldview. Most educators and philosophers agree that education, as reflected in its curricula and methodologies, is influenced by the culture in which it is created, by those who write it, by the purpose of education as defined by those in authority, and by the

intended population to which it is taught (Dewey, 1916; Freire, 1970/2000; Levinson, 2002; Palmer, 1998; Topping, 2015). In Alberta, governments have used Ministerial Orders on Learning[2] to set the direction for curriculum development and classroom teaching; each Ministerial Order reflects many factors, including cultural ideologies, visions of education, anthropologies, societal needs, and other diverse realities of the time. Teacher education programs and professional development adapt to the requirements of programs of studies to ensure that the ideologies and expectations of the society at that time are reflected in the classrooms of the province.

Education reflects culture, values, and beliefs that are formed through human relationships and are defined by particular experiences. Catholic education is no different in that it reflects a distinctive Enlightenment rationalism and preference for individualist autonomy over other systems of belief. Berner (2017) wrote:

> The Catholic Church also claims that education is morally charged, but for a different reason: human beings are "made in the image of God" and thus education inevitably involves "man whole and entire, soul united to body in unity of nature, with all his faculties natural and supernatural." It is inadequate to separate religious instruction from the other subjects: "every other subject taught [must] be permeated with Christian piety. If this is wanting, if this sacred atmosphere does not pervade, . . . little good can be expected from any kind of learning." Thus, only a Catholic education can possibly capture the truth about human beings and thus prepare students to serve the world that God has made . . . . This makes no sense apart from the traditions and sacred texts that inform Catholic beliefs. (p. 13)

Public schools also provide a perspective that influences and forms the community in which it participates. Berner (2017) argued that public schools "reflect a distinctive Enlightenment rationalism and preference for individualist autonomy over other systems of belief" (p. 36). Whether it is the overt teaching of "ethics," "character," or "civics" (Campbell,

[2] For instance, the UCP government in Alberta announced a new Ministerial Order on Learning (Government of Alberta, Department of Education, 2020).

2017) or the decisions at the school, division, or provincial level in regard to curriculum[3] and codes of conduct, the staff in all schools teach and share values and worldviews with their students.

Catholic Schools in Alberta

Members of religious communities sent from Quebec, France, and later Ireland and the Maritimes organized and led pre-Confederation Catholic education in Western Canada. These religious people—priests, brothers, and sisters—were the primary teachers and witnesses in Catholic schools in Alberta for close to 100 years. However, the 1960s brought about a dramatic change in Canadian society and the Catholic Church. By the 1970s, laity formed a significant component of the teaching staff in Alberta Catholic schools and reduced the number of members of religious communities drastically (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982; Hoven, 2015a; Mulligan, 2006: Tkach, 1983).

Today, members of religious orders or priests as teachers in schools are very rare. This change has signalled the demise of visible, prophetic witnesses, persons who through their dress, lifestyle, and vows provided students and parents with the Gospel or Good News. The withdrawal of Christian witnesses who wore religious attire from the classrooms has reduced the presence of visual symbols of faith and, in many ways, contributed to Catholic school students' (and lay staff's) personal experience of relationship and faith. In such a vastly changing cultural landscape, students have diminished opportunities to encounter and experience such obvious witnesses to faith in schools and in the public sphere.

[3] For example, the Ministerial Order (Government of Alberta, Department of Education, 2020, para. 028/2020) from Education Minister Adriana LaGrange articulates attitudes, skills, knowledge, and values that permeate and guide education in Alberta. It sets the foundations for curriculum, learning, and conduct in all Alberta schools.

The differences in appearance and worldviews in Catholic schools have often caused strife among their supporters and dissenters. *Hansard* from the Senate debates of 1875 on the Northwest Territories Act and education legislation presented the same arguments used today to discount and attack Catholic education. According to Lupul (1974), Protestants and secularists in newly formed Canada argued that Catholic schools were not only unnecessary, but also destructive to the growing identity of the new country. Examples of the discussions from *Hansard* included the following:

- Forcing the provinces to include separate school education is contrary to the spirit of the *Constitution*, which gave education rights to the provinces to decide.
- Catholics do not need "protection."
- Education and all people would benefit if they were trained together;
- Religious education and instruction should be offered in the home and in churches by clergy.

In response, supporters of separate (generally Catholic) schools countered with the following arguments:

- Separate school rights in the BNA Act actually remove discord in the future in Canada when one group tries to overpower minority rights.
- The *Constitution* protected minority rights in the future provinces and did not leave the elimination of these rights to the whim of a resolute majority.
- Parents have a right to educate children as they please.
- Children can acquire secular and religious knowledge simultaneously as they grow and mature.

- A separate-schools clause in the *Constitution* does not necessarily mean separate schools; it only gives the minority the same rights as the majority to choose their own schools and form of education.

In the tension between secular and religious worldviews, as well as between progressive, postmodern views and traditional family values, sits publicly funded Catholic education in Alberta. It is an old, ongoing story that began prior to Confederation, and opponents of denominational schools have recently claimed that the schools are "obsolete, unnecessary, expensive, and contrary to what we understand about personal and religious freedom and the religious neutrality of the provincial government" (King, 2016, para. 2).

Reasons for Catholic Schools in Alberta

The presence of publicly funded (both fully and partially) Catholic education in Canada has cultural, religious, educational, and historical reasons. The first primitive schools in what is now Alberta were established on the arrival of the Catholic Oblate missionaries, Fathers Blanchet and Demers, in 1838 at Fort Edmonton. In the 1840s, Catholic missions were created at Lac St. Anne, Lesser Slave Lake, and Grande Prairie. The Oblate fathers were the first of many priests and religious who introduced Catholic education in what is now central and northern Alberta.

Father Albert Lacombe, an Oblate of Mary Immaculate, introduced formal schooling in Alberta. He arrived at Lac St. Anne in 1852 and immediately began to instruct both adults and children. Around the same time, Bishop Tache of St. Boniface sent various female religious orders, including the Faithful Companions of Jesus, Providence Sisters, and the Congregation of Notre Dame, west to minister in the fields of education and health care for both the Native populations and the growing number of settlers (Feehan, 2005).

The first Northwest Territories Act in 1870, which established Canadian control over the West from the Hudson's Bay Company, and the second Northwest Territories Act of 1875, which provided funding for education, set the foundations for the current funding of public and separate schools with school boards established throughout the province that served both the Catholic and the Protestant populations where numbers warranted. Catholic public schools dominated in the French-speaking and later English-speaking Irish-immigrant areas of the province. In the second half of the 19th century the great majority of immigrants to Western Canada were from Anglican English and Presbyterian Scottish backgrounds; they filled the schools in most of the rest of the English-speaking areas. Despite being controversial, the funding of a dual school system was maintained in 1905 when Alberta joined Confederation (Tkach, 1983).

Catholic Permeation in Catholic Schools

Throughout Alberta's history, Catholic schools have consistently taught in an atmosphere of permeation of Catholic teachings and traditions. Protestant public and separate schools until recently tended to vary in their level of religious practice, and, because of a common Christian heritage among different Christian traditions, the Lord's Prayer, scripture, and the celebration of the Christian calendar were part of every child's education. By the 1960s, however, many in the formerly Protestant public schools began to recognize Canadians' changing beliefs and their revisiting of the role of religion in public life and slowly moved to a more secular educational experience (Hiemstra & Brink, 2007). Over time, public school boards, with some encouragement from the province, slowly decreased the Christian character of public schools and limited religious practice to the recitation of the Lord's Prayer (Education Act, 2012) and optional religious education classes in some areas of the province.

The Education Act (Province of Alberta, 2012, sec. 58.2) also allowed parents to withdraw students from religious activities or discussions in all schools in Alberta unless they had a direct curriculum connection (e.g., for historical, social, or literature reasons). Thus, over the last half of the 20th century public schools moved away from their Christian roots in the late 19th century and evolved into secular schools devoid of their religious origins. Catholic schools, in contrast, have continued their strong relationship with the Catholic Church and have done their best to maintain the Catholic character, practices, and academic tradition.

Historically in Alberta, the majority population, whether Catholic or Protestant, when formed the public district; and the minority religious faith established the separate division. Many areas had majority Catholic populations and, as a result, were public Catholic districts. Since the formation of the province in 1905, through amalgamation and legislation, all Catholic divisions are now separate schools (Feehan, 2011; St. Albert and Sturgeon Valley School Districts, 2012). Furthermore, in 1994 the process of regionalization and the resetting of boundaries eliminated the distinction separate from non-Catholic boards, and the process was complete in 2012; the last public Catholic board—St. Albert Public—switched its designation from public to separate and created a common understanding that in Alberta all public school boards are now secular and all separate boards are Catholic.[4]

Currently, Alberta has 22 boards with Catholic education: 185,000 students in 483 schools, taught by approximately 12,000 teachers and administrators (ACSTA, 2020). Catholic education is an integral part of education systems worldwide. Based on 2019 statistics, Catholic schools educate close to 55 million students worldwide; they are the largest nongovernment organization tasked with education in the world (Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate,

[4] The exception is St. Paul Educational Regional Authority, which sits outside constitutional guarantees and still has a Protestant separate school district: Glen Avon Protestant Separate School District.

2019). Although Catholic education remains significant provincially and internationally, the debate on its continued existence continues in Alberta (as well as Saskatchewan and Ontario). The arguments 150 years ago were about Protestant-Catholic duality, but the basis of the duality tends to be more secular—religious with the notion that government funding should not be used to support any religious beliefs or organization in the public forum.

Continuing Popularity of Catholic Schools in Canada

Despite the trend toward the secularization of society and the reduced numbers of people who publicly profess their faith in the public sphere, the Catholic population of Canada continues to rise (Bibby & Reid, 2016). More important, in Alberta, Catholic school enrolments not only remain strong but, in many cases, also grow proportionally faster than public school enrolments (Alberta Education, n.d.-b). This explosive growth has forced the Catholic community to greatly expand its search for staff for Catholic schools and adapt to the new reality of young teachers' not having been raised in actively religious households or exposed to the rudiments of faith. Throughout the world the Church has responded to the growing demand for Catholic education by forming teachers in faith and holiness to fill this need (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982). Historically this has been completed in both formal settings such as theological and education schools of formation and by informal means such as faith filled, volunteer teachers willing to teach parish based religious education.

In its teaching about lay Catholics' roles in the world, Church teaching, most recently expressed in Vatican II, the Second Vatican Council (1966) explained that "the witness of a Christian life and good works done in a supernatural spirit have great power to draw (all) to the faith and to God" (para. 6). In a community and family permeated with faith, this occurred through socialization. Today, Catholic educators are challenged to live out the Christian life

through their witness to it; they are called to be the light of hope and faith found in the Gospel so that they might work to fulfill the mission of Christ for students. However, to accomplish this mission in a secularized world where religion in the public sphere is difficult, the Church and Catholic schools must provide preservice teachers and Catholic school teachers who teach for Catholic school boards an opportunity and experiences for personal transformation and conversion.

Two Examples of Religion in the Public Sphere

The role of religious belief in culture and society has evolved and, especially in the past century, dramatically changed. Whereas once Christian religious values, teaching, literature, and symbolism dominated the public discourse, today's Western society has pushed transcendent belief systems, especially Christianity, out of public spaces or the "agora" (Acts 14 and 17), and into the privacy of homes, churches, and, ultimately, individual consciences.

Two publicly elected officials have illustrated the tensions of faith in the public square: Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and French President Immanuel Macron. Trudeau represents, for many, the archetype of modern, 21st-century belief. Although he considers himself a Catholic, he relinquishes belief to a cafeteria selection of dogmas and truths, hides his prayer and worship, and presents to the world a secular vision and "progressive" religion. Trudeau, who openly considers himself Catholic (Kennedy, 2014), has made every attempt to demonstrate regularly what he considers the necessity of a complete separation of his beliefs and public life, Church and State.

In an article in the Jesuit magazine *America*, Dettloff (2018) depicted Trudeau's belief system and his government's attack on conscience rights in Canada through the prime minister's and the Liberal Party of Canada's views of secularism, particularly in the abortion debate and

two particular instances of limits on freedom of conscience and religion. All Liberal Party candidates were required to publicly support unrestricted access to abortion to be certified by the party to run for the election, and in 2018 an attestation test for any group in Canada—business or charity—who requested grant money for summer staff was implemented. This required that all organizations, including religious organizations, attest through an oath that their primary mission was not prolife and that they supported the prochoice agenda of the government in power (Dettloff, 2018).[5] Official Catholic Church teaching prohibits abortion in nearly all circumstances.

In secular France, in contrast, French President Emmanuel Macron suggested that France needed the Catholic Church and that the Church[6] could help to restore and assist the people of France to reach former glory through engagement. In a speech to gathered Church leaders (Gregg, 2018), he regretted the divorce of the Church from the public life of governance and suggested that France's official policy of secularization, first established in the 1905 *Constitution*, created difficulties for current French society. Macron suggested the need to heal the rift between Church and State and bemoaned the role of the State in creating this separation, "If we've done so, it must be because somewhere we share the feeling that the link between Church and State has been damaged, that the time has come for us, both you and me, to mend it" (Reuters Staff, 2018, para. 4).

---

[5] In the fall of 2018 the government quietly dropped, in most cases, the requirement for an attestation but gave no reason. Organizations that overtly fight against women's human and reproductive rights are still banned. Most are Christian pregnancy counselling groups.

[6] *Church* has many understandings. The church can be a building where the faithful gather, including a local community, or parish in Catholic terminology. The Church can be part of the hierarchical structure of a particular denomination: in Catholicism the diocese as represented by the Bishop, the collection of all Catholic dioceses, or 23 Churches or "rites," headed by the Pope or "pontiff" (literally "bridge builder"), which unite all Catholics worldwide. Last, the Church can include all Christians through time and space who look to Jesus Christ as the Son of God and Saviour. In this study the term "Church" with a capital C denotes the Catholic Church as led by the Pope and centered in Rome.

Each of these views would be somewhat foreign to Canadians today. Regarding their religious beliefs, most Canadians (Bibby & Reid, 2016) exist in a state of skeptical belief—almost a postresurrection St. Thomas state of belief that requires a need for proof (see John 20:24-29) before they commit to belief in just about anything. In this world of scepticism about traditional belief, scientism, and immanence, Catholic education intersects with the secular world.

In the language of Taylor (2007), when immanence and transcendence[7] collided in a world of choice, which he described as cross pressures and fragilization,[8] confusion, distrust and division appeared. Religion itself was questioned, but so was unbelief (atheism) and how, in a modern society, space could be created for each group and enable human flourishing despite disparate beliefs. Taylor explained:

> The salient feature of Western societies is not so much a decline of religious faith and practice, though there has been lots of that, more in some societies than in others, but rather a mutual fragilization of different religious positions, as well as of the outlooks both of belief and unbelief. The whole culture experiences cross pressures, between the draw of narratives of closed immanence on one side, and the sense of their inadequacy on the other, strengthened by encounter with existing milieux of religious practice, or just by some intimations of the transcendent. (p. 595)

Taylor (2007) suggested that the current society lived in a world of constant paradox and flux in regard to freedom and belief. Historically, people have never had so much choice

---

[7] Taylor (2007) presented multiple understandings of transcendence, or going "beyond" (p. 20); for example, an agape sense of love, a higher power or "God," extension of life beyond birth and death, and interconnectedness among all creation. The immanent frame denies an explicit sense of transcendence. Transcendence is spiritual, interconnected (porous identity), enchanted, supernatural; the immanent frame is living self-sufficiently, individually (buffered identity), and within a natural reality.

[8] Taylor (2007) believed that faith in a secular age is cross-pressured or strained by the presence of multiple accounts of belief and unbelief in contemporary Western culture. According to Taylor, these multiple accounts fragilize our own accounts of faith. This fragilization nurtures the conditions for believing today and even creates a kind of epistemological crisis whereby we wonder whether our own accounts of faith are true and whether we can have enough confidence in them to live a life of fullness according to them. Paul VI (1975) in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (para. 55-56) addressed this same concept without Taylor's language.

with regard to belief (cross pressures) and essentially become paralyzed by the abundance of options for belief and almost fear choosing should they choose incorrectly (fragilization). Combined with these options were the sense of there must be "something more" (transcendence) and the fear that this life and what many sensed was all there was (immanence). Society appeared to reject many of its previous narratives and certainties and was searching for something tangible in which to believe.

Purpose of the Study

> The great challenge for Catholic schools in an increasingly secularized society is to present the Christian message in a convincing and systematic way. . . The identity and success of Catholic education is linked inseparably to the witness of life given by the teaching staff . . . School staff, who truly live their faith, will be agents of a new evangelization in creating a positive climate for the Christian faith to grow and in spiritually nourishing the students entrusted to their care. (John Paul II, 2001, para. 34)

At the intersection of the reality of immanence and transcendence, belief and unbelief, public funding and religion lies Catholic education in Canada. The purpose of this philosophical study is firmly situated in an exploration of the current reality of religious pluralism, secularism, and Catholic education to provide insight into best practices to form teachers today. In this study I frame educational issues identified in the academic literature that consistently compel controversy among Canadians and publicly funded Catholic education, examine in detail some of the specific conflicting issues/values involved, and name particular responses for the formation of Catholic educators to engage in the diverse, secular world of education in Alberta.

Canadian society, like much of the Western world, is an arena that has entertained multiple social, religious, and political changes. Especially in the past 100 years, there has been an apparent evolution of Western society from a religious, communal, enchanted world that points to the transcendent to one that is greatly influenced by individualism and immanence and ruled by reason. The individualization of faith and religion and the call for the removal of public

expressions of faith have led to a stark "flattening" of our world and thus created an age of doubt and disbelief.

Society has generally rejected the notion of transcendence, the mystery beyond normal human flourishing, and a higher reality beyond the world (Taylor, 2007, p. 44). Taylor (2007) saw the move from enchantment to disenchantment as a flattening of the world. Smith (2014), in the introduction to his companion book to Taylor's, suggested looking at the world as a topographical map. In the past it was filled with valleys and mountains ("despair" and "bliss") and hints of transcendence in everything and everywhere. Disenchantment flattened these mountains and valleys, removed the enchanted (spirits, mystery, dangers, excitement, etc.), and disenchantment led to a mundane, ordinary, life and often to a sense of malaise. Humanity turned inward to the self. This inward turn, despite giving rise to promoting human rights, individual concern for ecological issues, and a focus on self-flourishing and personal care, led postresurrection to a lopping off of the transcendence of human living, the inability to experience a sense of bliss, and, to some extent, the connectedness of human relationships.

Catholic education today finds itself in this fragile, cross-pressured setting. As a form of religious education, Catholic education exists in many shapes and within a variety of contexts; yet, at the heart of Catholic education, no matter its incarnation, is the person of Jesus Christ. Authentic Catholic education centers on Jesus as revealed to the world, as lived in community, as invitational, integral to the whole person, and lifelong (Graham, 2011).

Religious education, *Catholic education*, *catechesis*, and *religious studies* are all terms that Canadian religious educators use (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988; Congregation for Clergy, 1997; Franchi, 2013; Groome, 2014; Rymarz, 2011a) in one form or another. They describe and enunciate the action of education to share faith and foster discipleship in Catholic

schools. Since the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965; henceforth Vatican II), the diversity of educational models and structures continued to evolve and grow exponentially and effectively diversified religious education ideologies.

Personal Search for Faith and Catholic Education: A Context

Being part of a faith community, I grew up in a world with faith witnesses all around me, whether implicit or explicit. The axiom "faith is often caught and not taught" described my early faith formation (see Deuteronomy 6:4-9). My faith education began long before my formal registration in Edmonton Catholic Schools. My mother, grandmother, and aunt all worked in Catholic schools and were strongly committed to their faith. My grandparents were faithful and committed to prayer and belief. Living witnesses abounded in my family.

Whether it was Mass on Sundays, the many family gatherings to celebrate the sacraments, or the Catholic school, like a fish surrounded by water, I was breathing the air of Catholicism, not knowing that I had other options. I liked school and was blessed with many teachers who had an impact on me both academically and spiritually. The school was a source of life-giving encounters, from sacramental activity to deep friendships and to respected and spirit-filled teachers. I played hockey in a Catholic men's fraternal league organized for their children; I attended Cubs (i.e., Boy Scouts) in a Catholic "pack" at my Catholic school. I doubt that my parents had read Horace Bushnell (1953), but his question "What is the true idea of Christian education?" and his belief that "the child is to grow up a Christian, and never know himself as being otherwise" (p. 4) was the basis of my childhood. I was well into my elementary education before I came to realize that not everyone was raised in the same Catholic "bubble" that I was.

Upon high school graduation, St. Joseph's College at the University of Alberta sustained my faith through my university years; and meeting my wife, whom I always knew where to find

on Sunday mornings, deepened that commitment to the Church. Working within Catholic school systems for four decades gave me opportunities to reflect further on my faith and gave me the freedom and opportunities through faith days, retreats, and coursework to explore and learn more about Catholicism. My master's degree from Newman Theological College in Edmonton solidified the academic and spiritual formation of my life and provided the language for faith and witnesses that I had previously lacked.

The greatest challenge, as well as the greatest reward, has been my opportunity to serve as school chaplain and religious educator in a Catholic high school. From liturgical preparation, sacramental instruction, and teaching religion to literally thousands of students, and especially leading junior/senior high retreat experiences at various camps throughout the diocese, I have openly expressed my experience of the transcendent, something that Taylor (2007) said can be equated with a religious view of the world beyond the simple immanent frame (p. 20), and shared that experience with others. Catholic schools have enlivened and evangelized me, in all of their various permeations, by providing meaning and purpose, and have drawn me into a life of faith and wonder. This educational experience is one that I long to share with others; although far from perfect, this study gave me an opportunity to explore this topic deeply.

Following my graduate degree, I taught courses at Newman Theological College in Edmonton that included introductory theology and the history of pedagogy in the Church. As I read and then taught the history-of-education course, I became enamored with the material but more powerfully by the witnesses who have impacted the world in a profound manner. From Jesus to Clement, Augustine to Alcuin, Aquinas through Luther, and up through Ward and Merici, witness after witness changed and impacted the work of educators through the millennia.

What made these thinkers and educators witnesses? How did they differ from the teachers of their day and age and provide lasting visions of wisdom in their students? This led me to question how the witnesses in my life impacted me and their influence on my teaching and relationships with students and curricula. I began to ask questions about how Catholic educators might form, in an intentional manner, young people to emulate and share the essential meaning of life and value of humanity by using the witness whom they shared with others throughout history?

Not all Catholics, however, share my story of faith and witness. How do Catholic institutions, particularly in a publicly funded school system, share a faith-filled education in a province where districts are struggling to find teachers formed in faith, not to mention the calls from many in the public for the removal of religion and talk of transcendence from public forums? How can Catholic schools and teachers share faith and engage a world with the message of love and human flourishing found in Christianity in a world that pushes faith to the private sphere? For Christians, and many others inspired by the divine, the modern world without transcendence can appear cold, meaningless, and dark. According to Taylor (2007), restricting human existence to the immanent frame today lacks an eternal vision and eschatology—the soul's ultimate destiny or purpose outside of time. Immanence, or living within the immanent frame, for those who experience transcendence, limits our sense of reality and our morality or "good" within the world around us. Catholic schools, focussed on a transcendent vision, point toward and share a "great cloud of witnesses'' (Heb. 12:1).

Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor's contemporary understanding of transcendence and its place in a secular society have greatly influenced my research and studies. In his book *A Secular Age* (Taylor, 2007), he described transcendence as experiencing and living in an

enchanted creation filled with a sense of spiritually charged, interconnected relationships. I believe that Catholic education can engage students and lead them to this way of being in this world. Faith-based education can bring this sense of the transcendence to the ordinary and present or create a perspective for our students on life, love, success, and purpose that is different from a more secular, immanent worldview. To do this successfully, preservice and fully active teachers in Catholic schools must have opportunities to reflect on and evaluate their current worldviews, to experience a sense of transcendence and witness to it in a meaningful manner.

The Power of Witnesses

> Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses. (Paul VI, 1975, para. 41)

In *Evangelii Nuntiandi (Evangelization in the Modern World*) Pope Paul VI (1975) described evangelization as being witness to Jesus Christ and the most effective means of leading others to an authentic Christian life (para. 21). He repeated this theme, reaffirmed the importance of preaching the Good News, noted that authenticity comes through actions more than words, and asserted the vital role of living the Gospels as the most effective means of sharing faith. Paul VI described those who share faith as "witnesses" and highlighted the role of teachers who, by living authentic lives, are important actors in evangelization in the Church. The term witness is used in many ways; however, Pope Paul was expressing a desire for those who taught to, as Jesus did, live authentically and "proclaim the good news of the Kingdom of God" (Luke 4:43) to all whom they encountered. This was the mission of Christ and thus became the mission of all who served and followed Him.

Catholic education is the most effective when it is proclaimed by witness, said Pope Paul VI (1975). Witness emerged from a witnessing community, *maturia* (Greek), who "bear[s] credible public witness to Christian faith through lifestyle and example, living as a sacrament—

as an effective sign—of its own preaching, even to the point of suffering and death if necessary" (Groome, 1998, p. 190). Groome (1998) explained that Catholic teachers must be witnesses of the beliefs, values, and lifestyles of the community whom they represent, including "personal and social values such as honesty, truth-telling, civility, justice, respect, and compassion" (p. 206). Integrity of word and deed are essential to the credibility of witnesses.

Catholic education in Alberta requires teachers who are faith witnesses. A witness is one who experiences something, who gives evidence for or to, who bears testimony. A witness is also a herald, one who precedes or announces, who conveys and proclaims, promotes and advocates. A witness is one who perseveres and has faced struggles but overcome (Heb. 21:1); through word and deed and by their being, the witness shares good news with all.

The Vatican II decree *Ad gentes* (*To the Nations*; Second Vatican Council, 1965a) described the call of the Church to share the Gospel with the world by three means: (a) Christian witness, (b) preaching of the Gospel, and (c) the formation of Christian community. All three goals are important within the Catholic school. The role of witnesses, who share the mission of the Church throughout their lives, strengthened through the sacraments and the Holy Spirit, is central to Catholic education. Having others "observing their good works, can glorify the Father (cf. Matt. 5:16) and can perceive more fully the real meaning of human life and the universal bond of the community of mankind" (para. 11). Preaching and gathering as a community in charity follows witness as essential acts of evangelization.

The Vatican document *The Catholic School* (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977) articulated the role of Catholic schools and teachers as the model of witnesses of Christian life. These schools, the Congregation for Catholic Education stated, were to be places where expressions of Christian life are encouraged and supported (para. 19). Catholic schools, far more

than other schools, suggested the document, were to be a community whose aim was the transmission of values to live a life in Christ. The schools promoted a faith-relationship with Christ, in whom all values find fulfilment. However, faith was principally assimilated through contact with people whose daily life bears witness to it. Christian faith, in fact, is born and sustained within a community (para. 53).

Catholic teachers have a mission, set out in baptism and confirmed through the sacraments when hired they promise to make Jesus Christ the center of their lives. *The General Directory of Catechesis* (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997) clearly stated:

> No methodology, no matter how well tested, can dispense with the person of the catechist in every phase of the catechetical process. The charism given to him by the Spirit, a solid spirituality and transparent witness of life, constitutes the soul of every method. Only his own human and Christian qualities guarantee a good use of texts and other work instruments. This vocation must be cultivated and nurtured to fulfill the ministry set upon all Catholic school teachers. (para. 156)

The catechist and Catholic teacher are mediators who communicated between the people and the mystery of God. The *General Directory for Catechesis* ([*GDC*], Congregation for the Clergy, 1997) reminded catechists of their personal relationship with God and that the manner in which they live bears witness to God and the mission of the Catholic school. As Pope Paul said, witnesses had a power and strength that people today listened to and learned from. Teachers come by many names: mentor, coach, instructor, professor, parent, supervisor, master, educator, pedagogue, trainer, tutor—all of which are capable of sharing with students their gifts and skills, wisdom and knowledge. Witnesses share something deeper than a skill or a piece of knowledge; they share their lives; they open their souls and lay bare their love for the learner and the learning (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997).

How does Catholic education form witnesses for Catholic schools in Alberta? For Catholic teachers, the mission of Christ and the Church must also become their mission: to

become effective witnesses of faith and heralds of the Good News by witnessing to the salvific life in Christ and eventually become witnesses to others. In an ever-increasingly secular society, Catholic schools in Alberta struggle to provide families who desire a Catholic education with faith-filled witnesses to share the Story and Vision of Christianity and the teachings and beliefs of Christ with students. Catholic school administrators find it increasingly difficult to find qualified candidates who have been raised as faith-filled Catholics and have coupled this faith with a desire to teach in Catholic schools. In most cases, it is less a question of rejecting faith and Catholicism than never having been mentored according to Catholic tradition, teachings, and role models.

How can the Catholic community, including parishes, educational institutions, and school divisions, ensure the handing on of the Catholic spiritual tradition (from the Latin *tradere*—"to entrust or hand on") through the witness of faith-filled teachers? Currently Alberta school divisions and university teacher-preparation programs appear to take a haphazard or short-term approach to the spiritual and theological formation of students and teachers. Although they aim for a coming mission, the methods, programs, and content they engage to prepare preservice and inservice teachers for Catholic schools lack a strategic coherence. As a Catholic teacher, administrator, and leader, I am interested in identifying the theoretical framework through Taylor's work and that of academic religious educators to propose basic principles and structure for faith formation in Catholic schools in a secular Alberta.

Defining *Faith Formation*

> The teacher under discussion here is not simply a professional person who systematically transmits a body of knowledge in the context of a school; "teacher" is to be understood as "educator"—one who helps to form human persons. (Congregation for Catholic Education*,* 1982, para. 16*)*

In a course on pedagogy and Catholic education theory at Newman Theological College, Dr. Barbara Rice differentiated between the terms *training* and *formation*. To train, she said, is to provide mastery in a skill or talent, often through repetitive action or rote learning. Mastery comes with the repetition of the desired skill to the point of being able to achieve at a high level or perfection. Formation, she clarified, is more than training and incorporates the entire being of the learner. To form someone is to enable them to shape themselves more completely spiritually, physically, emotionally, and socially, which often leads that person to grow and change permanently. In forming, one does not simply acquire a skill but becomes someone new. Education is greater than training; education for Dr. Rice is a part of formation. She put a period on the discussion with the following statement: "People train dogs; teachers form human beings" (personal communication, 1992).

Although the word training is often used synonymously with education, coaching, and other forms of teaching and instruction, formation (based on Latin: "a mould or form") is the term that I purposely use in this paper to describe the process of moulding and shaping Catholic educators, students, and the Catholic community. Kirylo and Aldridge (2019) used the analogy of training as knowing how and formation as knowing why. Teachers should be more than technicians who are "learning methods, techniques, and skills" (p. 34); in reference to Freire (2000), teacher preparation is rooted in the ethical formation of individuals and the greater community.

Formation, according to Graham (2011), is a process "whereby human beings are shaped though the realities of daily life, which challenges them to grow into higher states of living" (p. 26). In a sense all education, from elementary through secondary, postsecondary, and graduate, is an attempt to prepare for a special mission and calls for formation. Graham added

that faith formation, from a Catholic perspective, embeds the "deeper reality that human beings are created by God and can only become their authentic selves by being true to their Creator" (p. 26).

The Vatican document *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the New Millennium* (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997) expressed the need for both "the time for learning and the time for formation" (para. 14). The Catholic school promotes both the acquisition of ideas and notions and the growing of wisdom that comes with formation. Formation includes not only knowledge, but also the moral and religious virtues to form the whole person. A Catholic education is concerned not only with the internal development, but also an outward concern for society (*Gravissimum Educationis*; Second Vatican Council, 1965d), and, I hope, inspires students who are ready to bear witness to the hope that is within them (cf. 1 Peter 3:15).

For Bellows (2013), "Formation is a life-long process of coming to accept God's unconditional love graciously, and respond in love to God and to one another. Evangelisation, catechesis and formation are all part of the same Christ-centered, ecclesial mission" (p. 34). She believed that formation is part of evangelisation and catechesis and described the process of maturation in faith that one has already acquired with catechesis, referring to the planned learning and teaching of the faith. The Congregation for the Clergy (1997) included an extensive description of the necessity and process of forming catechists in Chapter 2 (paras. 233-252). The *GDC* (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997) describes formation as the preparation of catechists to teach in the name of Christ and the Church (para. 236).

The language of formation and *to form* in this dissertation is intentional and important to Catholic education. Catholic educational institutions and the Catholic community have the task of ensuring that those who serve in Catholic schools are formed in a manner and to a level of

formation that authentically and honestly furthers the mission of the Church, the aim of the Catholic school, and, ultimately, the flourishing of the human person.

Implications for Catholic Education

Denominational schools create a context and opportunity for the Catholic community to teach and form students in the values of their tradition. This can happen only with teachers and administrators who share and live these same beliefs. Schools of education are teeming with students who desire to teach in Catholic schools despite the fact (from my experience) that few students are familiar with Catholic theology, values, beliefs, and culture. In many cases the teachings of the Catholic Church can conflict with and be counter to the prevailing progressive ideologies associated with exclusive humanism, the modern moral order, and the individualism the students have come to experience in most Western societies.

The Congregation for Catholic Education named many of the issues surrounding the formation of teachers on many occasions. The documents *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith* (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982, para. 60), *The Religious Dimension of Education* (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988, para. 97), and *Educating to Intercultural Dialogue in Catholic Schools Living in Harmony for a Civilization of Love* (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2013) have emphasized the necessity for teachers' formation in faith and witness. The Congregation has repeatedly highlighted the great damage that could occur should teachers lack formation and encourages all those involved in religious education to continue ongoing faith and theological formation throughout their lives.

In response to dramatic changes in both the diversity and ideology of mainstream culture and the role of religion in Canadian society over the past 50 years, I use the work of Charles Taylor as a lens through which understand this environment and to lay out the principles for

teacher faith formation in Alberta Catholic schools. Taylor, a Canadian Catholic philosopher, has worked and written extensively on postmodern society and the role of religion, both historically and today, and mapped, defined, and described the spread of secularism in the Western world. The work of Taylor is a valuable contribution and context for belief and unbelief in modern society and offers a vocabulary that serves as a philosophical and historical backdrop for postmodern thinking and our current cultural milieu. More important, he outlined key intersections between secular and religious societies, including a vocabulary that the members of a pluralistic society can share and use in dialogue.

Reflecting on secularism and using the work of Taylor as a lens through which to explore and dialogue, in the remainder of this dissertation I explore some of the key insights and implications of secularism and teachers' formation for Catholic education.

CHAPTER 2: LIVING IN A SECULAR AGE: LOSS OF TRANSCENDENCE

To understand the context of teachers' formation for Catholic schools, one must understand and reflect on the culture that forms our students, their parents, and teachers today. We live in a world flooded with what we deem progressive ideologies and values that resist pluralism and diversity in the name of intolerance and *wokefulness*—a byword of social awareness and being awakened to the realities of the world (Merriam-Webster, 2021). The current political situation in the United States as I wrote this chapter spoke to what might happen if such intolerance is fueled by ignorance or policy.

Most of our students and young people cannot imagine a world without the Internet and social media and the instantaneous knowledge of the world that these technologies provide. It is not surprising that many have the impression that all knowledge and reality can be found in a device as simple as a phone; just ask Siri. The notion of transcendence, the divine, or God for many is becoming a foreign concept. Often, it is not so much being exposed to religion and rejecting it as having never truly experienced the reality of transcendent belief systems in a meaningful and relevant manner.

For many belief in the divine or following mainstream religion is declining rapidly (Bibby & Reid, 2016), and even for those who consider themselves members of a church, practice is often sporadic. The fastest growing "religious" groups in Canada are those who claim to have no religion. Many in this group consider religion antiquated, illogical, and deluded, often because of their lack of exposure to religious belief in their youth or a worldview shaped by scientism. The world of our ancestors—and for many, including my parents and, to some extent, myself—differed from the world that formed my children.

That world is also increasingly different technologically, spiritually, and socially. Technology, culture, science, community, events, geography, among others influences, shape this reality and create a context that forms the life, beliefs, narratives, and values of each person. People who grow up in a similar age, with similar cultural experiences, are shaped by factors such as family, education, religious beliefs, and experiences; however, those factors are formed within a particular worldview that acts as a frame of reference and reality. Being raised within a family and community in a particular time and place imparts a contextual overall understanding of the world and a person's place within that world.

Although society was not completely homogeneous, people of the past lived within communities, churches, and schools that shared very similar experiences, values, and beliefs. In Western Christendom one was generally raised in a particular religious tradition, one usually remained within that community for life. People rarely, if ever, questioned the existence of God or the values of the group according to the grand narrative and the customs and cultural traditions that the group followed. The reasons for uniformity included limited travel and interaction with others, the lack of communication with outsiders, limited education opportunities, and the existing technologies, significantly different from the global village that exists today. Simply stated, there was no diversity of ideas and few people who were willing to challenge the status quo.

However, things changed. Beginning with the Renaissance and Protestant Reformation, followed closely by the Philosophical Enlightenment and the advent of new technologies such as printing presses, travel, and the rise of education, global industrialization spread new ideas; and the insular experience of life in remote areas changed dramatically. This ongoing technological

and social revolution upended the world in a manner that still has significant importance to our current world and an understanding of how things are and ought to be.

Education, specifically Catholic education, also changed with the growth in ideas, communications, psychology, and sociology. Culture is never stagnant, and changes in worldviews, technologies, and learning are ever expanding. However, what if cultural views of the world change so dramatically in a short period of time that once-immutable truths and beliefs in a divine or transcendent existence or being are no longer seen as objective truths, and competing views are seen as equally feasible? How do we reconcile—or can we?—Catholic education in a world where many reject belief in the transcendent and urge a fully secular public view? How can Catholic schools function without teachers who accept and support the traditional views of the Church?

The Work of Charles Taylor

Charles Taylor's work, as he outlined in his magnum opus *A Secular Age* (Taylor, 2007), described life today as a world in which can be found multiple realities[9] and options for belief and spirituality. In the language of Taylor, immanence (worldly, rational, and scientific) and transcendence (spiritual, enchanted, beyond-ness) collided in everyday life. Our current secular age provides a number of cross pressures, simultaneous spiritual options for belief and unbelief that impact everyone and can lead to innumerable options for belief and choice. The tension between immanence and transcendence in a sense makes belief difficult; people describe a yearning that exists that cannot be fully satisfied with worldly possession`s or simple immanent experiences. As a result, we appear to live in a world where everyone is a "doubting Thomas" (Smith, 2014, p. 4), searching for purpose and grasping for certainty but finding only doubt.

[9] See John Paul (1993, *Veritas Splendor*) and Benedict XVI (2005) as examples of the nature of relativism and worldviews.

This sense of existential angst appears to manifest itself in a more extreme manner in our youth than it did in those of older generations. Levels of anxiety and feelings of loneliness and alienation exist at higher levels. The feeling of a lack of purpose and a search for meaning are strongest among youth. Less confidence in denominational and community structures, fear of commitment, and reactions against traditional authorities loom large in this age group. Taylor (2007) suggested that the loss of a sense of the transcendence, a "disconnect" found in a buffered identity and acute individualism, led to this loss of transcendence and meaning. Yet, from this generation and context, Alberta Catholic schools search for teachers to serve as Christian witnesses for their students.

Conceptual Context

Each term I invited a Catholic school superintendent to my undergraduate introduction-to-religious education course to speak to the realities of applying for, interviewing, and teaching in a Catholic school. The superintendent would typically speak of Catholic schools as being countercultural and sacred spaces and outline expectations of teachers in a faith milieu such as a Catholic school. Inevitably, they would explain the issue of the teaching contract and the particular clause included in Catholic school employment contract that is normally called the *Catholic clause* and outlines the personal and professional morality expected of Catholic teachers.

Until this point the students are generally encouraged and optimistic, for the general understanding is that Catholic schools tend to be positive places to work, with the perception of fewer discipline problems (having taught for 30 years in Catholic education, I can attest to the falsity of this claim!) and a sense of community that comes from a shared faith. The discussion of the Catholic clause usually immediately changes the mood. "What right does the Catholic

school have to tell me how to live my life outside of school?" "I can't live with whomever I wish?" "Excuse me. If I get pregnant, you can fire me?"

In Canada, the modern Enlightenment and its values permeate our society; often religious values and beliefs conflict with progressive or secular ideas in the public square. Canadian society, like much of the Western world, is an arena that has entertained multiple social, religious, and political changes. Especially the past 100 years has witnesses the evolution from a religious, communal, agrarian, enchanted world pointing to the transcendent a world of disenchantment, based on science, reflecting an immanent worldview and ruled to some extent by reason; and the rise of individualism has greatly influenced our cultural reality. The individualization of faith and religion and the removal of public expressions of faith, or "exclusive humanism," has led to a stark "flattening" of our world that has rejected the notion of transcendence, the mystery beyond normal human flourishing, and a higher reality beyond the world (Taylor, 2007, p. 44), and turned inward to the self.

Most Canadians today, including teachers in Catholic schools, come from a nominal faith background and experience or express what Groome (2011) described as "moralistic therapeutic deism." Many Catholic teachers, especially those under 50, fall within this group. Groome noted that,

> even among churches that seem to have some success in retaining their youth, the research indicates that their young people's faith often reflects a "moralistic therapeutic deism" rather than authentic Christianity. They embrace a "nice guy" image of a God who comforts and consoles, is called upon only as needed, and makes no real demands on their daily living other than that they "be good, nice, and fair to each other." (p. 8)

Smith and Denton (2005), whose study of American youth led to the coining of the term moralistic therapeutic deists, defined this belief system as a

> belief in a creator God who watches over human life on earth, wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other, but does not seem to be particularly involved in one's life except when needed to resolve a problem. (p. 6)

The study indicated that American youth perceived God more as Santa Claus than the creator, redeemer, and sanctifier of traditional Christian belief.

Catholic schools in Western society, long having lost the ability to employ members of religious orders as teachers and witnesses, reach out to laity in search of teachers and administrators to share the evangelization of the students, families, and communities in their care. Teachers who seek employment in Catholic schools are often young people with vague notions of religion and faith who were raised in homes of various understandings of what Christianity entails, minimally participate in the faith community (many simply attended Catholic schools), and generally are, by all accounts, secular with a nostalgic notion of Christianity.

How will Catholic educational institutions engage these teachers and form authentic Catholic teachers to minister to our students and families? In the remainder of this chapter I outline Charles Taylor's (2007) description of secularism in his book *A Secular Age* to foster an understanding of the societal context and the implications for the formation of teacher witnesses within Catholic education, now and in the future.

Charles Taylor

Charles Taylor is a Canadian philosopher and professor emeritus at McGill University who, throughout his career but most especially in the past 20 years (Gallagher, 2010a) has tried to shed light upon religious belief and unbelief in Western society today. Taylor, a devout Catholic (Abbey, 2010), has actively promoted the role of laity in the Church decrying the clericalism, especially the type that he experienced when he grew up in Quebec prior to the Quiet

Revolution. More recently, his focus has been on the form of academic clericalism found in academia, where the spiritual dimension of life is ignored, and, he believes philosophers, sociologists, and historians trapped in the immanent frame fail to address important issues and refuse to engage that which is not measurable (Gallagher, 2010a).

At the onset of *A Secular Age*, Taylor (2007) argued that many historians and sociologists have held to a secularization thesis that presents that, as modern society advances, religion will gradually diminish in influence, and science and reason will govern culture and society. Taylor's book began with the fact that the modern world has not necessarily witnessed the disappearance of religion and instead has seen religious belief and faith maintain their influence and, in many places in the world, grow extremely quickly. Religion and belief can exist within the immanent frame, where they no longer need a transcendent being or god(s).

Important to leaders in Catholic education and the formation of Catholic teachers is Taylor's (2007) description of "what it is to live in an age of secularity" (p. 678) and how that experience has shaped the entire purview of people, including educators in Catholic schools. Because his work is substantial, I will offer in broad strokes his description of our secular age, the disenchantment of our world, the rise of a buffered or isolated self, and the arrival of an overall atmosphere that permeates everything in the Western world. Taylor's description of the current age can provide both a language for secularism and a starting point for the encounter of Catholic education and the formation of future teachers raised and living in that secular world.

Defining a Secular Age

> Fullness and human flourishing in religion is found outside the world or beyond human life, whereas a secular view would see human flourishing "within" this current life (Taylor, 2007, p. 15)

Taylor's *A Secular Age* (2007) describes evolution of the term secular over a period of 500 years in great detail. Pre-Reformation society clearly distinguished between the sacred and what Taylor called, $secular_1$.[10] Pre-Reformation society was organized as specialized or divided into the world of the clerics, who prayed for the world and tended to affairs of the transcendent, the nobility who governed in an hierarchical system (hierarchy = sacred order) and the peasants who tended to the work of providing the necessities of life so that the prayer class (religious orders) could pray and the governors could govern. Those not involved in the affairs of the transcendent were secular (Latin for "of the age"). Society was clearly divided, and each group was dependent on the other. All society was religious in the sense that everyone breathed the spirituality of faith and Christianity; unbelief, in this period of human history, was not an option. Specifically, the word *secular* refers to those whose daily responsibilities in society are not directly related to the transcendent.

$Secular_2$, according to Taylor (2007), arose from the Enlightenment and the debates, especially on the role of science, in coming to know and make sense of the world as well as within philosophy, politics, and the arts. Those ongoing discussions and debates enabled nonbelief to exist as an option and created a dialogue between those of belief and nonbelief. Many believed that $secular_2$ led to a decline in religious belief and practice in modern society as people slowly turned away from God and were no longer going to Church.

$Secular_2$ can also be considered freedom from religion; individuals might practice Christianity, but in the public sphere to acknowledge a particular faith tradition or faith at all

[10] Smith (2014) used subscripts $_{1\text{-}3}$ to distinguish the understandings of secular, compared to Taylor's (2007) "sense of secularity" 1-3. I have adopted Smith's format.

gives preference to a particular belief system.[11] This was considered a consequence of the rise of alternative beliefs in a global world and the improved understanding of our world through science and reason, especially evolutionary theory or neurophysiology to explain the workings of the world (Taylor, 2007, p. 4). It reinforced the thought that society considers religion and belief as separate and that religion, in civilized society, is private and should be kept from the public sphere.

Our present age provides a third definition for secularism, or secular$_3$, which is made possible through what Taylor (2007) called *exclusive humanism*; he described an age of competing narratives and beliefs for even the staunchest of believers. "Belief" in secular$_3$, with its plurality of options, is only one voice among many competing visions of human flourishing and thus is contestable. This understanding includes not just a shift in beliefs, but also a change in the conditions of belief (Smith, 2014). For instance, it is readily apparent to Catholic school teachers today that there are many paths to human flourishing and many ways in which they can personally find fulfillment, whether they work in a Catholic school or not. In this shifting and fluid landscape of belief, exclusive humanism becomes possible, not only for the elites of society. As the title of his book attests, Taylor believed that we currently live in secular$_3$.

Critique of Taylor

Taylor's ideas have not been universally accepted. Some critics have pointed to his communitarianism and the manner in which he reduced individualism to the concerns of the larger society (Diggins, 2007), to the detriment of individual rights. Other scholars have critiqued Taylor's depiction of declining religious belief and participation in religious communities by pointing out the high rates of belief in God in several Western countries (Abbey, 2010). Abbey

[11] Many would argue that is the current state of Catholic education in Alberta, that one religious group, Catholics, receive preferential treatment but other Christian denominations and religions do not.

believed that Taylor's inclusive definition of religion, the statistics presented in census data, and the fact that few define themselves as atheist or agnostics show little evidence that we are living in a secular age (p. 22). Yet Abbey believed that his basic argument still held: The elimination of God or the transcendent in many people's lives with their sole experience of immanence is insufficient for human flourishing.

Taylor has been criticized for his belief that transcendence is a necessary prerequisite for the fullness of human flourishing. Taylor (2007) believed that, although it is possible, it would be difficult to accomplish human flourishing in an immanent frame. Hart (2012) saw Taylor's $secular_3$ as a denial of naturalism to some extent by seeing theistic belief as necessary to human flourishing and fullness of life unnecessary. According to Hart, Taylor's Christian view of transcendence displayed an overreliance on the Christian tradition and bias based on Taylor's personal faith.

Taylor's overt Catholic terminology and perspective put him on dangerous ground in modern academia, and his focus on Christianity, absent of Muslim, Hindu, and Jewish voices, seemed in opposition to his ecumenical and pluralistic views elsewhere. Hart (2012) suggested that Taylor was not an expert on world religions and critiqued his understanding of Buddhism; he considered him as overly Catholic and denigrating other Christian traditions (Abbey, 2010; Hart, 2012). Although Taylor addressed secularism from a philosophical standpoint, he included an abundance of theology. Some academics believed that he needed to address his theology because it was not fully developed (Gallagher; 2010a, 2010b; Schweiker, 2009).

Taylor (2007) himself recognized his limitations and areas that needed further development. However, as an overarching theory of secularization and for the purposes of Catholic education in a secular age, Taylor created a foundation for discussion and a

terminology, philosophical and Catholic, to engage and contextualize the discussion of the need for teachers' faith formation.

Enchantment and Disenchantment

According to Taylor (2007), the current age has created a society in which, for the first time in human history, the choice of belief or unbelief in a divine presence, or "God," is possible and in which, in many cases, faith is actively discouraged. Western society had become "disenchanted" compared to the enchanted era of pre-Reformation Europe, which he described as a time when the natural and supernatural worlds were "interwoven with higher times" (p. 375) and left little room for unbelief. Taylor suggested that it is impossible to live experientially solely within the natural level because "spirits, forces, powers, higher times were always intruding" (p. 375). Taylor explained that "higher times" are forms of transcendence experiences or the experience of forces that break into or overturn the rational order of things. He used the examples of *festival* or *carnival*, in which social order is often frustrated and the irrational, often marked by religious practices and transcendental experiences not found in everyday life, temporarily becomes the norm (Schweiker, 2009).

Early in the Enlightenment, disenchantment and relegation of higher times from a more rational philosophy and thought made the removal of the transcendent possible. Enchantment and the notion of higher times (beyond worldly) provided "inspiration, strength and discipline" (Taylor, 2007, p. 375), which slowed this process as the ability to reorder the world and the sense of morality and civic order came from God. However, as the Enlightenment progressed, the individual moved from what Taylor described as a porous nature, interconnected to enchanted and outside world of spirits and grace, to one of a buffered identity or nature, with a self-insulated existence and an interior mind no longer vulnerable to the transcendent or demonic

forces of the previously enchanted era (Smith, 2014). Disenchantment of the world and the marginalization of higher times that occurred at this time led to the buffered self, an identity able to fend for itself, and eliminated the need for God and the Church.

These two identities, porous and buffered, resulted in very different existential conditions. In the porous identity, defined by a deep interconnection between persons and the world, "the source of its most powerful and important emotions are outside the mind"; and the "very notion that there was a clear boundary, allowing us to define an inner based area, grounded in which we can disengage from the rest has no sense" (Taylor, 2007, p. 38). The buffered identity, a closed and individual identity that would never have been considered 500 years earlier, in the current age replaces the notion of a porous identity. The buffered-self allows the existence of a distance, stepping back and setting a boundary, from everything outside the mind or self. The purposes of the buffered self were those that arose from inside a person, and the crucial meanings are those defined in a person's responses to them.

The buffered self, compared to the porous self, sees the boundary, the separation from the outside interconnectivity of others and a greater reliance on the internal self, as a buffer to things outside. The buffered self is immune or resistant to the outside pressures and forces and could see itself as "invulnerable, as master of the meaning of things for it" (Taylor, 2007, p. 38). Because the porous self is connected to the world and all creation, it is vulnerable to spirits, demons, and cosmic forces that could lead to fear and hold a grip on the individual and community. However, the buffered self takes this fear out of the world by crafting a boundary that creates a different existential condition in relation to the outside of the self. People can now safely ignore the things and fears that occur outside the self. The difference in the porous identity

is that the meaning and purpose of the individual are transformed, and people can deal with those fears much differently in the buffered identity.

Another feature of the buffered self is the ability to disengage from what is beyond the boundary and the intimate connection with the world, which gives a person an autonomous order that leads to an opportunity for self-control and self-direction. Taylor (2007) suggested that modern individuals are no longer bound by the forces and agents of the enchanted world, including anything from the will of the community and creation to demons and the spirit of God. This has led to a form of individuality that was never possible prior to secular$_3$.

Living within the buffered self also had implications for the created world and humanity's interactions with and understanding of them. The porous self is able to see a power or spirit or energy in objects. These charged objects have a casual power by virtue of their intrinsic meanings in an enchanted world. The object, which has the power to hurt, manifest evil, or destroy, also has the ability to heal, make God incarnate, and make holy. These objects were an integral part of the everyday experience of past communities. Thus the healing possibilities at shrines, the use of relics, communal acts of unity, and the blood of martyrs were not only powerful, but also necessary for the physical and mental fullness of the community (Taylor, 2007).

Belief and Unbelief in the Modern World

What does this mean for belief and unbelief in the modern world? If the enchanted world is alive, powerful, and interconnected, disbelief is not possible. It is not just that spirits and powers are everywhere; most important, God is the most powerful Spirit and the only guarantee that in this "awe-inspiring and frightening field of forces, good will triumph" (Taylor, 2007, p. 41). Rejecting God is not an option in an enchanted world. The greatest change that the rise of

the buffered self has brought to modernity is the possibility of disbelief for many and the ability to disengage from the fear and control of the enchanted world; for the fear of Satan and the need for the power of God are removed, thus making exclusive humanism a possibility.

According to Taylor (2007), the spread of the Enlightenment and its Renaissance humanism, the Reformation, the rise of the police state (a social order enforced through government structure), and the Scientific Revolution, all loosely intertwined, are integral to the move from porous self to a buffered identity (p. 61). The scientific gains over the past 500 have years enabled the individual to respond to the supernatural with natural solutions. Closely tied to the notion of enchantment is the belief in the ability of God, spirits, demons, and so on, to actively intervene in the natural world, change the courses of events, and impact individual lives. Taylor used the phrase "cosmos to universe" (p.323) to describe this shift, the way the world was imagined over time and its implications for belief. The move from an enchanted world that was comprehended within certain boundaries being somewhat local and static, to a world that science was revealing to be vast, infinite, and in the midst of an evolution that was spread out over aeons. The cosmos is an ordered, created imaginary, shaped by an understanding of time not only as *Chronos*, but also as *Kairos* (p. 59) and shared by all of society with explicit cosmic doctrines. The shift to a physical universe, one with laws that preclude "miracles" and other supernatural interventions, and the ability to explain life through natural processes could not only limit the power and action of God, but also lead to the possibility of unbelief (pp. 323-324).

Exclusive Humanism

Taylor (2007) argued that over a relatively short period of time humanity moved from a world where God was the default to a world where, for many, belief in God became a real choice, and a choice that many chose to reject. Now that unbelief in God was possible, it was not

that people necessarily chose disbelief, but that they now had a number of options in which to believe; as Smith (2014) called it, “believing otherwise” (p. 47). Smith understood Taylor as saying that people all need to believe in something and would not tolerate living in a world without meaning. Moreover, if transcendence gave the previous age significance, society needed to account for a new imaginary, a means to imagine a meaningful life within this new self-sufficient universe.

Taylor (2007) described this new imaginary as *exclusive humanism*, which enables humanity to “account for meaning and significance without any appeal to the divine or transcendence” (p. 23). Hence, for religious believers, Taylor criticized the modern idea of the human search for meaning, because exclusive humanism emphasizes the immanent world of the human being without reference to a transcendent Creator.

The elimination of transcendence, of an understanding of something beyond normal human flourishing or the ability to reach out of oneself and encounter something greater within the immanent, has led to a process of immanentization. In this process, Taylor (2007, as cited in Smith, 2014) suggested, meaning and “fullness are found within an enclosed, self-sufficient, naturalistic universe that engulfs the individual and eliminates the notion of transcendence” (p. 141).

Exclusive humanism encourages self-sufficiency, and expressive individualism becomes the fulfillment of our human potential, suggested Taylor (2007). Expressive individualism is an understanding that people have their own ways of realizing their humanity and are called to express that humanity rather than conform to models that others have imposed, especially institutions such as church communities (Smith, 2014, p. 141).

Taylor (2007) explained that those who live within exclusive humanism, encased in a buffered self, feel a sense of discontentment and spiritual malaise which appears to be a common feature of the generation. “Cross-pressure within the buffered identity” (pp. 302-303) between orthodox belief, which we fear, and materialistic atheism leads to this malaise and a loss of meaning in life. A similar malaise results from pluralism and homogeneity, so that people struggle with the question of why this faith and not that. Why are my beliefs better or worse than yours? “Homogeneity and instability (of the buffered identity) work together to bring the fragilizing[12] effect of pluralism to the maximum” (p. 304).

The Malaise of Modernity

This malaise of immanence has had three outcomes. The first is the belief that with the eclipse of the transcendence something was lost: a person’s “goals, actions, and achievements lack weight, gravity, substance” (Taylor, 2007, p. 307); a loss of the heroic and of meaning (examples include teenage angst and midlife crisis). The second involves the search for a meaning of life and the need for humans to discover a purpose with real significance, especially when the realization occurs that their chosen path is no longer compelling. The third is the sense of flatness for many people that comes from consumer culture, which can lead to emptiness from the cycle of desire and fulfillment and the irony, said Taylor, of the flatness and emptiness of the urban environment (p. 308).

Taylor (2007) explained that this malaise does not necessarily lead back to transcendence, a belief in God, in the traditional sense, although it might. The malaises of immanence often spur the human need for meaning, but for many a response would and could

[12] Fragilizing, according to Taylor (2007), comes from fragilization, or the fragile faith of those who believe in the transcendent but see around them so many who do not share the same faith, are members of different faiths, or live with no faith and begin to question what they believe and why. This leads to a fragile belief or faith.

occur only within the immanent frame, the view of self and the world with no transcendence. Living and breathing in a culture of secularism and unbelief, for many, actually limits the possibilities for belief and meaning. Most often, people who are in this position within the immanent frame seek new forms of religions expression or different readings of immanence that Taylor called a *nova* or explosion and fragmentation of beliefs and values. This sudden shift or change in views and perspectives could include a new way of looking at human rights, sexuality, and identity, as well as a call for social justice and prosperity or a turning to nature and naturalism, much like the French revolution and the writings of Rousseau (p. 310).

The current secular age includes a number of cross pressures, simultaneous spiritual options for belief and unbelief, which impact everyone and lead to innumerable options for belief. The tension between immanence and relationship in a sense makes belief difficult; yet, a yearning exists and persists. Humanity, suggested Taylor (2007), appears to be living in a world where everyone is searching for purpose and grasping for certainty, but finding only doubt.

Within this context Catholic schools search for witnesses for their students. These witnesses or guides are necessary to enable Catholic schools to lead and expose the transcendence, the world of enchantment, connectedness, and the divine for students. Where and how can religious communities and schools find, form, and sustain teachers in an age of cross pressures and individualism? This is the work of teachers' formation, both during the preservice teacher-formation process and the ongoing faith formation of educators within our Catholic schools and parishes.

My quest has been to answer the question, how might the language and understanding of secularism, as Taylor (2007) expressed it, inform our teacher-preparation and formation programs in Catholic schools?

Four Key Issues in the Engagement of Catholic School With Modernity

I recently served for eight years as the executive director of the ACSTA in Edmonton. The ACSTA (2020) represents 24 school divisions (22 in Alberta, 1 in Yukon, and 1 in NWT), 458 schools, 185,000 students, and 150 trustees. The association's mission is to "Celebrate, preserve, promote and enhance Catholic education" (ACSTA, 2020, Who We Are: Mission section, para. 1). Immersion in the everyday world of Catholic education through communication with the Ministry of Education and engaging in legal and advocacy work, trustee formation, religious education curriculum development, and governance issues focussed me on the many issues that I came to see as struggles in the relationship between secularism and Catholic education in Alberta and the world of Catholic school communities.

Although across the world Catholic education is vibrant, in Alberta, as in most places, Catholic education, for many reasons, including financial and ideological, is always at risk from those who see no place for religion in the public sphere. Changing cultural standards and postmodern beliefs often place the school and Church at odds with their own staff and parent communities, who do not fully understand or even reject certain Church teachings. These parents demand a Catholic education for their children on their terms. Catholic schools in Alberta are filling faster than public schools—36% faster, according to CBC (Fletcher, 2018), as the demand for a publicly funded, government-supervised education with spiritual values and faith at its core, appears to resonate strongly with many parents, both Catholic and non-Catholic.

Within this context of tensions, secular versus religious, public versus separate, progressive moral worldviews versus traditional perspectives on the anthropology of the person and the role of religion in the public sphere, in this dissertation I investigate questions and

concerns that create cross pressures between Catholic education and its current and future teachers, all of whom live and are shaped by the secular world.

A review of Catholic and religious education journals revealed that various topics emerge consistently that reflect the interaction of Catholic education and secularism throughout the world. Despite the international character of the journals, and for many their cross-denominational and multireligious views and discussions, the questions, issues, and struggles are similar; and the cultural impact of secularism on the religious educational communities was often the same. From teachers' formation to curriculum, legal issues to postmodernism, educational philosophy, and theological teachings—in fact, whatever the issue—the struggle in Scotland, Montana, New South Wales, India, Philippines, or Alberta appears to be the same. The following issues from these journals have had the greatest impact on Alberta schools, and faith-formation programs must address and overcome to engage teachers and allow then to break free of the immanent frame.[13]

Issue 1: Language of Religious Education in a Secular World

There is considerable debate in the literature on the meaning, aims, and goals of religious education. For example, how do we differentiate between catechesis, religious education, religious studies, theological education, and spiritual education, and their role in the Catholic school classroom?

[13] A major concern for religious school in most countries, especially the United States, and in Canada for partially funded provinces such as British Columbia and Manitoba and provinces without funding in Atlantic Canada, is fund raising for private or partially funded schools. This is not the case in Alberta, and I do not address it.

Issue 2: Modernity, Secularism, and Catholic Education

The literature contains a great deal of discussion on the cultural evolution towards secularism, postmodernism, equality, and human rights and the Catholic Church's moral and ethical positions on many issues that might appear to be the antithesis of secular society.

Issue 3: Ecological Care for Religious Education in a Secular Age

Terminology for and writing on creation spirituality, ecospirituality, and ecopedagogy, has gone from absent to full bloom since Pope Francis's (2015a) encyclical *Laudato si*, with environmental issues such as global warming, climate change, and its secondary effects such as poverty and migration becoming important and often-discussed issues in religious education journals.

Issue 4: Legal Issues in Canadian Catholic Education

The central battleground for the collision of secular society and Catholic education is the courtroom. The courts interpret and mediate the constitutional rights granted to the Catholic religious minority in Canada outside Quebec to establish and maintain the rights and privileges granted to Catholic ratepayers at Confederation. Section 93 (1, 3, 4) of the Constitution Acts (1867-1982) of Canada (Government of Canada, Justice Laws Website, 2021), including Section 17 of the Alberta Act and the Northwest Territories Ordinances of 1901, are the basis for the legal rights and responsibilities of ratepayers and legislatures regarding Catholic education.[14]

[14] The Constitutional guarantee for Catholic schools and legislation on Catholic-education rights uses the terminology "separate" schools. Catholics and Protestants receive the same rights and privileges, and the minority "faith" is granted the opportunity to form school boards. If Catholic boards are a majority, they are deemed public school; if Protestants are a minority, they are deemed separate. Western Canada still has Protestant separate school divisions.

Forming Catholic Teachers in a Postmodern Secular Age

The all-encompassing Catholic culture that formed many older teachers, and to some extent myself, no longer exists today. At least it does not exist in the same manner that it did during the middle of the last century. Many students encountered the notions of pilgrimage, regular confession, meatless Fridays, rosary in May and October, and mass on First Fridays, for example, which were all part of their culture in the mid to late 20th century but are no longer part of regular practice in Catholicism today. The current dominant cultural view is generally described as postmodern (Cush & Robinson, 2014; Graham, 2011; Oliver, 2001), and from this culture and worldview, Catholic schools encounter their current and future teachers.

In the language of Taylor (2007), the four issues could be described as cross pressures: "the simultaneous pressure of various spiritual options" (Smith, 2014, p. 140), some of which pull the individual to transcendence, with an equally strong pull towards immanentization. Using With reference to Taylor's insight into society and secularism, specifically in secular$_3$, I will address each of these issues in regard to Catholic education, modernity, and teachers' formation. In the final chapter of this section I examine Catholic teachers' formation in Alberta and Taylor's view of conversion in the modern age. The investigation will focus on the impact of these issues upon the faith formation of teachers and the ability of Catholic schools to develop authentic witnesses of faith in our classrooms in a secular world.

CHAPTER 3: RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN A SECULAR AGE

Since the 1960s the cultural landscape for Catholics has changed dramatically. With secularism, the role of the wider religious community in the formation of Catholic youth has declined substantially. The local communities' capacity to form and nurture young people through internal means such as youth groups, local pilgrimages, and community events permeated with faith have weakened and led to fewer practising Catholics to draw the next generation of Catholic teachers (Franchi & Rymarz, 2017). Catholic schools exist in part to assist the family and the parish in the vital task of faith formation in all Christians. Catholic schools, through their religious education and permeation of faith throughout the school, including its overt and hidden curricula, complement parents' faith formation of their children. However, the task of faith formation in this secular age has become increasingly difficult, and the aims and context of religious education often appear uncertain and evolving regularly over time.

For religious educator Thomas Groome (2014), the central component of the faith mission of Catholic schools was religious education. Every educational system, either implicit or explicit, reflects and proposes a philosophy and meaning about the person and the good life. Calling an education (or school or teacher) *Catholic* suggests and reflects the deep commitment of the school to the Catholic faith. The permeation of faith throughout the school is more of a "spirituality of education" that invites staff and the community to integrate faith throughout the entire curriculum of the school (Groome, 2014).

Another religious educator, Michael Gallagher (2010a, 2010b) reflected on religious education and the secular world, including the reconciliation of Charles Taylor's (2007) writings with Catholic religious education. Gallagher extensively studied faith in the postmodern age and engaged the world of Catholic religious education, modernity, and Taylor. Much of his writing

focussed on issues of inculturation, youth ministry, religious education, and a spirituality for modern culture.

The process of sharing faith in the classroom has many different, complementary names: catechesis, evangelization, religious education, theological education, religious studies, mystagogy, and religious instruction. In Canada and across the Catholic education world, these terms describe the process of forming Christians, and, although each is distinct, they are often used interchangeably. This overlap of meaning in terminology produces situations in which educators frequently lack clarity in their understanding of the educational mission of the Catholic school in a secular age. This lack of clarity leads to misunderstanding of the terminology and of the mission of religious educators, especially among teachers in the classroom. Combined with the rapidly changing nature of society, the Catholic education community can become confused about religious pedagogy, curriculum, and language for today.

In this chapter I address the nature and purpose of religious education and the impact of secularization on pedagogy, curriculum, and teachers' formation. In light of this work, I engage the writings of Taylor and how they might offer direction for religious education programs and the faith communities that hand on faith.

The Nature of Religious Education

Groome (1980; 1991; 1998; 2011) has been active in the development of religious education theory and pedagogy, and his philosophy and methodologies have impacted K-12, parish, and postsecondary religious programs. Understanding his contributions, especially in light of his referral to Taylor (2007), is vital to comprehend current religious education and assess the future of Catholic education curricula, define religious education, and create teacher-formation programs in a secular age.

Groome (1991) recognized early in his teaching career that catechism-based programs of the first half of the 20th century in Catholic schools were not connected to the life situations and experiences of students. Programs that were essentially simplified theology for children were problematic as a means of faith formation. Groome researched and experimented with a number of different educational strategies and incorporated the philosophies and pedagogies of Freire, Dewey, Piaget, and Habermas (Beaudoin, 2005), among others, into his own teaching practice for a variety of age groups. He developed the method of *shared praxis*, which he discussed in his seminal book *Christian Religious Education* (Groome, 1980), to address what he perceived as shortfalls in religious education. With this, Groome identified a sophisticated methodology for religious education in Christian communities that still resonates today.

For Groome (1991), the central rationale for religious education began with the concept that education is inherently religious and a spiritual activity. Religious education should be directed primarily to the ultimate meaning and purpose of life and built upon the awareness of a person's capacity to reach the transcendent. It is an attempt to interpret and reflect that community's perspective and understanding of life and the community's perspective on the encounter with the divine in the here and now (p. 11).

By engaging a person's capacity for the transcendent or divine, religious education, argued Groome (1991), shapes a student's whole way of being; it is deeply human and strives to be a humanizing activity. Even educational language could mislead: It is not "subjects" who are being taught in schools, but human beings. Religious education does not focus on things as much as on leading people to relationship with each other and God (pp. 11-12). People do not accomplish this through solely dogma, Scripture, or moral teachings as much as by nurturing a relationship with Jesus Christ. Knowing Jesus is more than knowing about the historical Jesus; it

is a relationship that "carries on his mission of God's reign of holiness and justice in the world" (Groome, 1998, p. 252).

Although Groome (1991) grappled with reshaping the meaning of religious education for a modern world, he recognized that the education literature contained little consensus on the nature of education itself. Most people equated education with schooling, in which youth are instructed. He suggested that, although schooling and instruction do take place, education is larger than the classroom, and the essential characteristic of all education is as a political activity. Groome believed that the biblical message that people love God by loving their neighbours as themselves demands justice and is, at its core, a political activity. Educators, according to Groome, must recognize that they are engaged in a political activity when they teach; how they teach and the learning environment reflect their political choices (pp. 12-13).

Groome's Purpose of Religious Education

Groome (1991) suggested that religious education exists for three reasons: "For the Reign of God, for Lived Christian Faith, and Christian freedom and the fullness of life" (p. 14). Educators need to be are aware of the purpose and spirit of religious education to engage meaningfully with curricula and address the aims of the Catholic school.

Teaching for the Reign of God

Beginning with the reign of God, Groome (2011) challenged the overly secular and immanent approach to faith formation that explained faith in relevant, human terms. The Gospel teaching about the reign of God was the central theme of Jesus' teaching ministry. Jesus of Nazareth taught that the fullness of God's grace is alive and can be found in the fullness of human life and encapsulated in his teaching (Mark 1:15; Rom, 14:7; Second Vatican Council, 1965c; Groome, 2011). God's reign, according to Groome (1991), is the metapurpose of

religious education: to demand a pedagogy that "engages and forms people's very selves to be historical agents of God's reign" (p. 17).

Groome (2014) wrote that Jesus modeled a pedagogy that led people to name their experiences and reflect on their lives from different perspectives. Jesus focussed on how God's reign brings blessings to them and God's love means choosing freely to follow as disciple. The reign of God can be accomplished by bringing "good news to the poor, . . . release to the captives, . . . sight to the blind, . . . freedom to the oppressed' and proclaiming "the year of the Lord's favour: (Luke 4:16–21). Groome (2011) believed that this vision occurs when Catholic education becomes a

> commitment to a humanizing education for persons and serving the common good of society. This translated into a positive understanding of the human person and potential of every student, a sacramental view of the world, a commitment to community, a holistic way of knowing and leading people to wisdom and responsibility, a politics of justice and spirituality that puts faith into everyday life. (pp. 255-256)

Focussed on the reign of God, a humanizing education exists a positive understanding of the human person and the potential of each person permeates the entire school curriculum. It is sacramental to hold that God's presence is everywhere and that people should be welcoming to all. A humanizing education leads people to wisdom, responsibility, and an appreciation for the past (Groome, 1998, 2011). Last, a Catholic education that is humanized recognizes that education is a political calling for a commitment to justice; Christian spirituality puts faith into action and moves beyond oneself, the local community. For Groome (2014), this humanizing education, focussed on the reign of God, is the essence of Catholic education.

Teaching for Lived Christian Faith

The Vatican II document *Gaudium et Spes* (Second Vatican Council, 1965c) laments those who focus too much on the world at the expense of their faith or concentrate fully on faith

to withdraw from the world. Faith and daily life are intertwined, and separating the two causes great harm: “This split between the faith which many profess and their daily lives deserves to be counted among the more serious errors of our age” (para. 43). For Groome (2011; 2014), God’s reign is the metapurpose that guides the formal purpose of religious education: lived faith.

Educating in faith is to form, inform, and transform (Groome, 1980, 1998, 2011) the learner, the teacher, and the community. Children are formed through the affective aspect of the learning process; they grew emotionally, relationally, academically, and spirituality. This formation of a human person in wholeness is essential. Children are informed of the wisdom and knowledge of the community and provided the skills necessary to work and enhance their lives to reach their full intellectual and skill potential. They are also called upon to reflect on their life situations and seek justice and the transformation of the world. It was through these three lenses that the Christian faith could be fully lived (Groome, 1991, pp. 18-21).

Teaching For Christian Freedom and the Fullness of Life for All

According to Groome (1991, 2011), trust and belief in the reign of God offer the eternal presence of God’s love and the possibility of life to its fullest (John 10:10). However, the freedom to love fully does not occur only in the afterlife but is a continuation of a life of freedom and love today. The fullness of life includes values of forgiveness, liberation, charity, faithfulness, and love, which require relationships with others.

Groome (1991) argued that the life of freedom available through faith began within history. This political element is a key purpose of religious education as a transcendent act. The religious language of liberation is apparent in the values of God’s reign: justice, peace, love, reconciliation, hopes, joy, equality, and so on (p. 22). Christianity, if “taught and learned in humanizing ways, critically appreciated and creatively appropriated” (Groome, 1998, p. 256),

brings liberation. Much of this echoes Paulo Freire's call for education as liberation and for justice (Groome, 1991, 1998, 2011, 2014).

Using the above principles, Groome (2011) created a methodology for religious education that he called *shared Christian praxis*. He described shared praxis as a "life to faith to life" (p. 261) process of pedagogy that encourages participation and dialogue with the self, others, and God. The process is structured in three parts (Groome, 1991). First, it is a process of shared dialogue with self, others, the Christian faith, and God. Second, it is a process of faith that people need to live cognitively, affectively, and behaviourally, drawing upon the Christian story and its traditions. Third, this way of religious education is a process of learning through reflecting on life and what God does in people's lives. It involved both knowing and being and incorporating the creative process of reflection by using reason, memory and imagination, and one's actions, feelings, intuitions, experiences and understandings of everyday life.

Return to Old Ways?

Some have called to return religion classes to the pre-Vatican II world, including to the catechism approach to religious education, the memorization and repetition of sound doctrine, and the practice of old devotions. Although neuroscience has established that memorized data can have a lasting impact on value and identity over time, and these are important aspects of faith communities, this will not in the long run help and can even hinder dialogue and growth in this age (Groome, 2011, pp. 8-9). Taylor (2007) suggested that faith and religion in the past existed in a fundamentally different culture and social imaginary and would not answer the spiritual hunger of many today. The use of a catechism and a purely catechetical approach, with the expectation of an evangelized and converted group of students, is unrealistic in this age.

Catechism presupposes evangelization, which is an essential aspect of current religious education programs.

Taylor (2007), Groome (1998, 2011), and other educators and philosophers believed that nostalgia can be dangerous and unproductive. Taylor (2011) wrote, “Today many people look back to the world of the porous self [premodernity] with nostalgia, as though the creation of a thick emotional boundary between us and the cosmos were now lived as a loss” (p. 221). For those who long for a return to a premodern world, a world of transcendence, in our current society, this is unlikely. Neither Groome nor Taylor would see an attempt to force a sense of the transcendence on people through religious education as a realistic strategy in the formation for the conversion or reconversion of young teachers.

Gallagher and Catholic Religious Education

Groome’s (2011; 2014; 2019) notion of a humanizing examination of religious education and integrating the ideas of Taylor was important in introducing Taylor to the educational community. However, Gallagher (2010b) took Taylor’s ideas and expanded upon them for religious education at a deeper level. He employed Taylor’s work and translated and applied it for those who work in Catholic religious education. Gallagher presented five key positions of Taylor’s work that directly impact Catholic religious education and society’s engagement with modernity and secularization.

Impact of Modernity

Gallagher (2010b) explained that Taylor (1989) believed that modernity inspired the notion of personal authenticity and that this could become problematic for an individualistic or subjective humanity. Taken to an extreme, this individualism ultimately “would tend towards emptiness” (p. 507) and led Taylor to question how society can resist this descent into a

meaninglessness dead end (Gallagher, 2010a). Taylor, who defended and critiqued modernity, described himself as neither a "knocker" nor a "booster" of modernity; instead, he identified himself as part of the philosophical community in the middle and identified both the positives and negatives of the resulting secularism. Taylor was hopeful that people would recognize the limits of human horizons and hoped that the dominant understanding of life would settle into a "soft relativism" (Gallagher, 2010b, p. 115) regarding individualism.

For Gallagher (2010b), this vision of modernity impacted religious formation in contemporary society; educators cannot simply transmit faith directly or be satisfied with a neutral description of religious positions. Instead of being hung up on the transmission of religious knowledge, Gallagher interpreted Taylor's (2007) approach as a heavier emphasis on assisting "young people recognize the different battle zones of our culture, to sift out the sources of silliness from the sources of fullness worthy of our hopes" (Gallagher, 2010b, p. 115). According to Taylor, education would teach the skills of discernment and decision making to enable students to recognize and understand the conditions of their own lives, both individually and within the community (p. 115).

Secularization

Taylor (2007) regularly discounted the traditional theory of secularization that suggested a slow and inevitable decline of religion in society. He believed the sociological view that this determinism of the end of religion is superficial and that the slow replacement of religion by science and technology is false. Instead, he wanted people to focus more on the impact of secularization on a person's self-image and place in the world rather than the number of adherents. More important is a look inward at their spirituality, their assumptions about life, and the roots of society. Taylor wrote, "The interesting story is not simply one of decline [of religion,

but] new ways of existing both in and out of relation with God" (p. 437). Taylor suggested that religion would not disappear, but the role and place of religion in our lives would change (Gallagher, 2010b).

Gallagher (2010b) believed that Taylor was challenging religious education to create and develop new tools, new means of engaging and reflecting upon culture with students. If secularization meant an uprooting of older roots and connections to traditional faith, religious educators needed to rethink and reestablish Christian identities in ways never imagined. Gallagher placed Taylor's (2007) approach in this changing view of religion within the rich tradition of people such as John Henry Newman and his dynamic understanding of religious imagination. Religious educators need to fully examine the depth of religious imagination and its implications for faith in the future. Religion needs to be animated by imagination; to be credible, religion must first be credible to the imagination.

Role of Religion

What is the role of religion in humanity? Taylor (2007) again argued against a narrow sociological finding and rejected that the "main point of religion is solving the human need for meaning" (p. 718). He contended that the current malaise of modernity is a result of the rejection of transcendence in a secular world. If this is the case, the simple answer to the malaise appears to be a return to religion, but Taylor believed that this would be short sighted. In the current age, if individualist perspectives shape our sense of truth and reality, then many unexamined subjective or relativistic perceptions have become the basis for truth, including religious truth. Taylor was not comfortable with this as a foundation for truth; instead, he believed that religion is a source of spiritual and graced transformation and allows human beings to move beyond normal human flourishing to fullness (Gallagher, 2010b, p. 117).

Gallagher (2010b) reasoned that Taylor's (2007) take on the role of religion reveals a discussion of the teaching of theology (more dogmatic) and religious studies (phenomenon of religion) in religious education. The academic study of theology was grounded in a faith commitment, compared to religious studies that describe religion more from a phenomenological perspective with disengagement from belief and practice. Gallagher argued that Taylor favoured theology and its promotion of a faith commitment and warnings of the subtle temptations of modernity. Gallagher again used the example of John Henry Newman, who wrote about what he called the *religion of the day*, in which the comfortable and powerful British Empire seem willing to present a tame and diluted version of the Gospel as a source of consolation and justification for the empire.

Gallagher (2010b) suggested that religious education has succumbed to the temptation to overhumanize or simplify the Gospel message. In trying to make faith real, admirable, and hopeful for faith communities by removing the challenge, discomfort, and often sacrifice to follow Gospel teachings, the Christian faith has become all things to all people and has lost its beauty and uniqueness. Although religion can provide meaning to life, it is so much greater than that. Taylor (2007), said Gallagher, saw faith as a graced transformation of believers, which led "beyond a normal flourishing" (Taylor, 2007, p. 430) to a sense of liberation or freedom (Gallagher, 2010b).

Christianity

Although Taylor (2007) stressed that he was not a theologian, he regularly commented on his understanding of Christianity. He stated in *A Secular Age*, "God's initiative is to enter, in full vulnerability, the heart of the resistance, to be among humans, offering participation in the divine life" (p. 654); and he believed that it is essential that society recover a sense of the Incarnation in

its view and understanding of the world. As a philosopher, Taylor often seemed hesitant to describe in detail his theology, but he has commented repeatedly in his writing and speaking on the value of "Christian revelation as empowering and transforming us through a sharing in God's own life and love" (Gallagher, 2010b, p. 118). Taylor believed that the essence of Christianity is found in God's divine love as it flows from the Trinity of Persons, which makes love possible for all humanity.

Gallagher (2010b) suggested that Christian religious education must find a way to communicate intellectually and spiritually the "differentness of Christianity" (p.118), including its identity and mission. A large part of this effort is to explain the reign of God to teachers in a comprehensible manner. For the reign of God to be real, it must also be relevant and meaningful in the lives of those formed. Gallagher supported Groome and noted, "To become all things to all kinds of people, . . . there lurks the subtle danger—that we rob the Gospel of its disturbing beauty and uniqueness" (pp. 117-118). It is difficult to capture the otherness or difference that lies in transcendence versus an immanent reality, but it is necessary to find a way to do so. Gallagher concluded:

> We need to find both intellectual and spiritual ways of communicating the differentness of Christianity, its specific identity and call. If some of our students are going to be atheists, let us hope that their religious education will have awoken them to the grit and drama of a gospel they are unable to believe, thus saving them from the shallower unbelief of a merely fashionable distaste for Church. (p. 118)

Forms of Faith

Taylor (2007) remarked on the emergent number of new forms of faith found in today's cultures and insisted that cultural change is not the end or death of faith, but he challenged many older, traditional institutions and languages of faith. Gallagher (2010b) agreed with Taylor and, using language from philosopher Bernard Lonergan, suggested that faith is not dying. In fact,

this expansion of forms of faith is more a crisis of culture than it is a crisis of faith. In modernity, traditional assumptions, values, and meanings lose impact over time, and renewal is necessary. Taylor added that this crisis of culture and upheaval could actually clarify and purify expressions of faith in which images of God have become too simple, too immanent, and too easy. Historically, faith has survived by evolving and challenging the current reality.

Gallagher (2010b) the religious educator suggested that evolving cultures requires a different spiritual formation for future believers. It is necessary for religious education to lead students to the capacity to recognize God's presence and guidance in ordinary human experiences. Taylor (2007) confidently suggested that faith commitment today needs to be less "collective" and "more personal . . . and Christocentric" (p. 541).

Varieties of Religious Education

Groome (2011; 2014) and Gallagher (2010b), inspired in part by Taylor (2007), offered insight into a way forward for religious education in a secular age. Understanding the aims of Catholic education and creating effective curricula become increasingly difficult given the realities of modernity, as the field of religious education wrestles with this challenge. Defining the context, content, and pedagogy of religious education is increasingly problematic. Religious terminology can be confusing because people often use various terms synonymously when, philosophically, theologically, and educationally, the terms are considerably different: for example, evangelization, catechesis, mystagogy, religious education, religious instruction, theological education, and so on.

The Congregation for Catholic Education[15] collaborates with Catholic schools worldwide and encourages the use of ecclesial language present in catechetical documents, such as evangelization and catechesis. Publicly funded Catholic schools in Canada generally use less Catholic terminology, including religious education, theology, and religious instruction. Defining and clarifying language is essential to sharing faith in Catholic schools and helping the greater faith community to understand the aims and mission of Catholic education.

The problem is that a lack of agreement on the language of religious education reflects misunderstandings and conflicts about the aims of religious education. Feinburg (2006) suggested that the three aims of religious education are (a) to share doctrine and shape belief, (b) to form souls open to the transcendent and (c) to refine consciences for ethical living. These goals highlight three purposes, including to inform students on their faith through knowledge and doctrine; pastorally, to form students and address their emotional and spiritual needs and capacity to act and live an ethical life with the knowledge and moral teachings to make good judgements; and, essentially, to transform the society in which the students live (Groome, 2011).

Religious education in Catholic schools is vital in creating a community of faith and mentoring witnesses who can assist in the formation of disciples. This education and sharing of faith in an authentic and logical manner require teachers and faith communities who can describe this process of formation in schools. This articulation is necessary for the community of educators and for the larger societal context of the general education communities. What is the language and pedagogy used in Catholic education to form Catholic teacher and future witnesses?

---

[15] The Congregation for Catholic Education is a "ministry" in the Catholic Church's governance structure that oversees Catholic education and schools around the world. The Congregation is structured like a Ministry of Education in that it creates documents that outline the Church's position on education and evangelization and the expectations for curriculum and teacher formation.

Vocabulary of Instruction

The language, theory, and programs of study in Catholic religious education vary around the world. Research has suggested that competing theories of religious education place different expectations on educators and thus create challenges that impact the potential implementation of programs and curriculum development (Teece, 2011). Teece (2011) suggested that the Catholic community requires a thorough discussion of what religious education is, including its outcomes and goals, before any agreement on curriculum and teachers' formation can be reached. He suggested that having "an overcrowded school curriculum, a subject that does not know what it is and what distinctive contribution it can make is constantly in danger of being marginalised" (p. 161) and that a debate among academics on the purpose and value of religious education in academia might be healthy. However, that does not address teachers' need for clarity and consistent purpose and methodologies for Catholic education now.

Franchi (2013) agreed with Teece (2011) that religious education in Catholic schools is a course that needs a definition suggest the Vatican "has yet to release a definite document on the aims, purpose and challenges of religious education in the Catholic world and focusses more on catechesis" (p. 468). Yet he questioned the value of a definitive definition because Catholic education exists in such a variety of contexts and diversity of cultures. Leaving the definition of the aims and goals open to local understandings, situations, and realities of culture, history, and personnel allows educators to best define their aims within the ecclesial context of bishops for the local and their current situations.

Catechesis, as Pope John Paul II (1979a) defined it, is the

> education of children, young people and adults in the faith, which includes especially the teaching of Christian doctrine imparted, generally speaking, in an organic and systematic way, with a view to initiating the hearers into the fullness of Christian life. (para. 18).

Catechesis also presupposes that the person has been evangelized and has an existing faith; this is not often the case in Catholic schools. Religious education (or "religious instruction," according to the Vatican documents), although it complements catechesis, is different, as the *GDC* (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997, para. 73; Franchi, 2013) affirms. Religious education has specific goals and outcomes, involves modern pedagogical approaches, and focusses more on knowledge than it does on catechesis and evangelization. The Church recognizes that the proper place for catechesis is in the home, but Catholic schools also have a vital role in this formation (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977). In Catholic schools, religious education can evangelize and catechize and bring students to Christ; but, in secular or nonreligious schools, religious education is often called religious studies and is taught from an objective perspective that respects the diversity of the study body.

The phrase *religious studies* is often used interchangeably with *religious education* and *catechesis*, but also has a distinct meaning and context. Barnes (2015) explained the purpose of religious studies:

> The academic study of religion is to understand religion, its nature, diversity and role in history and in contemporary societies. It is an intellectual humanistic discipline. It does not presuppose personal commitment nor does it aim to undermine personal commitment. As such it is sometimes equated with a scientific approach to religion neutral, impartial and rational. (p. 203)

The dialogue with theologians, educators, curriculum writers, philosophers of education, and the Church requires well-defined terminology to ensure that all participants in the discussion of faith formation understand one another and have a clear sense of the aims of religious education.

Religious Education versus Catechesis

Religious education is difficult to define; includes many models, theories, and philosophies (Lovat, 2009); and has no clear consensus; but it serves as the middle ground between religious studies and catechesis. Religious education as a distinct discipline evolved in the early 20th century, essentially as a unification of liberal theology and the progressive educational thought of educators such as Dewey (Franchi, 2013; Groome, 1991; Treston, 1993). Prior to Vatican II, the explicit goal of religious education in Catholic schools was students' faith formation through memorization of a catechism. Only after Vatican II and its call for a greater role at the local parish for catechesis the Church began to promote catechesis and religious education as complementary processes (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988). This debate over the meaning and aims of religious education caused church leaders to write the document *The Catholic School* (1977) which includes pronounced distinctions between catechesis and religious education.

Religious education has a number of definitions. Groome (1991) stated that "the purpose of RE [is] for the reign of God; for lived Christian faith; for human freedom" (p. 14); Harris (1987) defined the purpose as "for empowering intelligent, human and responsible life in the world" (p. 88); and Treston (1993) considered it

> a relationship between religious and education. Religious education is the effort to know and experience the world of religion. It does not mean leading a child or adult to faith commitment but may contribute to a position of faith affiliation. (p. 32)

Boys (as cited in Curtis, 1999) described its purpose as being "for moral, affective and cognitive Christian conversion" (para. 5).

Current curricular work in religious education, it appears, is a mixed bag of all of the above. Buchanan (2011) called for an end to what he termed *pedagogical drift*, which he defined as

> a term that can be used to explain how the application, interpretation, and adaptation of pedagogical techniques may influence the formation of emerging approaches to religious education. When approaches to religious education are viewed historically, the phenomenon of pedagogical drift can help religious educators to understand the relationship between various approaches. (p. 33)

Buchanan believed that curriculum specialists need to understand how different approaches to religious education arose, how they have influenced the field, and how to best use them in the future. It is necessary to recognize that, as curricula have become specialized and inform diverse audiences, adaptation and change have had to meet situational requirements and local needs. For example, a catechism approach reminds teachers of the importance of religious knowledge, a kerygmatic approach to the centrality of Christ, and a phenomenology and lived-experience approach that includes the environment and communal experience of faith. For Buchanan, no one curricula and pedagogy sufficed.

Could catechesis and religious education (and religious studies, to some extent) occur in the same classroom? Deenihan (2002), Rossiter (1982) and to some extend Marthaler (as cited in Franchi, 2011), argued for a complete separation of the two; catechesis is distinct from religious education. Catechesis is an integral part of the Church community, encompasses greater community involvement, and centers on the family; religious education in schools is too narrow to contain it. Groome (2007) and Warren (1981) argued the opposite and noted that it would be hazardous to separate them because they are often interwoven. Catholic Church documents are unclear on the issue but include enough diversity for at least a nominal separation of religious education and catechesis.

Catechesis presupposes a faith commitment, and the Catholic classroom today reflects the culture and readiness for evangelization and catechesis. With the vast diversity of levels of belief and commitment to faith, a catechetical dimension in the classroom cannot be expected to achieve the same purpose as parish and home-based formation. Understanding the situational difference is necessary to successfully fulfill the mission of Catholic schools and the formation of disciples.

Religious Education in Catholic Schools

The content of religious education programs varies from country to country and, in many cases, diocese to diocese. Many factors influence the writing of curricula, including bishops' roles, local tradition, cultural background, past and current resources, and, to some extent, the funding models or types of schools in the jurisdiction. In Alberta, because of public funding, the government can determine and impact the content of the school's curriculum and to some extent that of religious education programs as well. Canada is not alone in public funding of denominational schools; they also exist in many English-speaking countries such as England and Wales, Scotland, and Australia.

In many European countries and Australia, public (nondenominational) schools are also required to teach religious education courses; until recently, they gave privileged place to Christianity and were in a form that was closer to catechesis. Today, religious education, is still taught and called religious education, it is presented more from a religious-studies perspective (Llorent-Vaquero, 2017). Catholic denominational schools historically took a catechetical approach to religious education, but as demographics changed and many non-Catholic/non-Christians and nonpracticing Catholics chose to attend Catholic schools around the world, the move to a curriculum rooted more in a phenomenological and sociological approach to teaching

religion—rather than presupposing belief and practice in the home—is now common practice in many jurisdictions.

As with Catholic religious education around the world, Canadian schools, and to some extent their bishops, present a diversity of programs and methodologies. Canadian religious education programs include a combination of catechesis, religious education, and religious studies, with a greater emphasis on catechesis than religious education and religious studies. The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops created and approved the current secondary religious education curricula for use in Catholic schools across the country in the late 1990s and early 2000s, and it will not be replaced for a number of years, despite initial plans to do so.

Rymarz (2011a) explored how Canadian religious education works through the balance between religious education and catechesis. He believed that there might be much to gain by moving Catholic schools more into religious education but not completely abandoning the catechetical aspect of Catholic education. Genuine catechesis, the Congregation for Catholic Education (1988) suggested in *The Religious Dimension of the Catholic School*, takes place first and foremost within the family, and the school can never replace that. In Canadian Catholic catechetical documents and many of the school curricula, the goal of Catholic education is catechesis, which requires a level of personal faith and witness, as well as knowledge and formation, which are rarely found in depth in publicly funded Catholic schools in Alberta. Both elementary and secondary curricula from the Canadian Catholic Bishops presuppose faith and call for the school to lead students to Christ, which is catechetical, not religious education.

Some confusion exists, despite the focus on catechesis, over the Canadian curriculum's many religious-education components. Rymarz (2011a) suggested that this inability to clearly articulate a definition and differentiation has left schools and teachers without clear aims and

objectives. He asked, “What are the aims of religious education programs in Canadian Catholic schools for students who are not, and have no strong desire to become, ‘young believers’ or ‘living the way of Christ?’” (p. 542). Rymarz presented a series of problems that could occur if Canadian educators do not answer this question adequately. He argued that religious education in Canadian Catholic schools should be based on the Vatican documents, especially according to the *General Directory for Catechesis* (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997). Catechesis and religious education should be kept separate, and the need to focus on religious education is paramount. He maintained, however, that good religious education can lead to faith and needs to be followed with catechesis. Rymarz criticized the current situation because it generally appears to be a series of shotgun methods and ideologies that include religious education and catechesis.

Moving the curriculum away from catechesis to the teaching of religious education in Catholic schools could ultimately lead to the failure of the Church’s and school’s goal of faith formation. Hyde (2013), writing from an Australian perspective, argued that religious education is not the intention of the Catholic Church’s educational documents. Many new religious education curricula use new educational philosophies focussed on described outcomes to measure learning. Catholic education, however, does not narrowly follow academic outcomes: “The fundamental difference between religious and other forms of education is that its aim is not simply intellectual assent to religious truths but also a total commitment of one’s whole being to the Person of Christ” (Congregation for the Catholic Education, 1977, para. 50).

Because the outcomes and goals of religious education are different from those of secular subjects, the methodologies, curriculum writing, and teaching strategies that teachers use might not meet the needs and purpose of religious education. Unlike nonconfessional schools, where a strictly objective, inquiry, constructivist approach to religious education might work well, if the

goal of religious education is confessional and faith formation of students, the same curriculum structures and outcomes-based approach cannot work. Hyde (2013) stressed the need to rely on different forms of religious education.

Hyde (2013) believed that the Vatican documents are clear as to the goals of religious instruction and that, as a result, schools must reformulate religious education to fit the desired faith-formation goals, which are much closer to catechesis than religious studies. Franchi (2013) argued that the Vatican documents are unclear and not definitive; yet they are focussed far more on catechesis and do little to explain what religious education and the expectations are. Franchi asserted that religious education must be firmly located in the Church's intellectual and educational traditions while, at the same time, offering valuable opportunities to those who are not Catholic to become critically engaged and respond to this comprehensive body of knowledge. Rymarz (2011a) accepted that we need to move away from a strictly enforced catechetical approach, and saw the opportunity for effective religious education to include catechesis. In this way, religious education is not antithetical to evangelization as well.

Differences in approaches to understanding religious education have the potential to influence learning that has been compiled over generations in the schools. A purely catechetical model seems problematic in an increasingly secular Canada; a narrow, religious-studies approach does not adequately support the faith formation of students or recognize the value of this formation for teachers in the school. Religious education is more than a single approach; it is more a combination of approaches, including evangelization: "Catholic schools are at once places of evangelization, of complete formation, of enculturation, of apprenticeship in a lively dialogue between young people of different religions and social backgrounds" (Congregation for the Catholic Education, 1997, para. 11).

No matter the particular approach that we take toward understanding religious education or catechesis, all would agree on the central role of teachers in schools' missions. The faith formation of teachers prior to entering schools and their ongoing faith development are vital to Catholic schools, and no purpose of religious education or catechesis can be effective without faith-filled teachers (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997; Franchi, 2011; Franchi & Rymarz, 2017; Rymarz, 2010).

Moving Forward With Religious Education

Taylor (2007) argued that historic Christianity is evolving and that, as Gallagher (2010b) interpreted it, it will impact religious education. The changing nature of society and Christianity mean that religious education must adjust to new understandings of culture and the various conflicts that are at play. Individualism will mark faith in the future, and students and teachers require the skills to discern and determine their place in the world. In the secular world, strict catechetical methods no longer engage young people the way that they did previous generations. Many educators understand that this shift is a result of the disappearance of the Catholic subculture that enables the family and society to complement the use of a traditional catechism with a common language and culture.

One means that Taylor (2007) suggested of addressing this new terrain is for religious education to engage more in the concept of religious imagination. Maria Harris (1987) identified the importance of religious imagination, which "can lead to incarnation, to revelation, and to the grace of power. And these, in turn, can lead to the re-creation of the world" (p. 181). Imagination is a powerful tool in education, and its use in Catholic education is not new. Groome (1991, 1998) spoke to the ability of imagination to move people and ideas beyond the limits of current structures and reveal the limits of those structures.

Imagination has played a central role in the pedagogical approach of shared praxis, as Groome (1980) described it. Groome (2014) affirmed that educators must intentionally create imaginative activities: Before something can be real, it first must be imagined. Students' and teachers' use of imagination in religious education could make them open to and able to see beyond the immanent frame. Imagination allows students to "see" what is, reflect upon what they see, move beyond the "paralysis of settling" for what is, and create a demand to "imagine otherwise" (Groome, 1991, p. 96). Taylor (2007) and Groome (1998) often relied on musicians, "poets and artists" (p. 132) to explain their positions for those with strong imaginations and could see (Matt. 13:16; 1 Cor. 2:9) what was really there and make it real for others.

Imagination is central to Catholic sacramental theology, and an encounter with the transcendent is possible in and through symbol, ritual, and celebration. According to Taylor (2007), God's transformative action occurs in our lives, and overidentifying with modern culture could mean missing the "greater transformation which Christian faith holds out" (p. 737). What is needed and what religious education must provide is a "sacramental consciousness" (Groome, 1998, p. 126): the imagination not only to see, as above, but also to perceive what should be—that is, a prophetic capacity—and the imagination and motivation to do accordingly.

Taylor (2007) warned of the temptation to water down the teachings of the Gospel to reach both a new and a broader audience. Gospels are powerful, beautiful, and disturbing, all at once. People need to be exposed to that power—not a simple narrative of the path to heaven, but the transformative power of the Gospels for living today. This message of love and relationship is important in a world that is becoming more and more individualistic. Christianity and the Gospel message for Taylor could be uniquely life affirming in this secular age. Religious

education curricula, pedagogy, and teachers themselves must be properly formed and prepared to engage this new generation and its constantly shifting culture to share the Gospel message.

Religious education requires a clear definition and understanding. Both the method and the content of teaching, students, and preservice and inservice teachers need to examine its aim and pedagogy thoroughly. In dialogue with the social sciences such as psychology, sociology, philosophy, anthropology, education, and theology, Catholic leaders need to address the confusion and lack of communication among religious educators, the development of curriculum, and the formation of teachers. This will not occur without the leadership and guidance of bishops, religious education specialists, teacher-formation institutions, and school-system leadership, all working together in cooperation.

For education in a secular age Groome (2014) suggested that religious education must integrate and engage the daily lives of those being formed. For this integration and engagement to be effective, Groome believed that religious education must be "a pedagogy that encourages people to integrate 'life' and 'faith' into a 'life-in-faith'" (p. 121) and that a greater focus on the historical Jesus and His centrality in religious education is necessary.

Extensive care is required in the education and formation of our children, young teachers, and the ongoing faith formation of experienced teachers. Programs of religious education and teachers' formation need to stimulate the heart, the mind, and the soul. Religious education curricula and programs must be age appropriate and academically challenging and speak to the whole of the student and his or her life in a pluralistic society. Teacher education programs that prepare teachers to teach in Catholic schools require strong and challenging courses on the most basic teachings of the faith, spirituality, and justice in a setting that encourages discernment and transformation.

In the next three chapters I address issues that are important to teachers' formation. In Chapter 4, I discuss secularism, modernity, and anthropology and the implications for Catholic education. Many current conflicts over Catholic education stem from the differing views and goals of the human person and how they are taught in Catholic schools. In Chapter 5, I focus on one concept ON WHICH the Church and society often find common agreement. Ecopedagogy and ecospirituality can serve as the basis for understanding and cooperation between the two via dialogue and relationship. The last chapter in the group highlights the arena for many of the battles in the public sphere between modern culture and Catholic education. In Chapter 6 I discuss how the courts have walked a fine line between two competing rights: denominational education rights and the evolving nature of human rights.

CHAPTER 4: THE RISE OF MODERN SECULARISM AND THE PLACE OF CONTEMPORARY CATHOLIC EDUCATION

Albertan society, like much of the West, is undergoing a cultural shift of seismic proportions. Many of the changes have brought increased awareness to human-dignity issues such as racism, gender inequality, and bullying. Modernity has brought about many positive changes and led people to a new sense of prosperity, educational opportunity, and equality. At the same time, however, we have seen a steady move culturally towards the elimination or cancellation of the past, including religious and spiritual traditions, from the public sphere in the face of the rise of modern individualism (Taylor, 1995). Taylor (1995) attributed this disconnect from the past to a constant shift in the social imaginaries that are the means by which people imagine their existence within a society and include expectations, order, and the implicit grasp of a social space—which Taylor (2007) called the *public sphere* and described as a

> common space in which the members of society are deemed to meet through a variety of media: print, electronic, and face-to-face encounters; to discuss matters of common interest; and thus to be able to form a common mind about these. (p. 185)

Taylor differentiated between a "topical common space" (p. 187) and the public sphere. The former would include gathering for a concert, a sports event, or a religious ritual, whereas the public sphere transcends such topical spaces and "knits together a plurality of such spaces" (p. 187). This "metatopical" public sphere undergirds the social imaginary of a society and becomes the prevailing metanarrative and "common mind" of the culture.

Although the idea of the public sphere is not new, what is new is that since the 18th century and the rise of modernity, the public sphere's "radical secularity" (Taylor, 2007, p. 192) has defined it. The root of secularity has always been the separation or removal of God, religion, and spirituality from the public space. Historically, traditional institutions such as churches

enjoyed a different status and were immune to shifting ideas and imaginaries; hence the prevalence of public funding and the role of faith based-social institutions in Alberta. However, the new public sphere is intended to remove this status; in fact, many call for the removal of all religion from public spaces. The traditional work of religious organizations in the fields of health care, social services, and education, which is still substantial in Alberta, is being questioned with suggestions that religious organizations should not have access to public monies to carry on their missions.

A great deal of the discussion in the literature on Catholic education is on the cultural evolution towards secularism, postmodernism, equality, and human rights and the Church's moral and ethical positions on many issues that appears to be the antithesis of modern cultural teachings. Much of this questioning comes not only from opponents of Catholic schools, but also from the Catholic community and Catholic teachers themselves. Catholic schools need to find a meaningful role in the evolving public sphere to remain relevant; however, this search has led to conflict, including conflicting views on anthropology and the Church's role in public education in society. This conflict and understanding how these tensions evolved is important in defining the formation that our teachers need.

The Church in the Public Sphere

A drift has occurred from a single set of shared ideas and values in the larger Christian culture in premodern times to a pluralistic society with various beliefs and values. Taylor (2007) suggested that the "social imaginary" (p. 171), our communal and defining understanding of the world, values, and meaning, has shifted and enabled people to imagine and live differently from previous generations. Whereas the premodern world used to see the world mostly through a single lens (in the West, Christianity, for the most part), now modern society embodies many

ways of interpreting and understanding the reality, which includes a diversity of values, beliefs, and traditions that often conflict in the public sphere. The Church holds great influence, but, over time, shifting ideologies have reduced much of its power and authority. New institutions, public spaces, and ideas have replaced much of the Church's previous influence.

Christian churches themselves, often through their own actions, have contributed to their diminished role (Groome, 2014). Christians, who were generally once united on moral issues, now express a diversity of beliefs and teachings on issues of morality and ethics. Various historical and recent crises, including clergy sex abuse, residential schools, and financial mismanagement, have severely weakened churches' and religious organizations' moral authority in the public sphere.

The Catholic Church, which many have characterized as a pre-Enlightenment and ancient institution, is changing slowly and deliberately and, as a result, does not share many of the values and expectations of the rapidly evolving modern society. Taylor (2007) frequently contended that the secular belief that politics and religion are two separate spaces and should not influence the other, at least publicly, is at odds with many Christians' belief in integralism. This has led to conflicts, especially in the perception and understanding of individual identity and anthropology, communal versus individual rights, and the definition of success and meaning of life.

Canadians opposed to the funding of Catholic institutions in the 21st century often declare Catholic schools an historical anachronism that promotes an outdated, harmful, and essentially premodern understanding of the person and communal society (Emman, 2016). This segment of society, including the media, generally considered progressive or socially liberal, makes regular attacks, with the support of some politicians, against publicly funded Catholic schools. These attacks often lead to the view that Catholic education as a publicly funded institution is tenuous.

Combined with so-called “archaic” morals (e.g., prohibition against premarital sex, contraception, abortion, euthanasia), many in the public sphere believe that Catholic schools counter the establishment of a liberal and tolerant society (Klaszus, 2014).

Living in Tension: Between Two Worldviews

Current and future teachers in Alberta live between these conflicting worldviews. In particular, Catholic teachers cope with the constant tension between the prevailing societal beliefs and views and those that their faith communities teach. Taylor (2007) reminded us that modern Christians live in an uncomfortable position and face scrutiny from both secular and religious immanent cultures that promote individualism based on personal freedom, which often rejects traditional beliefs such as sin, atonement, and the concept of Hell. Nonetheless, people in an immanent culture are still attracted to the notion of community and the “central mysteries of Christian faith” (pp. 655-656).

Most Catholics accept the value of personal freedom but believe that there is more to earthly life than the self-enclosure of immanence and thus try to engage in the transcendent, transformative meaning of the death and resurrection of Christ. Taylor (2007) contended that the tensions between immanence and transcendence, as well as community and individualism, lie at the heart of the battle between belief and unbelief. This battle is still unresolved in modern society, and, by extension, public funding and support of denomination schooling are contentious and contribute to the challenge of finding witnesses for Catholic education.

Challenges for Catholic Education

Forming teachers in faith, both preservice and inservice Catholic school teachers, means understanding the current challenges—internal “battles,” in the language of Taylor (2007)—that Catholic school divisions face in their expectation of teachers to be authentic witnesses to the

Catholic faith. School leaders need to be aware of the tensions that teachers feel and how the Church and Catholic schools might act as advocates for alternative views and present a different understanding of *eudaimonia*; that is, the role of the Catholic school in leading our students to human flourishing. Conflicting views of the human person, definitions of dignity, and interpretations of the anthropology that different segments of society express are important. The topics revealed in the literature present pressing problems and gaps in understanding the current situation.

Oliver (2001) situated the "battle" with postmodernism for Christian teachers' formation in undergraduate schools, where modern culture influences preservice teachers, and in graduate schools, where students explore philosophical ideas that can run counter to Christian teachings. In many legal challenges the courts have consistently preserved public funding in the three provinces and publicly funded Catholic schools, but the belief is that, unless the schools conform to societal norms, the schools will cease to be funded.

Within the Catholic community are those who see the need to provide students with alternative viewpoints in morality and anthropology. McDonough (2009) asked, "Can there be faithful dissent in Catholic religious education in schools?" (p. 187), which suggests that Catholic education, by withholding alternative teachings and views on controversial subjects such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer or questioning (LGBTQ) people, medical assistance in dying, abortion, and contraception, is doing a disservice to our schools and students. McDonough argued that, historically, reform and change in the Church and society have come through dissent and discussion of issues. By presenting divergent perspectives, the Church has an opportunity to engage students, create discussion, and allow students intellectual freedom.

Rymarz (2011b) countered McDonough's (2009) argument by suggesting that he made a number of assertions about Catholic education in Canada that Rymarz considered inaccurate. For example, he suggested that current Catholic education curriculum or pedagogy has no place for the discussion of dissenting opinions, yet most Catholic curricula in Canada depend on Groome's (1980) shared praxis. In this method discussion, critical engagement and the evaluation of varying opinions and views are crucial. Rymarz concluded that better trained teachers are needed to introduce and engage in difficult issues, because simply introducing dissenting opinions to students does not necessarily improve the quality of religious education.

Just as research on feminist, queer and postcolonial theory is influencing and changing modern culture, public education and Catholic schools are feeling the shift in the general public's engagement in the world and are being pressured to conform with new views, including changes to curriculum (Cush & Robinson, 2014). This field is highly underdeveloped in the literature, but it is a pressing issue culturally, especially in Catholic jurisdictions that are publicly funded. Remaining true to Catholic teaching in a hostile setting with support from the courts (see Chapter 5) is creating a climate of antagonism that leads at times to anti-Christian rhetoric that dominates the debate.

Russo (2015) and Watson (2011) outlined religion's restrictions on freedom that are growing in many countries around the world. Together with restrictions on religion and religious practice in the public sphere, these changes impact not only schools, but also the ability of religious communities to operate openly. Russo believed that limits imposed in the public sphere have created a situation in which the right to freedom of religion has morphed into freedom from religion in postmodern society. The elimination of religion and spirituality from the public sphere by those who wish to be free from religion and restrict religion to individual and private

belief can be considered an attack on another's freedom of religion. The recent Bill 21 in Quebec, *An Act Respecting the Laicity of the State* (National Assembly of Québec, 2019), might be an example where banning religious symbols and certain clothing infringes on the rights to religious expression and conscience for members of minority religions and communities.

In the past, sexuality and LGBTQ issues in Catholic schools were almost nonexistent in the literature on Catholic education. Only recently has this changed in articles that appeared from 2019 to 2020 (e.g., Callaghan & van Leent, 2019). The secular education and law journals, in contrast, are filled with articles generally against the views of the Catholic school and the teachings of the Church. This is an area in which Catholic educational researchers need to find a language to engage in dialogue or provide thoughtful and meaningful means to reconcile Catholic teaching with the postmodern view of sexuality and the human person (Callaghan & van Leent, 2019).

Even Catholic authors such as Clarke and McDonough (2012) criticized the Church for its views on sexuality and called for the acceptance of gay-straight alliances (GSAs)[16] in all publicly funded schools, including Catholic schools, despite trustees' and bishops' opposition to any teachings or gatherings that could "normalize" nonheterosexual lifestyles or identities. Further, some authors have taken a broader view in this dialogue. Miedema (2014) called for the inclusion of religion in all schools, including secular public schools. Nash (2001), a nontheist, wrote of the spiritual nature of education and identified closely with the work of Parker Palmer.

The literature revealed a diversity of views on the clash between the values and beliefs of society and Christians. Spirituality and religion, frequent topics in educational journals, which in modernity appear to be more separated than in previous ages, are still important aspects of

[16] Now other club names such as queer-straight alliance, gender and sexual orientation alliance, pride clubs, rainbow alliances, and many others are common.

education and culture. Modern society tends to describe spirituality in freeing and positive terms but harshly criticizes traditional religion as negatively binding members to a narrow spiritual and limited freedom. This is evident in the phrase "spiritual but not religious" or a "spiritual super-nova, a galloping pluralism on the spiritual plane" (Taylor, 2007, p. 300).

Taylor's Social Imaginary and Modernity

Regarding the work of Taylor, Smith (2014) asked, "How in a relatively short period of time, did we go from a world where belief in God was the default assumption to our secular age in which belief in God seems, to many, unbelievable?" (p. 47) Society has moved from a place of unquestioned belief in God to one of multiple beliefs, worldviews, and greater diversity. This shift in religious and moral structuring has led to significant changes in societal governance, moral practices, spiritualities, and relationships among individuals and groups. Taylor answered Smith's question by outlining the change in the Western world's shifting social imaginaries.

The change in social imagination over the past 500 years, which in human history is a relatively short period of time, had been dramatic. Social imaginary, according to Taylor (2007, pp. 171-172), is the common understanding of groups of people who formed the common practices, values, and beliefs that are widely shared as the legitimate understanding of the majority of the group or culture. Society has shifted from the medieval, during which time belief in God was a default assumption, to a world in which belief in God is no longer the default assumption and, where it is permissible or even encouraged at times, God's existence is denied. In the secular age, society has created a slew of creative options for belief and reconfigured people's sense of meaning of life, death, values, and anthropology (Smith, 2014, p. 47). Belief in God is now just one of many legitimate worldviews.

The current age, however, is not one of disbelief; it is more an age of differing or plural beliefs. This is the *nova effect*, in the language of Taylor (2007). Smith (2014) argued that people cannot tolerate living in a world without meaning and that, if belief in transcendence or a higher order was considered significant to the world in the past, that has been lost. Taylor contended that we needed a new imaginary that would enable us to imagine a meaningful life; the replacement imaginary is "exclusive humanism" (p. 19). Unlike the subtraction theory of secularism, which suggests the disappearance of belief in transcendence over time, humanity is still left with ordinary human desires that have become the basis of our modern humanism. Instead of reducing belief, culture has simply changed the concept of belief and now recognizes that exclusive humanism in the immanent frame can use many stories to provide meaning in life and a moral framework for communities.

Taylor (2007) suggested that an anthropological move followed the theological shift that I discussed above. This move, from belief in and connection with transcendence to the limits of immanentization, is important. Society has moved the realm of significance away from the divine or "beyond," and significance and belief are now closed in the material world of the universe and the natural world. Taylor spoke of the four parts of this shift (pp. 221-222). The first is an understanding of "further purpose," which explains how the belief in the search for a higher good, or heaven, dominated the premodern age. Pain and suffering had purpose; human frailties became redemptive suffering and were valuable steps on the path to a beatific vision. From this viewpoint, God cares for everyone deeply, and their relationship with this God who loves all, cares for all, and interacts with everyone was central to their daily lives. It was clear that this life was not all that there was.

Taylor (2007) talked, however, about how over the past five centuries Western society has shifted its perspective away from a God who directly watches and interacts with them to a God in the Deist tradition, a watchmaker God, who set the universe in motion and then stood away—a providential deism. Taylor called this the *eclipse of purpose* (p. 222). Since the Enlightenment, an ongoing humanizing trend has moved Western society away from transcendence to immanence, to living for today and away from a purpose in a life to come in the future, including eternal life. This belief, which dominated the first 1,500 years of Christianity, had weakened considerably by the 18th century.

In the premodern era, people knew that they were powerless to accomplish good without God. Taylor (2007) called the second change in the social imaginary the "eclipse of grace" (pp. 222-223), during which the idea evolved that the order that God had designed was now explainable for all; this knowledge, the end of mystery, led to the disenchantment of the world. This shift to the belief that the meaning and purpose of God's plan for humanity could be determined with reason and discipline led humanity to believe that people no longer needed God to help them to determine what was good. Instead, they could find this purpose in human reason. God still had a role as watchmaker and judge, but became uninvolved.

Smith (2014) suggested that this shift led to an "intellectual pelagianism" (p. 50), in which, once humanity came to know God's will, they no longer needed God to understand what was good. For Taylor (2007), this knowledge and the subsequent decision ushered in the concept of exclusive humanism. People no longer needed God, a higher purpose, and transcendence; they could discern their purpose on their own.

The third shift, an overreliance on reason and science, occurred as people came to realize that important matters in life are discernible through rational thought and science. Any need for

mystery faded because all was now knowable. Mystery was not tolerated, and God's Providence could be determined by reason. Through the natural, immanent order, people found God's design for the world instead of the old mysteries and sacraments. The central mysteries at the heart of Christianity, "evil, estrangement from God and the inability to return to him unaided" (Taylor, 2007, p. 223), remained, however. All other mysteries, such as miracles, were no longer "miraculous," because people could find earthly causes for them, and God's plan for humanity was in the natural design of creation. Science and reason could now perform miracles and unlock mysteries; they became society's new dogma.

Last, this transition meant that humanity no longer needed a "god" who could transform people and the world. Humanity no longer desired a transcendent God. This imaginary caused many to stop feeling the need to search or engage with a relational God, one who watched, listened, and responded to prayers and supplications.

Over time, Western society moved from a predominantly transcendent to an immanent existence, and the central focus of the shared imaginary shifted from the world of spirits, enchantment, and heaven to a more human, personal world of the immanent. It has also changed the views on morality, meaning, and anthropology. Questions previously answered through belief and relationship with a creator God who incorporated mystery and surprise are now flattened, and spiritual possibilities are limited (Taylor, 2007). In an immanent social imaginary, the answers to mysteries are now found in the rational, scientific, and logical world and are knowable and predictable. God might still exist, and hope and eternal life are still possible, but most people have more trust and are more likely to search for the moral good in the economy, commercial life, and the public sphere than in a relational, loving God (pp. 176-178).

Taylor's (2007) account offers a brief window onto the dramatic changes that occurred throughout the Enlightenment and early Modern periods. These shifts, often occurring only to few people and among the educated and noble elite, took long periods of time to emerge in different localities. The nature of religion, society, conflict, industrialization, and many other circumstances contributed to the advancement of these ideas over time. The result today is a variety of views in a pluralistic society. Particularly important to this study and my focus on religious education formation is the impact of these changes on the anthropology of the person and the view of the self.

A Catholic View of Gender and Body

> It is clear that if we are to provide well-structured educational programs that are coherent with the true nature of the human persons (with a view to guiding them towards a full actualization of their sexual identity within the context of the vocation of self-giving), it is not possible to achieve this without a clear and convincing *anthropology* that gives a meaningful foundation to sexuality and affectivity. (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2019, para. 30)

This shift from transcendent to immanent and the creation of a new social imaginary have greatly influenced our understanding of the body and our consideration of it as part of the morality of a human person. To understand the Catholic position on various ethical and moral issues regarding the person and identity, one must first start with Catholic anthropology. Catholic teaching carefully defines the rationale and purpose of the human person. We must address this anthropology in the formation of Catholic teachers, who might have been raised Christian but are immersed in modernity and often struggle with conflicting social imaginaries. The differing view of the nature of the body is crucial to an understanding of the difference between Catholicism and secular culture with regard to teachers' formation. Ethical and moral decisions, such as sexuality, reproductive rights, relationships, and assisted suicide, are often based on

anthropology. Differing views of the body's purpose, meaning, and eschatology can have significant implications for moral decision making.

Taylor (2007) believed that, for many people, the postmodern world had led to the loss of the experience of transcendence in their lives because the modern world has reduced God to an abstract principle, or more of a *force* or energy. Taylor traced and described in great detail his theory of the move from a connected, porous identity to a more isolating, individualistic, disenchanted sense of the universe. It was a shift from a world filled with enchantment and "God" to a more "natural religion" (p. 221) that he named *providential deism*. Here the transcendent became disconnected from the pre-Enlightenment understanding of a relational God who is active and involved in people's daily lives. The feeling of interconnectedness that Taylor described as part of the premodern porous self has been replaced by a feeling that is impersonal and, to some extent, "symbolic" of loving kindness or feelings of exclusive humanism (Smith, 2014, pp. 29-30).

Catholic Anthropology

To understand this shift and the conflict that emerged between Christian anthology and the common view of the person in secular humanism and modernity, it is necessary to define the Catholic view of humanity.

Rausch (2012) explained that, for Christians, God remains personal, relational, transcendent, and yet immanent (pp. 31-32). God, who speaks the divine word, is able to break the silence between divine and human and has gone as far as to be incarnated, which involves coming to know humanity as one in the flesh in the person of Jesus. The incarnation (Taylor, 2007, p. 56)—God's taking on human flesh—has enormous implications for Christians' understanding of the mystery of God and the human person.

Gods in the ancient world and beliefs about gods differed considerably from the Judeo-Christian experience. From the fertility gods of Mesopotamia to the Roman and Greeks gods of the personification of power and love, to Plato's and Aristotle's abstract gods found in forms and intellect, humanity has called upon the other to express their fears, challenges, anxieties, and triumphs. Humans have always created gods to mask, project, and explain their insecurities and fears, misunderstandings and ignorance, questions and concerns. These are the gods that postmodern society and the new atheists such as Dawkins and Hitchens (Rausch, 2012, p. 33) easily mock; the God of the Judeo-Christian tradition is different.

The God of Christians is rooted in the narrative on human origins in the Book of Genesis: "So God created humankind in his image; . . . male and female he created them" (Gen 1:27). This verse indicates that God created humanity for relationship and that the self is fully realized only within a complementary relationship. Humans are integrated creations of body and soul; naturalism and physicalism have been rejected because of the intimate relationship between creature and creator (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2019, para. 31). God is not an impersonal force or a mere philosophical thought experiment, but a personal, creative, relational being who seeks to engage and encounter humanity. This incarnation—God's entering human history and engaging with humanity in the flesh—occurred in a person: Jesus the Christ, the Word who became flesh, the Son of God who came to make the Father known to humanity. The Trinity—"God in three persons"—reminds humanity that God is not only personal, but also intersubjective and relational; God is a communion of persons who is love and forms the core of the Christian understanding of God (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2019, para. 33; Rausch, 2012, p. 34). Understanding these details is fundamental to Catholic anthropology, in which God is both immanent and transcendent. This duality of immanent and transcendent

suggests that God's creation can be flawed and graced at the same time. God's creations, including humans as creations of God, bound to God's nature, could thus be flawed and graced as well.

Rausch (2012) considered transcendence (p. 34) something beyond, outside the world, other, or beyond our ability to comprehend or understand. In the Old Testament, transcendence is often expressed as holy or set apart and as something that cannot be seen face to face because it is awe inspiring or frightening (Exodus 33:20; Judges 13:22). God is also beyond graven images; even pronouncement of the name of God was forbidden; and when God appeared on a mountain (Mark 9:6), those present were terrified; and God "dwells in unapproachable light" (1 Tim 6:16).

The postbiblical Christian tradition continued to stress the transcendent God as pure light (Anselm); as a pure, self-subsistent Being; as an un-caused existence (Aquinas); as so beyond that even in the beatific vision he would not be comprehended or understood and remained a mystery (Rahner, as cited in Rausch, 2012). Only through revelation, God's act of self-disclosure, could transcendence be known and relationship possible (p. 34).

Rausch (2012) identified three anthropological consequences of recognizing the transcendence of God (pp. 34-35). First, it is futile to try to domesticate the divine. Humans cannot reduce and make God manageable through scripture or personal ideas of God in common and popular culture. God is incomprehensible and, as Rausch said, "that mystery (God) can be glimpsed but never dissolved" (p. 35). Christians are united with God through love rather than philosophy or ideas (1 John 4:8). Second, if revelation can lead humanity to divine transcendence, it might also demonstrate the immanence of the divine mystery: "God surrounds us like the air we breathe, like the water that sustains fish in the sea" (p. 35). God's presence is reflected in nature, disclosed in symbol, and sensed in the human heart. God has spoken his

eternal word in time and space in human history (in Jesus; John 1:1-14), but has also come personally in experiences. God is immanent, immediate, and present. Third, humans can never experience God directly, for even humanity's theological language (limited to metaphors that describe God) or scripture (the experiences of others) is a second-hand "language." Rausch stated that Christians must be able to abide in this "paradox of immanent and transcendent, God is incomprehensible and revelatory, beyond and in our midst" (p. 35)

Catholics tend to stress immanence over transcendence; as an earthy people where God can often be found in the sacraments and the physical reality of the created world. Water, oil, ash, flame, bread, wine, are used to guide Catholics to the transcendent God as much as the purely spiritual. For example, the doctrine of the Fall taught that creation was in some way damaged and yet graced at the same time. Grace is God's self-communication and God's life present in the world (Rausch, 2012, p. 35). The Western Church historically tended to emphasize the need for redemption, the cross, the idea of satisfaction for the sin (Tertullian), and the notion of original sin (Augustine). Aquinas, however (following Anselm), believed that even though humanity is damaged by sin, it is not beyond salvation or completely corrupted; thus, the Catholic tradition places more stress on the incarnation than on redemption (p. 36).

Rausch (2012) defined sin as "our all too human egoism, self-seeking, and refusal to acknowledge our Creator" (p. 37). He described the wisdom of original sin described as follows:

> We are born into a world of damaged relationships; our families are often dysfunctional, our social environments scarred by self-seeking or violence, our cultures marked by prejudice against the weak or the different. Our freedom is limited by forces beyond our control. Because we are radically social beings formed into concrete situations both flawed and blessed, we have solidarity in sin as well as grace. (p. 37)

Humankind is flawed and graced, touched by sin, but open to God.

Christians believe that grace builds upon nature, God's self-communication or presence in the world, and elevated and perfected human nature. Humanity can know God through the created reality of the world, the fullness of creation, and involvement in it (Rausch, 2012, p. 37). Christians fought the Greek dualism of body-spirit since the encounter between the Bible with the Greco-Roman world and philosophy. By insisting on the divinity/humanity of Christ, the early Church fought heresies that tried to privilege spirit over the physical (Gnosticism and Docetism). The Church (Genesis 1:1-2:4a; 1:27) deemed nature good, man and women created in God's image, and every person sacred and absolute. This is the foundation of Catholicism's respect for life; creation revealed the goodness of God (p. 38).

Christians believe that humans are embodied spirits and the means by which God reveals His self and encounters humanity. Human sexuality itself can be considered sacramental when it is expressed within the covenantal relationship of marriage and is open to life and unites two people. All humanity, all persons, are necessary because in communal living, relationship, the fullness of human flourishing occurs. This is achieved in a spirit-filled community, or in *koinonia,* fellowship with Christ, sharing in His sufferings and partnership in the good news and with each other (e.g., 2 Corinthians 13:14; Rausch, 2012, p. 43).

Patterns of Conflicting Imaginaries in the Formation of Catholic Teachers

Both preservice and inservice teachers with years of experience tend to encounter conflict in their personal morality and the expectations of the Catholic school in their formation and teaching. Societal norms and Catholic teaching often clash in the reality of the classroom, where the Church encounters culture in conflicting ways. Despite the fact that Catholicism holds and teaches different values and beliefs than secular culture does, teachers are expected to model and share the Church's teachings with students who often come from nonpracticing and non-Catholic

homes and whose experiences might be far removed from the ideal of Catholic morality and belief. Teachers themselves might have been raised and lived in this manner as well. Teacher-formation programs should address the following areas of conflict in the classroom and teachers' lives.

Atheism and Apathy

The Church has long recognized the threat of secularism and atheism. Pope Paul VI (1975) stated, "Faith is nearly always today exposed to secularism, even to militant atheism. It is a faith exposed to trials and threats, and even more, a faith besieged and actively opposed" (John Paul II, 1988a, para. 4 para. 54). Combined with "religious indifference" Benedict XVI (2010b) bemoaned the "abandonment of the faith" (para. 2) that has occurred over a short period of time in his call for a new evangelization. This secularization, suggested the popes, has affected whole communities and demonstrated some of the real challenges to religious education today.

Pope Benedict XVI (2010b), in *Ubicumque et Semper* (*Always and Everywhere*), called for a "new evangelization" of the world and described how sociological, technological, cultural, and economic factors have had a profound impact and led to significant changes in all aspects of society. Although these changes have had positive results in the fight against poverty and hunger, they have also had consequences for religious life, including a "troubling loss of the sacred" (para. 1). Pope Benedict XVI (2007) wrote that relativism has replaced the love of Christ, parents and teachers often abdicate their responsibility to hand on their faith to their children, and a mentality of consumerism has decreased faith in families and schools.

The Church and its leadership have consistently called for a new evangelization and a renewal of catechesis and religious education to counter these societal changes. Strengthening school religious education programs and making the theological education of teachers, pastors,

and families deeper and more comprehensive will assist in the transmission of faith in our homes, churches, and schools. John Paul II (1979a) warned about poor content and the reluctance to change and update catechesis, while maintaining routine, old fashioned pedagogy in the modern world is "leading to stagnation, lethargy and eventual paralysis" (para. 17) to religious education.

Bellows (2013) highlighted a number of studies that show spirituality replacing religion (p. 39). Religion has acquired a negative connotation of restrictive, doctrinal, and controlling, whereas being spiritual is considered freeing, independent, and diverse. Spirituality is attractive and personal; religion is not. A free-flowing spirituality fits snuggly within Taylor's (2007) exclusive humanism and more easily rejects communal bonds and extensive doctrines in the face of the failure of church leadership in areas such as the priest sex crisis, residential school, financial mismanagement, and so on. Spirituality, relativism, sexual freedom, and indifference to faith are often considered more attractive or intuitively more sensible for many.

Sexuality and Ethics

The last half of the 20th century witnessed a dramatic revolution in the manner in which people viewed choice, responsibility, and an inherent mistrust of authority as universal truths (Taylor, 2007, p. 479). Choices have become freed beyond traditional community mores, and many

> authorities have been overthrown leading to some gains and some losses in relation to morality and religion. One of the losses in our day and age is the knowledge, role, authority and value of religion has been reduced in many cases to "good conduct, right behaviour or morality." (p. 103)

The current generation is attacking even that little moral authority that the Church continues to view as valuable and just.

Expressive individualism is the understanding that all people have a way of realizing their own humanity and can live it or express it independently. The models of the past and those in our culture today, which others imposed on us, especially institutions such as the Church, no longer appear to provide the answers and truths once the community has found and accepted them. Expressive individualism has led to a soft relativism (Taylor, 2007, p. 484), which, through the strong influence of the media, has led to the loosening of traditional sexual morality.

Since the 1960s the heart of this revolution has been a shift in sexual mores. This is one of the greatest issues that Catholic school divisions face: how to address differences in Church teaching and the values of teaching staff, parents, and students themselves. Students and many teachers struggle with the sexual teachings of the Church. Taylor (2007) suggested that it is very difficult to reconcile the modern ideas and practices such as moral culture, choice, sexuality, and diversity in a clerical Church (p. 504).

Sexuality has been a powder keg in the conflict between advocates of the elimination of Catholic schools and those who stand for the rights of Catholic schools to teach and hold teachers to the Church's sexual moral standards. Discriminatory hiring practices of Catholic school divisions (as I explain further in Chapter 6)—such as the Catholicity clauses in teachers' contracts, the refusal to distribute condoms in Catholic schools, teaching against abortion, same-sex marriage and resistance to GSAs in Catholic schools—have led to controversy both internally and externally in school divisions across the province. Catholic teacher locals of the Alberta Teachers' Association too have struggled with Catholic leadership over the dismissal of gay and transgender teachers, and in 2017, with the support of Catholic locals, they passed a resolution at their annual general meeting to support Catholic schools only if they support current legislation around human rights (Hare, 2017).

Taylor (2007) explored the tension between sexual fulfillment and piety as an example of the struggle between liberation and Christian renunciation in the context of sacrifice in *A Secular Age* (p. 645). In the medieval Church human flourishing, in the Christian context, was considered a denial of sexual fulfillment, especially the denial as monks and hermits practised it; it can mean opening oneself to the wider love of God. The Church recognized the great power of sexuality over couples as a possessive desire for each other and a bond at the expense of piety and directed that sexual fulfillment be directed toward procreation. This exists only if one believes that devotion to another is a distraction from devotion to God, which is the conservative Christian view. Must one hold that sexual fulfillment and a dedication to God are incompatible? Many Christians today would not.

Millennials, who make up the vast majority of our younger teachers, struggle with traditional Church anthropology and morality on sexual issues. They see no contradiction between freedom of sexual expression and belief in God as they impact human fulfillment. Their view of the human person, shaped largely by individualism and the immanent perspective, rejects many of the Church's teachings on sexuality. Although Pope Francis has not changed any sexual teachings, he remarked that the Church has become fixated with certain issues, including sexuality, which seems to cloud the overarching message of Jesus (Lynch, 2015). Over his papacy Francis has engaged in dialogue with modern culture and attempted to change the tone of the discussions on sexual issues.

A recent document from the Congregation for Catholic Education (2019) entitled *"Male and Female He Created Them*" articulates the Church's position on sexuality and gender theory. The Church's critique of modern sexuality and gender theory rests on two notions: a sense of false freedom and a dualistic anthropology. False freedom stems from a renunciation of nature,

or the reality of the creation, to an absolute option given to the emotions and feelings of the person (para. 19). Simply to self-identify one's gender in a manner that rejects the biological reality of a person, according to the Church, is not acting with freedom and is actually false. Second, a dualistic anthropology that separates the body from the mind or spirit manipulates the body to any purpose and ultimately gives rise to relativism—everything that exists could have the same value—and ignores the real purpose of the human body. This could also lead to a complete split between gender and sexuality in which gender takes precedence over the reality of the biological body (para. 20).

Would a clear teaching and reaffirmation of the traditional view of sexuality convince teachers and students of this generation of the "truth" of Catholic teaching on human anthropology? It is doubtful that this emphasis would have a great effect, but presenting the Church's teaching is vital to the formation of Catholic teachers. The key to these teachings lies more in the recognition that sexual fulfillment and piety might not be mutually incompatible and that, for the Church, sexuality within certain contexts might be healthy and lead to personal fulfillment. Students and teachers need a clear explanation of Church teaching in this area; however, even then most will likely struggle with the teachings. The Synod on the Family and its final document *Amoris Laetitia* (Francis, 2016) has shown that the entire Church shares similar struggles and misunderstandings in this area. A refocus on the teachings of Jesus, scripture, and moral theology, although they do not clarify the matter for those stuck in the cross pressures, might at least help someone to overcome a few of the obstacles found in traditional belief.

Issues with regard to the LGBTQ et al., even within the Church, have been highly divisive, and in Alberta this topic has been a key battleground for Catholic schools. Despite the great difference of opinions, as Donlevy et al. (2013) explained, notwithstanding the Catholic

understanding of these issues of sexuality, the protection of LGBTQ youth requires that Catholic schools pay special attention to the most vulnerable. Catholic schools must provide a supportive community that creates a sense of solidarity for those marginalised and in jeopardy in the recognition that groups such as GSAs can provide safety and promote tolerance and acceptance and give all vulnerable students, including LGBTQ students, public visibility and credibility within schools, which is crucial to their health. As Taylor (1992) commented:

> Our identity is partly shaped by the recognition or its absence, often by the misrecognition of others, and so a person or group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves. Non-recognition or misrecognition can inflict harm; can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being. (p. 25)

The Council of Catholic Superintendents of Alberta (2019), the Alberta Bishops Conference, and the Alberta Catholic School Trustees Association implemented the provincial requirement and provided guidelines (the LIFE framework) for the creation of support groups within Catholic schools across the province.

Faith and Science

Many issues for preservice and inservice teachers are between scientific and faith-based worldviews. First, in my experience, even graduates of Catholic schools fail to fully grasp the complementarity of science and religion; science and faith were thought to be incompatible. Second, although students in a family, parish, or school have been taught religion or practise it, faith often stalls at a simple level; in most cases it rarely grows beyond a childlike belief system (Taylor, 2007, pp. 364-367).

School curricula strongly focus on science, technology, engineering, and math (or STEM) subjects, and as students' progress through their education, the ideas and complexity of the curricula increase exponentially. Catholic schools' religion programs, although they are

challenging and encourage students to reflect on their lives, unfortunately often fall victim to teachers who are ill formed for these discussions or fear engaging in controversial issues. Teacher education and training in this area is often insufficient for the complexity of the issues and hoisted upon teachers as an extra to their scheduled academic subjects. This results in the assignment of courses to teachers who do not have adequate religious knowledge compared to their formations in academic subjects. Misinformation in biblical studies (understanding the creations stories, parting of the Red Sea, and so on.), a lack of confidence in their learning, and the fear of upsetting traditional or conservative parents is a common list of reasons that teachers fail to demonstrate to students the complementarity of science and religion. Students might listen to a lecture in science class on evolutionary biology and in the next class read about creation accounts in Genesis that are poorly taught and explained, and then reach the conclusion that religion lacks logic and reason compared to the highly scientific explanations and logic of science (Hoven, 2015b).

The lack of age-appropriate, content-rich religious education could hinder the spiritual maturity of students as well. Their failure to be challenged to grow in faith—if religious education is not presented in "all its rigor and vigor" (John Paul II, 1979a , para. 30) through the encounter of meaningful mentors and exposure to the riches of the Christian tradition in an age-appropriate manner—could lead to an immature, often impersonal faith. This could manifest as the abandonment of one faith (religion) because another incompatible one (science) is more believable (Taylor, 2007, p. 366).

Secondary students who are formed in this environment arrive at university often challenged by scientific learning, lack the intellectual tools to discern the secular milieu of the university, and fail to reconcile the academics with their childhood faith. In their minds, the

explanation that corresponds with their experience and version of reality at that moment constitutes the truth for them. Science is often considered the mature answer to a childhood faith. Taylor (2007) used death as an example of how carrying a childhood faith cannot be sustained in a period or experience of trauma or difficulty, which could lead many people to move to atheism (p. 306).

Mutual Understandings Between the Church and Secular World

To suggest that secular, modern culture and the Church live in separate and diverse worlds, however, would be incorrect. In fact, Christians have initiated many of the changes in modern society. The social-justice teachings of the Catholic Church are considered a rich treasure built upon the foundations of philosophers, theologians, and saints that defend and define the dignity of the human person. Science and philosophy historically, and today, include the work of Christians who are trying to understand and know God through nature and creation. From astronomy to biology, agriculture, and philosophy, Christians have contributed significant ideas and inventions to the growth of the modern technological world.

The Church holds several teachings that can result in better mutual understandings between the secular modern world and Christian anthropologies. Groome (2011) spoke of a Catholic politics, a belief that all educational activity is political and forms students to engage in society as just and loving citizens. Examples of where Catholic teaching and modern society cooperate are the fight to end unjust discrimination, the focus on teaching children to honour the dignity and respect of every person, and the value of femininity (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2019, paras. 15-17).

The Church and all Catholic educational formation programs must eliminate and fight against unjust discrimination. Historically, the Church has participated in unjust discrimination

(Francis, 2017), including slavery, poverty, forced conversions, and other violence against those of differing beliefs. The teaching and formation of preservice and inservice teachers must lead to an understanding of various forms of discrimination, address and right injustice, and heed Jesus' call for the "equal dignity of men and women" (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2019, para. 15).

Essential to the formation of teachers in Catholic schools is the knowledge and ability to educate children and young people to respect every person, no matter their differences. Catholic schools are communities that represent the entire diversity of humanity and should reject bullying, violence, insults, or unjust discrimination based on specific characteristics that include race, religion, gender, or sexuality. Teacher-preparation programs and school divisions need to ensure that teachers and students are educated for active and responsible citizenship marked by the ability to welcome all legitimate expressions of human personhood (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2019, para. 16).

Another point of contact is the anthropological understanding of gender and the role of women in society and the Church. Feminism demonstrates that the skills and abilities of women are equal to those of men, and the Church has learned that women's capacity to live for the other favours a more realistic and clear understanding of an evolving situation of equality and human rights. Preparation programs need to instill within all a sense of respect for male and female and recognize the intrinsic value of the complementarity of human relationships and spiritual values. The Church recently recognized the importance and debt owed to women and their historic role in education and in the raising of children (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2019, para. 17).

The Human in a Secular Age

The religious dimension makes a true understanding of the human person possible. Human beings have a dignity and a greatness that exceed those of all other creatures: They are works of God that have been elevated to the supernatural order as children of God, and therefore they have both a divine origin and an eternal destiny that transcend this physical universe. Religion teachers will find the way already prepared for an organic presentation of Christian anthropology (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988).

Extensive care is required in the education and formation of our children and young teachers and in the ongoing faith formation of experienced teachers. Social imaginaries are constantly shifting, growing, evolving as beliefs, values, needs, and desires change and evolve. The public sphere, influenced by rising secularism and modernity, becomes the meeting place and arena for the testing, engagement in, and realization of the new, changing imaginary. Catholic education contributes by forming students and teachers, engaging the Church and society, and providing a perspective and ideology, including its own version of the good life.

The clash of imaginaries can be considered a battle or an opportunity for encounter with others, some of whom share beliefs and often those who do not. For Catholic schools to be agents of justice and change, a solid foundation with skilled teachers who are confident in faith and knowledge is necessary to prepare students for life in this changing pluralistic culture. Programs of religious education and teachers' formation need to stimulate the heart, mind, and soul. Religious education must include a clear philosophical and theological presentation of Catholic anthropology and the morality that flows from these teachings. Teachers with little or no formation can cause great harm and work against the mission and vision of Catholic education, which results "in an unbalanced emphasis on individual expression at the expense of a

more genuine Christian anthropology. This anthropology [Christian Trinitarian] stresses the transcendent . . . . Those working with young adults should, at every opportunity, engage with the transcendent" (Rymarz, 2011c, p. 161). Formation is critical.

In addition to formation in Catholic anthropology and a vison of the person, which includes sexuality, discrimination against sexual minorities, and women's rights, the ecological movement, as I describe it in the next chapter, creates a significant opportunity for positive dialogue and engagement with modernity. Rooted deeply in creation theology, the Christian ecological and ecospiritual movements, with the commitment of Pope Francis, create an opportunity for Christianity to engage with modernity in a project that unites humanity. Pope Francis's (2015a) *Laudato si'* recognizes the interconnectedness of creation and humanity and has called for reconsideration of humanity's role in creation. The encyclical's focus on education enables teachers and Catholic schools to participate in and lead a movement that involves people of all faiths and no faith to protect our common home; it could be a means of engaging a new generation of Christians in recognizing the transcendent in their lives.

CHAPTER 5: ECOLOGICAL CARE FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN A SECULAR AGE

> Climate change is a global problem with serious implications, environmental, social, economic, political, and for the distribution of goods; it represents one of the principal challenges facing humanity in our day. (Francis, 2015a, para. 25)

When I was a teacher/chaplain in a Catholic high school during the 1990s, the students and not the staff organized and ran, at least originally, the celebration of Earth Day. The staff initiated Easter and Christmas celebrations, which are traditionally Christian, with a significant cultural and religious component; but high school students organized the Earth Day celebration, a secular event. They planned the activities without staff assistance and included prayer, reflection, and, always, a call to action, all without teacher input. The student council raised money to plant a tree, students participated in environmental clean-up activities, and students led the call to recycle, reuse, and reduce consumption. This annual celebration of the Earth, ecology, and the environment was relatable and valuable to the students.

I quickly learned that this was one of the few opportunities in the school year that I had to join the religious/spiritual teachings of the Church in a movement that was self-organized and drew in students in a meaningful manner. In ecology and the environment, the students and staff shared a common goal, vision, and values. This created an opening for the school staff to work with students; for Catholic teachings to address issues of faith and nature, spirituality and ecology; and for the students to experience a confluence and collaboration of ideas between the secular and religious worldviews.

The ecological movement transcends political and religious boundaries and is a cause for engagement and joint action for Catholic schools communities. Several issues and values in the world unite peoples and transcend politics and religions. Other examples include poverty

reduction, economic inequality, imbalanced health care access, and access to education The environment and ecology present a strong case study for a transcendent Catholic worldview and immanent or secular worldview to effectively communicate and work as partners to overcome cultural and environmental problems, create a common language, and propose solutions despite the differing rationale and views of the people involved.

Catholic teacher-education programs that involve identification and collaboration with secular ideologies and ideas can be useful in the formation of a Catholic spirituality and the creation of witnesses of students and teachers. In the previous chapter I described anthropology as a potential stumbling block to Catholic teachers' formation; in this chapter I focus on a topic in which progressive and secular ideas converge with Catholic teaching and make it a possible tool for reconciliation or mutual discussion toward a language that furthers dialogue. Forming teachers with this knowledge and the opportunity for spiritual and ecological conversion could greatly impact the students and families involved in Catholic education and further the mission of the Church, Catholic schools, and Catholic social teachings (SCT).

The Catholic Ecological Movement

Pope Francis (2015a) wrote, "Living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience" (para. 217). Genesis 2:15 calls the faithful to "cultivate and care for" God's gift of creation. There has been a growing recognition of the scale of modern environmental degradation, especially that caused by the climate crisis. Francis expressed concern about humanity's failure to recognize the interconnectedness among the ecological and social challenges, including the Church's call for the protection of human life, the need to exercise a more intentional preferential option for the poor and vulnerable, and the promotion of the

common good (Hendrickson, 2020, p. 26). The Church has been a strong advocate of environmental and ecological issues for decades under the leadership of Popes John Paul II, Benedict XVI, and Francis. Church members, especially religious orders, male and female, have strongly protested environmental destruction and have offered a theology and spirituality of creation and relationship, including the fight for the rights of Indigenous Peoples and the protection of their cultures and land.[17]

In advance of the United Nations Climate Change Summit in Paris in December 2015, Francis released a papal encyclical on the environment and climate change that became a defining moment in Catholic social teachings (CST) on ecology and climate change. Over time these teachings have become a foundational theological stance of the Church and are particularly important given the socio-political influence and ecological impact of the Church in the world (Hrynkow & O'Hara, 2011). Previous popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI were known for their outspokenness on environmental matters and often referred to as the first *green* popes. Francis indicated early in his pontificate a focus on addressing the complexities of human existence and a spirituality of the Earth by explicitly referring to ecology in his first encyclical, *Lumen Fidei*: *Light of Faith* (Francis, 2013a), weeks after he was chosen pope.

Charles Taylor (2019) spoke directly to ecological care and its importance for the Church, especially for promoting the interrelationship between humanity and the Earth:

> I would say that the really big need we see in many Western societies today is for a sense of solidarity. We have drifted into an epoch in which there has been a floating towards individualism . . . And that the very efficient economy will somehow take care of things if they just somehow leave it to the market. These are all very dangerous illusions and somehow we need to reactivate a sense of our solidarity, solidarity with our fellow citizens, and solidarity with the whole of humanity, and a solidarity that goes beyond

[17]Examples include John Paul II (1987), Benedict XVI (2009), and Francis (2015).

> that, with the planet, which I think has been brilliantly presented by Pope Francis in his 2015 encyclical on the care of creation, *Laudato si'*. (para. 4)

Ecospirituality and the roots of the environmental movement grow deeply in the Catholic Church. Francis's encyclical was one of many documents, teachings and pronouncement by the Church on the integration of creation and humanity's place within the world. The ecological movement is more than reuse, recycle, and reduce; it involves the relationships, biotic and abiotic, within the entirety of creation. Those in Catholic schools, as instruments of the Church and guided by CST, need to be formed in ecological awareness, informed of the issues and duties as citizens of the world, and transformed by an ecological spirituality to become leaders in this movement.

By closely aligning Catholic teaching with a radical understanding of ecospirituality, Francis moved this issue to the forefront of Catholic teaching and increased the impact of ecological issues on the Catholic worldview, social teachings, and education. What does the Church currently teach, how might these teachings evolve, and what are the implications for Catholic education, especially teachers' formation and the dialogue with secular society?

Integrating Ecospirituality Into a Catholic Worldview

The formal roots of the Church's CST include a number of writings and teachings generally thought to start with *Rerum Novarum: Rights and Duties of Capital and Labor* (Leo III, 1891), which addressed the issues of justice and peace during the period of rapid industrialization in the 19th and 20th centuries. These teachings have expanded to include fields such as human relationships, medical technologies, and interspecies and environmental relationships. The first key environmental writings in the CST canon Pope Paul VI's (1971) *Octogesima Adveniens: Apostolic letter of Pope Paul VI,* in which he addressed important concerns about environmental issues as "the dramatic and unexpected consequence of human

activity" (para. 21). Paul VI not only recognized humanity's role in the environmental degradation, but also included the recognition that humanity has a shared responsibility to do something about it (Deane-Drummond, 2012, p. 195).

John Paul II (1979b), building upon earlier popes, developed a more systematic framework and developed a theological foundation on ecology and the Church in the expansion of CST. His first encyclical, *Redemptor Hominis: The Redeemer of Humanity*, linked the original creation of the world in Genesis to Jesus Christ and explained that "Christ acts to restore not simply a broken humanity, but a broken earth as well" (Deane-Drummond, 2012, p. 196). John Paul II (and later Benedict XVI and Francis) connected the Pauline phrase "creation is groaning" (Romans 8:22, NAB) with the suffering of the natural world and combined it with the awareness that humanity is responsible for this suffering as a result of the exploitation of the Earth.

John Paul II extended social teaching even further and called on the Church to restore humanity and the broken natural world to the fullness of grace in Christ. John Paul's thought reflected the notion of a cosmic Christology (which theologian and scientist Teilhard de Chardin first suggested, as well as the term *cosmic Christ*; Edwards, 2006, pp. 83-85), or "deep incarnation," to suggest that Christ is the firstborn of all creation, united with all creation, and thus cares for and heals all creation (Col. 1:15-17; Deane-Drummond, 2012, p. 206).

In *Redemptor Hominis*, John Paul II (1979b) not only described the breakdown of the relationship between humanity and creation, but also defined *right relationship* and explained how to understand *dominion* in Gen. 1:28. The encyclical condemned humanity's alienation from nature, and the use of natural material is merely a resource for "immediate use and consumption" (para 15). Instead John Paul II suggested that the will of the Creator was to ensure that the relationship between humanity and the natural world is honourable and virtuous rather than

oppressive and that it "should communicate with nature as an intelligent and noble 'master' and 'guardian,' and not as a heedless 'exploiter' and 'destroyer'" (para. 15). The pope carefully redefined the Christian notion of dominion as stewardship, moving it away from the interpretation as domination, but he clearly stated that ideas such as biocentrism or biocracy are to be avoided and that society must recognize the primacy of persons over things (Deane-Drummond, 2012, p. 197).

John Paul II (1981) continued to develop themes of ecology in various writings throughout his pontificate. For example in *Laborem Exercens* (*On Human Work*), he aligned the biblical concept of *subdue*, such that subjugation as found in Genesis is not exploitation but *justice and holiness* in humanity's sharing in the activity of the Creator (Deane-Drummond, 2012, p. 198). In *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (*The Social Concern of the Church*) John Paul II (1987, as cited in Deane-Drummond, 2012) described societies' ecological responsibility as not just an option for Christian discipleship, but "the very means through with humans become perfect and express the image of God" (p. 199). He also explained the theological basis for which other creations cannot be used simply for economic gain, but "one must take into account the nature of each being and its mutual connection to an ordered system, precisely the cosmos" (p. 198).

Benedict XVI remained faithful to the work of John Paul II in relentlessly trying to establish care for the environment and ecological awareness as integral to Christian faith (Groome, 2011, p. 216). He stressed the understanding that the natural world is an expression of God's love and the basis for human survival. Like John Paul II before him, Benedict strongly opposed economic systems that reject sustainability. He suggested being authentically human, meant that economic, social, and political development includes the principle of *graciousness* and was accompanied by an expression of fraternity. This fraternity was understood as all

creation being woven together into a pattern, not just for humans, but for all creation (Deane-Drummond, 2012, pp. 203-204).

Prior to *Laudato si'* (Francis, 2015a), many in the environmental and ecological community wondered where Francis would take the Church in the encyclical. He referred regularly to the ecological crisis at hand and warned the Church and the world that changes in behaviour and belief were necessary. Francis highlighted the issues of human relationships, economic disparity, environmental destruction, global warming, climate change, and peace as interconnected and humanity's need to address a solution. Francis's theological starting place was Genesis 1:26-28: humanity created in the image and likeness of God and a call to subdue the Earth and have dominion over it. For Francis, dominion did not mean power, but protection for all of creation (Delio, 2015).

Delio (2015) believed that Francis, in light of his past teachings, would focus more specifically on the reality of being human, the core (i.e., *cor*, Latin for "heart") of human existence, the seat of consciousness. Consciousness helps people to situate their place in the world. Ecology and care for creation stem from human relationships that extend outward to the environment. Francis had spoken out about technology replacing in-person relationships and luring people away from the biological world of relationships. He believed that this attitude had to be overcome, especially among youth who tended to live more and more in a virtual world.

Francis also referred to the destruction of the Earth as a collective sin of humanity: "This is our sin, exploiting the Earth. . . . This is one of the greatest challenges of our time: to convert ourselves to a type of development that knows how to respect creation" (Francis, as cited in Delio, 2015, para. 5).

Laudato si' and Catholic Education

The final chapter of *Laudato si'* (Francis, 2015a) directly addressed the role of the environment, ecopedagogy, and religious education. Because the encyclical is essential to an understanding of the Catholic sense of the environmental movement, chapter 6 is vital to Catholic teachers. This chapter provides a means to enable teachers to incorporate climate change and environmental concerns in their teaching, and understand and engage society with an environmental and ecological mindset. It is important that Catholic teachers understand the ecological movement, its complementary relationship to the teachings of the Church, and its power to spur dialogue the dominant immanent culture.

Laudato si' (Francis, 2015a) is an extraordinarily ecumenical document. Seven of the nine characteristics can easily be morally and intellectually shared with non-Catholics in an immanent frame; the last two reach out to the transcendent worldview. Lane (2015) suggested that the final chapter of the encyclical relates to three challenges tat Catholic education faces in the 21st century (p. 47): (a) the encyclical's critique of anthropocentrism, (b) the religious-education challenge that the encyclical demands, and (c) the call for both an individual and a communal ecological conversion. All three of the challenges impact the Church's understanding of anthropology and the development of a curriculum for religious education in Catholic schools.

Critique of Anthropocentrism

One of the encyclical's central underlying themes is the need for a cultural change that embraces humanity's common origin, mutual belonging, and a shared future with all creation. Francis (2015a) suggested that, unless people modify and develop a new way of thinking about being human (para. 215), no amount of education will change the current path, which will render education efforts ineffective. Francis declared, "There can be no ecology without an adequate

anthropology" (para. 118). The encyclical uses strong language such as *tyrannical* (para. 68), *distorted* (para. 69), and *misguided* (paras. 118, 119, 122) to describe people's anthropocentrism and the need for a change in anthropology.

Francis (2015a) left no room for ambiguity. Going further than previous popes, he acknowledged that human beings cause climate change and that "once humanity declares independence from reality and behaves with absolute dominion" (para. 117), creation will begin to crumble. When this happens, humanity will consider itself equal with God, which will provoke a rebellion, in a sense, on the part of nature. Humanity must reorder itself—or decenter—and reconnect with the larger natural order. For Francis, this moment is both an anthropological and theological crisis, and humanity will attempt to reimagine its place in creation. Lane (2015) stated that an understanding of the person can be both a cause and a solution to the crisis of climate change and that ecological destruction and education can play a role in this understanding (pp. 48-49).

Educational Challenges of the Encyclical

The final chapter of the encyclical (Francis, 2015a) deals specifically with ecological education and spirituality. Lane (2015) noted this is no accident (p. 49). Francis begins the chapter by noting that human beings above all need to change (para. 202) and repeatedly argues that this is an educational challenge that humanity faces (paras. 202, 209). Education must address the lack of awareness of humanity's common origins of creation, mutual belonging to each other, and the future that everyone needs to share (para. 202).

Lane (2015) suggested that understanding the common origins of creation, beginning with cosmology and biological evolution, is necessary to contend with these issues. Religious education must help students to recognize the place of human beings within the larger picture of

creation. The question of mutual belonging is an "anthropological issue, highlighting the mutuality, interrelatedness, dependence of human beings" (pp. 49-50).

The educational challenge includes going beyond the "compulsive consumerism" (Francis, 2015a, para. 203) of the free market economies of the globalized world, in which freedom is perceived as the freedom to consume and the failure to appreciate the reality that unlimited consumption is actually restrictive. Humanity has a responsibility to explore its relationship with objects and "things," because people exploit and use nature in a destructive fashion. A world economy based on the unlimited consumption of finite resources creates and perpetuates an unhealthy relationship with the physical world: "Purchasing is always a moral—and not simply economic—act" (Pope Benedict, as cited in Francis, 2015a, para. 206).

Pope Francis stated that the absence of humans' self-awareness and self-reflection in the current situation makes them incapable of offering guidance and direction. This absence becomes a source of anxiety that engenders feelings of instability and uncertainty, and the uncertainty can cause people to become "self-centered and self-enclosed" (paras. 204, 208). Lane (2015) described this as an anthropological issue and an extension of the "contemporary crisis of the modern self" (p. 51). Lane believed that it is not just a matter of identifying with one of premodern, modern, or postmodern, but of synthesizing the best of the three. A new vision of what it means to be human and regaining a sense of the place of humanity as part of creation is required:

> Our efforts at education will be inadequate and ineffectual unless we strive to promote a new way of thinking about human beings, life, society and our relationship with nature. Otherwise, the paradigm of consumerism will continue to advance, with the help of the media and the highly effective workings of the market. (Francis, 2015a, para. 215)

In addition to anthropological implications, the encyclical outlines the needs of environmental education programs (Francis, 2015a, para. 210). Previous environmental

education programs focussed on scientific information, consciousness raising, and the prevention of environmental risk. The encyclical suggests three additions to Catholic environmental education programs: (a) a critique of the myths of modernity that are grounded in a utilitarian mindset (i.e., individualism, unlimited progress, competition, consumerism, the unregulated market); (b) the restoration of various levels of ecological equilibrium or balance; and (c) an understanding of a transcendent ground for ecological ethics (para. 210; Lane, 2015, p. 51).

According to Lane (2015), ending the myth of unlimited progress is vitally important, as Francis (2015a) highlighted in *Laudato si'*. The encyclical powerfully states, "The idea of infinite or unlimited growth, which proves so attractive to economists, financiers, and experts in technology" is "based on the lie that there is an infinite supply of the earth's goods," which "leads to the planet being squeezed beyond every limit" (para. 106; Lane, 2015, p. 53). The critique of modernity includes praise for the advances of modernity, especially in the fields of medicine, engineering, and communications (para. 107); however, increased responsibility, values, and conscience have not always followed technological development (para. 105).

Ecological equilibrium, as Francis (2015a) defined it in *Laudato si'*, means "establishing harmony within ourselves, with others, with nature, and other living creatures, and with God" (para. 210) and requires a holistic education that must not focus simply on destructive technologies, environmental degradation, and resource extraction, but also remind teachers and students that everything is interrelated, interconnected, and interdependent. For Francis, environmental equilibrium meant reviewing and recovering the broken relationship between humanity, the Earth, and God (para. 66). The encyclical highlights the gap between the human and natural world, which is understood as partially responsible for the attitude of domination and exploitation of the Earth (Lane, 2015, p. 53).

The last goal of ecological education is what the encyclical (Francis, 2015a) described as "the leap towards the transcendent which gives ecological ethics its deepest meaning" (para. 210). Lane (2015) suggested that the challenge is to develop an ethics of ecology in terms of solidarity with creation, responsibility for the natural world, and compassionate care for a common home. All people ought to have a shared ethic if they are to save the planet. The challenge to theology is a transcendent foundation for this shared ethic. The encyclical constantly returns to the theme of working together as a society and implies that the center of ecological education and ethics is anthropology (para. 215; Lane, 2015, p. 53).

Ecological Conversion

Building on the work and thought of Pope John Paul II (Deane-Drummond, 2016, p. 284), Francis (2015a) suggested, "So what they [those not committed to ecological change] all need is an 'ecological conversion'" (para. 217), whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them. Living out a vocation to as a protector of God's handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of Christian experience (para. 217). A conversion of heart requires that individuals and communities explore for themselves, recognize the need to change, respond with "gratitude and graciousness," and "imitate his [God's] generosity in self-sacrifice and good works" (para. 220) to enable lasting and communal change.

Pope Francis (2015a) called all humanity to explore the meaning and purpose of life and, in doing so, embrace a life of contemplation and relationship. He wrote:

> Christian spirituality proposes an alternative understanding of the quality of life, and encourages a prophetic and contemplative lifestyle, one capable of deep enjoyment free of the obsession with consumption. We need to take up an ancient lesson, found in different religious traditions and also in the Bible; it is the conviction that "less is more." (para. 217)

The Church has long taught that people need to live and create a "civilization of love" (Francis, 2015a, para. 231) and expand it to a culture of care: "Care for nature is part of a lifestyle which includes the capacity for living together and communion. Jesus reminded us that we have God as our common Father and that this makes us brothers and sisters" (para. 228). The necessary love and respect are far beyond human relationships alone and include care for the environment and all creation. In the political realm this care and concern become tangible. In *Laudato si'*, Francis stated that creation is a reflection of the divine relationship of the Trinity. As Father, Son, and Spirit engaged in a relationship of love, all creation reflects and expresses this relationship through complicated and interwoven webs of dependency and growth:

> The divine Persons are subsistent relations, and the world, created according to the divine model, is a web of relationships. Creatures tend towards God, and in turn it is proper to every living being to tend towards other things, so that throughout the universe we can find any number of constant and secretly interwoven relationships. (para. 240)

The role of ecological education in ecological conversion is essential. The encyclical (Francis, 2015a) called for two forms of conversion (Lane, 2015, pp. 54-55): a profound interior conversion (para. 217) and a conversion of the community (para. 219). Central to this conversion is an encounter with Jesus Christ, which affects relationships with the created world. The task of conversion, difficult at the individual level, is the work of the community, with success possible only with a communal effort. Individual conversion requires the support of the community, and the community depends on the transformation of individuals. To assist with conversion, Francis suggested that people develop a sense of gratitude for creation and recognize that the world is God's loving gift to humanity. The encyclical invites reflection on the dignity of the natural world and the intrinsic relationship between the natural order and other human beings (paras. 81, 119). Francis insisted that ecological conversion is innate to the Christian experience

(para. 217) and achievable only if society engages the political, economic, and market environments, which contribute to ecological destruction (para. 206).

Deane-Drummond (2016) believed that Francis called humanity to reimagine the world, to create a new social imaginary, a new way of viewing and understanding the world based on a love of creation. She lamented that humanity has failed to meet the human responsibility to both people and the planet. It is important to address and reconcile these failures with a belief in God, who is creator and redeemer of the world.

Evangelization and reconciliation are the tasks of Catholic education. The new social imaginary, according to Taylor (2007), is important to draw humans into the biosphere and geological models of the Earth, which, in effect, creates a biosocial, biopolitical imaginary. Deane-Drummond (2016) called for the removal of the distinction between humanity and the natural world, something that Taylor argued occurred with the rise of modernity, and educators have a duty to implant that distinction in their students, culture, and the world.

In the encyclical, Francis (2015a) declared that the ecological crisis has spiritual roots and that, with secularization, humanity has lost its way. Francis, in *Laudato si',* presented a critical engagement with the dominant social norms and named specific social responsibilities that must be rectified (Deane-Drummond, 2016) Pope Francis, in *Laudato si'*, firmly made care for creation an essential part of the canon of CST, with poverty, peacemaking, and economic justice.

Making Friends With the Ecological Movement?

Taylor (2007) described two features that have led to Western society's disconnect from the natural environment. The first is the disenchantment of the created world, which has closed the boundary between internal thought and the external nature. The second, which is connected

to the first, is the rise of disengaged reason. If identity and reason are no longer connected to creation or the mind of God, people become disconnected from the cosmos. Instead, rational thought, no longer interlocked with the world and creation, is limited to physical evidence and science (Taylor, 1989). According to Taylor, if appears this beliefs provides the sense that "we no longer belong to this world; we have transcended it" (p. 301).

In modern urban society, the natural world can be strange and distant. For sacramental churches, the division between humanity and creation has removed much of the innate symbolism of creation in sacramental rites. Yet, an ecologically centered perspective often sheds a different light on existence. God's creation has nourished humanity s and created a sense of kinship. Taylor (2007) explained that "we belong to the earth; it is our home. This sensibility is a powerful source of ecological consciousness" (p. 347). Taylor also realized that at other times this alien and vast Earth can remind humans not only of their smallness, insignificance, and fragility, but also of the sense of mystery and enchantment.

Ecology, the interaction of humans and all creatures, can be both a problem and a possibility in working with teachers. The created world is a reflection and an encounter with the transcendent, but it can also be regarded as pantheistic or mere immanence. The deep ecology movement can echo a religious critique of modern, disengaging, unbelieving reason and does so from an immanent stance, drawing upon a person's deepest feelings or instincts (Taylor, 2007).

Laudato si' (Francis, 2015a) outlines the Catholic response to the ecological engagement, the relationships among all aspects of creation, and humanity's place in this created world. The encyclical offers a Christian viewpoint on the interconnectedness of all creation in light of a transcendent Creator. Francis, in response to the ecological crisis, called for a "profound interior conversion" (para. 217) to live out "our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork [as]

essential to a life of virtue" (para. 218). His ecological perspective is woven into the very fabric of Christian life, so that every created thing can potentially reveal the love of God and thus inspire a social conversion with "a spirit of generous care" (para. 220), brotherhood, and simplicity of Christian saints such as Francis of Assisi. His call to simplicity has been countercultural to the glorification of consumerism, affluence, and comfort in society today (Rolheiser, 2006, p. 78). Educators who engage relationships among the environment, the poor, and the Creator can embolden actual practices for schools, challenge teachers, and create witnesses to the transcendence through ecological education and formation.

Defining Ecospirituality in a Christian Context

> The world is charged with the grandeur of God.
> It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;
> It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil
> Crushed. Why do men then now not reck his rod?
> (Gerard Manley Hopkins, 1877/1985)

Nearly every religious and spiritual tradition universally includes a belief in the sacredness of creation. For example, Indigenous spirituality throughout the world expresses a spiritual and sacred tie to the Earth in stories, practices, and worship. Indigenous spirituality is usually represented as a spirituality of immanence and indwelling of God or the sacred (Berry, 2009, pp. 97-102). Those closest to the Earth recognize more clearly and respond with greater understanding to the relatedness and interdependence of creation that forms a web that ties the entire universe together into an Earth community (Francis, 2018).

Ecospirituality in Christianity is found in the biblical creation theologies of the mainstream Christian churches, and the perspective is typically Christocentric. Even the Catholic tradition reveals great diversity in the definition of ecospirituality. The Sisters of the Society of

the Holy Child (as cited in Mackenzie, n.d.), on the website *Ecospirituality Resources,* defined ecospirituality as

> relating to the Mystery we call God, living and acting in creation and all life within it; dealing with the interrelationship between physical realities and their inner and outer environment; integrating the Universe Story, the Great Work, evolving consciousness, the divine life within all creation, current threats to creation, and Christian (or other) faith responses. (para. 2)

The centrality of the description flows from the transcendent position of Christ and the co-creative role of humanity, who acts as a "spokesman for all creation" (John Paul II, 2002, para. 5).

By contrast, according to Tetlow (1995), the American Bishops endorse a far more traditional approach and language to ecospirituality, call on humanity to act as careful stewards of creation, and name all of creation as sacramental, which points to the wonder, awe, and beauty of God. Christian ecospirituality treads carefully between the notion of a transcendent God and an immanent spirituality and carefully avoids a plunge into pantheism (Tetlow, 1995). Religion, and the accompanying spirituality, is a powerful force for humans and their human-nature relationship. An ecospirituality in which the Earth becomes a spiritual place can have a tremendously positive impact on the human and nonhuman communities that abide there (Hettinger, 1995, p. 83). However, the opposite can also be true, and many people blame historical Christianity more than any other religion as the source of the current ecological problems.

Many writers, including Christians, have addressed the issue of Christianity in the creation of the problems that humans now encounter in the destruction of the environment. White (1967) identified traditional Christianity's arrogance toward nature, as interpreted in the Genesis (1:28) command to dominate and subdue the Earth and Christianity's preoccupation

with the transcendent and individual salvation of one's own soul (Cloutier, 2014), and less on the immanent—the Earth and creation—as the cause of the current environmental situation.

Thomas Berry (2009), a Catholic priest, cultural historian, and leader in the Catholic environment movement, concurred with White (1967) and asserted that three epic events in history moved Christianity from a religion-spirituality that was invested strongly in the Earth and the divinity of nature to a more transcendent and supernatural form of divinity and salvation. The first epic event, according to Berry, was the introduction of Greek philosophy, with its emphasis on the mind and the detachment of the body:

> The second event, which closely followed the first, was the detached spirituality of Puritanism found in some denominations of the Protestant Reformation and Jansenism in Catholicism; and the third era was the industrial revolution which incorporated the biblical notion of "dominion" and, over time, turned it more into "domination." (pp. 61-63)

An understanding of ecospirituality, especially within the Christian context, has a fine distinction between panentheism and pantheism. Pantheism (all-is-God), in many Aboriginal and Eastern belief systems, is the belief that all creation is "God" and thus divine. This is contrary to panentheism (all-in-God), which is the belief that God is encountered in creation and makes it holy, but this viewpoint still endorses a transcendent divinity or creator God. This God is found or can be identified in creation but is also beyond creation (Case-Winters, 2007). Johnson (2011) asserted that panentheism is the middle ground between pantheism and theism, provides a language for immanence, and respects the transcendent nature of God. The distinction is important because it potentially provides traditional Christianity with a theology and language to interact with deep ecology while it rejects pantheism. Other Christians view panentheism as problematic because it seems to blur the separation between God and creation.

Ecological Formation and Education

As I stated earlier, ecology, the interaction of humans with their environment, can be both a problem and a possibility in working with teachers. Taylor (2007) wrote, "We belong here; it is our home and can lead to an immense sense of ecological consciousness" (p. 347). *Laudato si'* (Francis, 2015a) is a powerful reflection on the interconnectedness of all creation, including human relationships and transcendence, and a valuable resource to understand and open oneself to God.

In light of *Laudato si'* (Francis, 2015a), the environmental movement has much to offer teachers to help them to understand the important link between the sacraments, the created world, and creation's capacity to reveal God to humanity. "The entire material universe speaks of God's love, his boundless affection for us. Soil, water, mountains: everything is, as it were, a caress of God" (para. 84). To accomplish this, Francis called for an interior conversion:

> The ecological crisis is also a summons to profound interior conversion . . . . So what they [those not committed to change] all need is an "ecological conversion," whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them. Living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience. (para. 217)

Francis (2015a) believed that internal, individual conversion leads to a social conversion, the ongoing development of community networks, and "a spirit of generous care" (para. 220), which can be a constant reminder that humanity is not disconnected from the rest of creation, but "joined in splendid communion" (para. 220).

Catholic Earthcare Australia (2010) and the Bishops education office published a document, *On Holy Ground*, on the education and ecological significance of the environmental crisis that has set the tone for educational materials and environmental education in Australian Catholic schools. Its three goals are (a) to reflect and respond to sacred scripture that highlights

the relationships among humanity, creation, and the Creator; (b) to reflect and respond to CST on ecology; and (c) to develop liturgies that enable schools to focus on God's creation. The curricula call for spiritual conversion by reinforcing the aspects of awe and wonder, materialism and consumerism, stewardship and sustainability, right relationship with the Earth and each other, and other competing values to demonstrate the dire consequences of continued destruction of the ecosystem (Lavery, 2011).

It is important that the Catholic community, including schools and institutes of teacher formation, be informed on and formed to ecological causes. Justice, the environment, and relationships are strongly linked. Ecological practices of schools can witness to the transcendence visible through ecological education and formation. The school, a humanizing and transformational institution, must be a community of justice. Environmental justice is part of it, and all relationships must point to a civilization of love and culture of care.

Ecospirituality and Religious Education

Education is a complex interaction of competing epistemologies, values, and interests. Catholic schools introduce another element throughout the life of the school, a Christian ethos that permeates the teaching, relationships, and curriculum. Curriculum designers have made great strides in presenting ecological themes and environmental education over the last few decades. From simple awareness of the issue in the 1970s to multiple and interdisciplinary approaches today, education authorities are coming to understand the importance of forming students with an ecological consciousness. Alberta Education, as part of a comprehensive overhaul and redesign of education for the 21st century, has included an environmental education framework (Ireland, 2013) that is cross disciplined, multifaceted, and closely aligned with recent movements and literature in environmental studies and education.

The Government of Alberta's (2017) *Guiding Framework for the Design and Development of Kindergarten to Grade 12 Provincial Curriculum (Programs of Study) [2016-2017]* reiterated the goals. They are ambitious but necessary and strongly advocate for the necessary contribution of environmental education to the social, cultural, and global environmental responsibilities; this represents a significant shift from the past. The introduction of the new *Ministerial Order on Student Learning* (Government of Alberta, Department of Education, 2020), which guides the ideology in the new curriculum, attempts to find a balance between environmental issues and ecology and the importance of fossil fuels to Alberta's economy. With so many jobs and Alberta's high standard of living because of the oilsands, drilling, coal, and natural gas, it is a sensitive issue in provincial education.

Religious-education curricula for Catholic schools vary around the world but are based on the goals of the *General Directory of Catechesis* (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997). The directory clearly states that, central to the education of youth in Catholic schools, themes "such as liberty, justice and peace and the protection of creation" (para. 157) are essential. Canadian religious educator James Mulligan (2006) referred to *biasing* the vision of Catholic education in schools (pp. 162-166). Social justice, including ecological and environmental concerns, should be a bias in Catholic schools. Catholic education (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997, para. 199) must focus and form young people to understand the integral relationship among them, all living organisms, and all creation.

Church and environmental leaders have expressed the great value and potential of the Christian church in sharing the message of ecological change and education. Berry (2009) suggested that "the Church could be a powerful force in bringing about the healing of a distraught Earth" (p. 53) and could renew its mission in the 21st century through this work. The

Church holds significant moral authority among its members, as Deane-Drummond (2012) suggested (p. 212). Its global reach, combined with ecological solidarity and peace, could have a significant impact on the world. For example, John Paul II (1990) wrote, "*An education in ecological responsibility* is urgent: responsibility for oneself, for others, and for the earth . . . . A true education in responsibility entails a genuine conversion in ways of thought and behaviour" (para. 13).

The pope's call for an ecological responsibility lies with each person and the institutions that form them, including the Catholic school. His call for education to include an ecological responsibility is essential. Catholic education, because of its nature and connectedness, must include a sense of the value and interweaving of life through biodiversity.

Berry (2009) described the need for humanity to reconnect with the primary concern of human affairs and recognize the individual's role in the community—not just the human community, but the community of the Earth. He suggested that the divine reach out to humanity—not mainly through scripture, but through the natural world, which is the fundamental locus of encounter between the human and the divine. He contended that people need to

> look up at the stars at night and recover the primordial wonder that awakened in our souls when first we see the stars ablaze in the heavens against the dark mystery of the night. We need to hear the song of the mockingbird thrown out to the universe form the topmost branch of the highest tree in the meadow. We need to experience the sweetness of the honeysuckle pervading the lowlands in the late summer evening. (p. 49)

These experiences draw people to communion with the Earth and encounter the mystery of being as one with all of the immensity of creation. Instead, many people have explained the world away with a pervasive scientism that has locked them so tightly into a human world where it appears that technology and the gadgets that prevent them from seeing the grandeur in creation

can solve all problems. Immanence and individualism prevent a rapport with the Earth and places many in society in a trancelike state.

Teachers and forming teachers need to reawaken the world and their students to the wonder and awe of the Earth so that they can truly encounter the universal connectedness and community that engages and sustains humanity. Hrynkow and O'Hara (2011) suggested that biocentric principles work together on the premise of interconnectedness with CST and align along the same themes of interconnectedness and the common good between people and creation. Peace occurs when all members of the community, biotic and abiotic, work in harmony and foster wholeness and value. Francis (2015a) strengthened this teaching even more in *Laudato si'*.

Thomas Groome (2011) called for a new Catholic cosmology to describe a new view of humanity's place in the world that captures people's impact on and interaction with it. Groome believed that Catholic schools play an integral role in leading students to an environmental consciousness:

> Pope Benedict XVI has been relentless in his call to unite ecological concerns with the Christian faith. This is as much a justice issue as a theological one. The practice of a "green" consciousness must be central to the Catholic school and formation of young people to preserve the environment and continue to recognize the sacramental nature of the Christian beliefs. (p. 216)

Groome (2011) suggested that teaching students to live in *koinonia*, a spirit-filled community. A community permeated with holiness and interconnectedness to creation and God's creative power can lead to a spirituality of justice and peace. Catholic schools need to be justice centered and committed to conservation, peace, and the environment (p. 187). Social justice includes environmentalism and humanity's relationship with the biocracy (all living things) and the nonliving Earth. As sacramental communities, Catholic cosmology includes an awakening to

people's relationships with the biosphere, where God is revealed in the "awe, wonder and amazement" (p.243) of creation and the diversity of life.

Education must express the importance to youth of acting on environmentalism rather than just talking about it. Groome (2014) stressed that educators and strong curricula are crucial to an education that does justice: "If people come through a curriculum of Christian religious education and remain. . . negligent in their responsibilities. . . for the environment and ecology" (p. 143), they have not been educated in Christianity. Groome's final movement of shared praxis demands decisions that impact learners cognitively, affectively, or behaviourally (p. 329). This call to action includes bringing about change, even small actions, at the local level, such as adopting a park, working with a group in a mail campaign against carbon emissions and water pollution, or working to save a threatened species.

Dermot Lane's (2015) *Catholic Education: In the Light of Vatican II and Laudato si*' presents a vision of Catholic education dominated by ecological thinking and a new understanding of human anthropology. Lane saw a slow shift from an anthropocentric understanding of humanity's encounters with the world to a more inclusive understanding of the human person in engaging creation more as a product of creation and less as domination of creation. Lane challenged Catholic educators to adopt a new anthropology, a new way of seeing the human person in relation to creation. According to Lane, central to the future of Catholic education is an understanding and recognition of what it means to be human beings on the Earth, which should motivate leaders to shift their understanding of the person in light of creation and the current environmental crisis.

Lane (2015) demanded that three actions flow from the Church's teaching: (a) to move beyond an anthropocentric view of the universe, (b) to promote ecological education as part of

Catholic education, and (c) to work towards ecological conversion as a key outcome of Catholic education. He explained that these developments are not optional for Catholic education but are an intrinsic part of what it means to be a Catholic educator in the 21st century. The Church, with its wide presence across the world, can bring about positive changes to the environment by integrating a deeper ecospirituality in its teaching and preaching and uniting the growing movements in ecology. Schools needed to be at the forefront of these initiatives.

Environmental education must also stress the interdisciplinary character of Catholic education and the formation of the whole person with faith and an ecological consciousness permeating all aspects of a child's education. Natural and physical sciences have a role in the formation of students and staff in their understanding of the interconnectedness of creation. Catholic science education requires a curriculum that

> accords full and enthusiastic recognition of the attainments of the scientific method as a divine gift of the mystery of God's creation, while underlining the individual and collective responsibilities entailed by the enormous potential of the natural science to restructure or even menace living ecosystems. (Davis & Franchi, 2012, pp. 43-44)

St. Francis, whom Pope John Paul II named the patron saint of the environment and the ecological movement and who is the namesake of Pope Francis, is a suitable model for students and ecological education. A curriculum infused with a Franciscan spirituality of the environment is based on three principles: (a) simplifying life, (b) building a supportive community, and (c) taking action (Delio et al., 2008). Convincing students to simplify their lives and take notice of the consumption and waste in their lives is a powerful example at the micro level of the destruction and waste at the macro level. Supportive communities, from small groups such as school environment committees to larger groups such as the David Suzuki Foundation, Earthwatch, and Sierra Youth Coalition, for example, can effectively assist in aligning students and adults with the ecological and faith objectives of the group and the formation of the student.

Meditation and contemplative prayer are also important. Humanity has alienated itself from God, others, and the Earth; and healing requires time and prayer to restore these relationships. Often apathy, consumerism, and materialism distract students from what is truly important, and in this context of prayerful reflection, their relationship with God can lead to growth and acceptance of responsibility. Prayer can be effective in leading people to new ways of seeing and being in the world. Prayer and meditation can "change the way we go about in this creation because the Spirit creates a new heart within us and thus a new vision of the world" (Delio et al., 2008, pp. 124-125).

Greening Catholic Teachers' Formation

A Catholic education should free the mind to search for truth; it should reflect the "notion of divine filiation and the development of good habits . . . [and] stimulate the student to express wonder and awe at the greatness of creation" (Davis & Franchi, 2012, p. 49), which will lead to the formation of students who live justly with a social conscience. Groome (2014) believed that every graduate from a Catholic school must leave with a commitment "to protecting the integrity of creation" (p. 251). John Paul II called for an ecological conversion, an ongoing movement to educate and move humanity away from ownership or stewardship to justice and peace with creation (Cloutier, 2014). Francis's (2015a) *Laudato si'* echoes and reinforces the earlier call to an ecological conversion in the writings of John Paul II and Benedict XVI (paras. 217-220). This conversion asks that educators lead humanity to recognize destructive patterns in the environment and explore alternative means of behaviour.

CST as a secondary driver in Catholic education curricula currently must be integrated more fully into the Catholic school in a tangible manner for a lasting impact on students and the world. Witnesses are essential, and schools, governments, religious institutions all have a role to

play. Pope Francis's model of living simply, the central message regarding ecology, can bring ecospirituality into the forefront of Catholic education. As Berry (2009) wrote:

> We need to move from a spirituality of alienation from the natural world to spirituality of intimacy with it, from a spirituality of the divine as revealed in the visible world around us, from a spirituality concerned with justice simply to humans to a justice that includes the larger Earth community. (p. 60)

Initiatives that involve the environment and ecology, including human ecology, are important to the Church and general society. Sharing a common goal and working together in dialogue and action effectively can lead to understanding, patience, open-mindedness, and action in the public sphere.

Teachers' formation in ecospirituality and environmental ethics, combined with the underlying anthropology that undergirds the Church's position on creation and humanity's place within, can potentially have two positive results. First, it can create a fresh new look at Christian teaching and facilitate a dialogue that impacts both the religious and nonreligious—those who believe in the transcendent and those who live in an immanent frame. Second, in addressing the ecospiritual movement and the Catholic social justice tradition, a religious education in ecology can foster a common understanding or at least promote a more fully developed discussion of Christian anthropology and sacramentality.

An intentional formation of the head, hand, and heart to ecological conversion (Francis, 2015a) is necessary in Catholic education and teachers' formation. Smith (2014) described Taylor's (2007) sense of conversion as a move from a closed to an open "take," a construal in the immanent frame open to the viability of other takes in perceiving and comprehending the world. When people engage those in the immanent frame, conversion begins by opening their minds to a new view of the world.

The Church and society agree and can work together on ecospirituality and the environmental movement. It can also reach the "minimal religion spirituality" (Taylor, 2007, p. 534) of nominal believers, who are disconnected from the religious community today. In this postsecular age, engaging teachers in subjects such as ecospirituality and ecopedagogy can open new possibilities for seekers and dwellers (Taylor, 2012) to communicate and can lead to belief and new possibilities for dialogue.

In contrast to this positive dialogue of ecospirituality and ecopedagogy, in Chapter 6, I present the arena in which modernity and Catholic education collide; legal challenges that accompany Catholic education in modernity—when two worldviews often conflict at the most basic levels of values and beliefs. The courts have become the frontline for the encounter between differing worldviews and the stage for reconciling the rights of the community with those of the individual in the public sphere.

CHAPTER 6: CATHOLIC EDUCATION, MODERNITY, AND THE LAW

In March, 2015, the Supreme Court of Canada (2015b) ruled on the need for Loyola College, a Jesuit-run private Catholic boys' school, to teach a government-designed course, Ethics and Religious Culture (ERC), which was implemented in all Quebec schools following the dismantlement of the province's denomination school systems in the late 1990s (Morris, 2011). The ERC had three educational aims for students: (a) the construction of a worldview, (b) the structuring of identity, and (c) the empowerment of each person. The authors of the ERC explained that "the construction of a worldview consists of learning to take a lucid, grounded look at the material universe in order to grasp its workings, and at the human universe in order to understand ideas, history, culture, and values" (p. 191).

Morris (2011) suggested that the program teaches that identity is formed through developing an awareness of students' own unique history and understanding of their social networks. Further, empowerment is understood as the capacity to "act in response to the complexity of current social issues or to confront major ethical and existential questions" (p. 192). The legal challenge is whether a private Jesuit school could teach the ERC from a Catholic perspective or must maintain, as the province intended, a secular, neutral perspective in teaching morals and religious belief to Quebec students.

Increasingly, the Canadian judiciary is being asked to interpret the rights, responsibilities, and limits of denominational education in Canada. In *Quebec v Loyola*, the Supreme Court sided with Loyola High School and stated that the school, as a Catholic institution, has the right to teach the Catholic religion and ethics from a denominational or confessional perspective but is required to teach objectively the world-religions component and provide alternative ethical positions to the Catholic positions (Supreme Court of Canada, 2015b).

This Supreme Court of Canada (2015b) case exemplifies a larger conundrum in Canada: How do Catholic education and the legal system navigate a path between the constitutionally protected Catholic education rights found in the *Canadian Constitution* (Government of Canada, Justice Laws Website, 2021, Section 93) while respecting the rapidly changing cultural and societal norms in Canadian society? The clash of worldviews—a secular society versus a historically Christian culture—has resulted in a turn to the courts for answers. In this chapter I present legal cases that exemplify the collision between belief and unbelief in modern culture. What happens when the beliefs and values of the minority conflict with those of the majority? How does Canadian culture balance conflicting rights?

Taylor, Secularism, Freedom of Religion, and the Law

Although Taylor (2007) did not directly address Catholic education in Canada and the law, he developed a foundational philosophy, language, and theory on minority ethnic and religious rights and privileges that have been useful to this study. His work on secularism, plurality, and culture is often quoted and used in many educational and legal writings to express the nature of secular society. Taylor (2007) called for resolving conflicts that involve religiousness, belief, and secularism through dialogue rather than the courts and legislative process.

Building the Future, a Time for Reconciliation: Abridged Report

In 2007 Quebec Premier Jean Charest invited Taylor and fellow academic Gerard Bouchard, a Quebec sociologist and historian, to form the Consultation Commission on Accommodation Practices Related to Cultural Differences. The report, *Building the Future: A Time for Reconciliation: Abridged Report* (Bouchard & Taylor, 2008), which is often referred to as the *Bouchard-Taylor Report*, addresses the issues of accommodation for cultural and religious

minorities, and the authors explored secularism in the province of Quebec in detail. They recognized the evolving diversity of Quebec culture and, at the same time, the need to protect traditional Quebecois society. Taylor, who later co-wrote with Jocelyn Maclure, a Quebecois philosopher, shared his views on secularism, accommodation, governance, and society in their book *Secularism and Freedom of Conscience* (Maclure & Taylor, 2011). Taylor's views in these sources help to understand and serve as a guide to the law, secularism, and religious accommodation in Canada.

The Bouchard and Taylor (2008) commission investigated a number of concerns that arose from the perceived understandings of the French Canadian majority's undue and extraordinary accommodations for minorities over a number of years. Upon investigation and reconstruction of some of the events, the authors expanded the study beyond the confines of the original mandate of the commission and explored accommodation, pluralism, and secularism. They concluded with recommendations on what constitutes reasonable religious and cultural accommodation in modern Quebec society.

Reasonable Accommodations

Section 3 of the final report (Bouchard & Taylor, 2008) examines the notion of the accommodation or harmonization of diversity in modern culture. Bouchard and Taylor (2008) suggested that any society in which two or more cultures intermingle creates or has the potential for misunderstanding and conflict. Each society must monitor the interaction and mixing of cultures and find means to respect differences and manage friction. Historically, the majority or dominant culture has absorbed the minority and acted authoritatively to assimilate and dominate the minority group. Although researchers have studied the positive and negative effects of assimilation, the growing diversity in many societies and general acceptance of diversity still

leaves the question, to what extent must the majority accommodate and accept minority practices, including Catholic education and culture in society? Democratic nations especially have displayed great respect for diversity and adopted methods to manage coexistence based on intercultural harmonization. Most Western democracies have established harmonization and measures for accommodation as part of the day-to-day life of public institutions, such as health establishments, schools, and universities.

Intercultural harmonization has impacted the law as well. The concept of equality, or uniform treatment, has evolved into closer attention to diversity and differences than to uniformity in legislation and the courts. In Canada the rule of equality recognizes that sometimes equality demands differential treatment, which has been dubbed reasonable accommodation. Rigid application of the norms in society, or "rigid equality," has occasionally led to indirect discrimination or prejudicial effects. Bouchard and Taylor (2008) suggested in their report that reasonable accommodation is intended to counteract certain forms of discrimination and prevent the strict application of the norm from disadvantaging or excluding individuals. In these situations the "duty of accommodation created by law did not require that a regulation or a statute be abrogated but only the discriminatory effects be mitigated" (p. 23). Not only was the intent to eliminate discrimination, but Canadian courts also asked organizations to define concrete measures to create equity by relaxing the strict interpretation of the law.

Bouchard and Taylor (2008) argued that harmonization measures for religious reasons arise from the same logic (p. 24). The rule of equality or fairness should dominate: What is legitimate for one group or faith community should be legitimate for all others. For example, to ensure freedom of religion, a secular state might, under certain circumstances, fund religious expression and activities (e.g., chapels in prisons, detention centers, and hospitals.)

In their report, Bouchard and Taylor (2008) stressed that rigid or absolute rigor in the application of legislation, including human rights legislation and regulations, does not always equate to fairness, that equality and freedom of religion do not necessarily mean a need to follow the norms of law uniformly. Accordingly, certain rights can be adjusted to facilitate fairness. This treatment does not always equate with privilege or exemption because these rights were intended to remedy flaws in a statute or regulation. Thus special treatment can be differential without being preferential. Without speaking directly to Catholic schooling, it is clear that Taylor (2007) believed that accommodations for Catholic education are in the best interests of society.

Ambiguities in Defining Secularism

Bouchard and Taylor (2008) highlighted the ambiguities in a definition of secularism. Many have argued that religion should not be found in the public sphere. Yet *public* can have two distinct meanings: as related to the state and its common or public institutions (e.g., courts, schools, hospitals) and as public spaces that must be open and accessible to everyone.

The first ambiguity, the secular principle of neutrality of the state, required that the state be free of all religious practice. Bouchard and Taylor (2008) agreed that secularism demands that religion be absent from public space in a very broad sense; for example, a state religion. However, they argued that religion already occupies the public space as per the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (Section 2; Government of Canada, 1982); religious groups and the faithful have the freedom to publicly display and practice their beliefs and values. Confusion seems to arise, as Bouchard and Taylor suggested, because these two ways of understanding the distinction between public and private intersect.

The second ambiguity is the notion of neutrality. Most people recognize that secular states must be neutral with respect to religion; however, the particular meaning of neutrality is

unclear. According to Bouchard and Taylor's (2008) report, the state must not take sides with regard to religion and nonreligion and must maintain a position of neutrality in dealing with deep-seated moral convictions, including religious and secular values. Modern secular liberal democracies are based on political moral codes and principles that uphold human rights and the equality of all citizens.

Ideally, all society shares the same principles and political moral code, although deep-seated values and convictions might differ. For example, Canadians agree that society should defend the right to life, but individuals do so in light of different justifications for different reasons. Christians would confirm that "human beings are created in God's image while a secular philosopher would claim that human being as a rational subject poses a dignity that no one must infringe" (Bouchard & Taylor, 2008, p. 43).

Principles of Secularism

Bouchard and Taylor (2008) argued that all liberal democracies adhere to a principle of secularism that is embodied in different ways. They identified four principles that underpin secularism. The first two define the purpose of the principle of secularism: the moral equity of persons and the freedom of conscience and religion. The last two principles explain how institutional structures help to attain the purpose: the separation of church and state and the neutrality of the state with respect to religions and deep-seated secular convictions. All secular systems must balance these principles.

Bouchard and Taylor (2008) also described two means of accomplishing these four principles: a closed or restrictive secularism, such as France; or an open secularism, such as the one that they proposed for Quebec. They criticized French closed or restricted secularism. Secularism, they argued, should foster, not hinder, expressions of freedom of religion and

conscience. Because freedom of conscience and religion is one of the principles of secularism, state neutrality must be designed to foster the expression of these freedoms. In contrast, acc to French leaders, the mission of secular schools is to emancipate students from religion because people's cultural and religious identities impede the social integration necessary for the development of a common notion of citizenship and nationality. Many in Alberta who oppose Catholic schools and the funding of Catholic schools support this restrictive secularism and, for this reason, seek the elimination of Catholic schools and availability of school choice.

Maclure and Taylor (2011) delved deeper into the two types of secularism to describe the role of conscience and freedom in Canada. The first is republican or rigid secularism (*laïcité*), in which state neutrality in religion means the complete absence of religion and belief in public life, especially in the services of the state, including health care and education. The second is a more pluralist-liberal secularism, or open secularism, in which space is available in the public square for the manifestation of religious and conscientious worldviews.

Elsewhere, Maclure and Taylor (2011) explained that a closed secularism is slowly taking over within modern society and that a liberal, pluralist conception of secularism has the primary function of protecting citizens' moral equality and freedom of conscience and religion. Equally as important, however, is the fact that it can contribute secondarily to civic integration (Bouchard & Taylor, 2008). In Alberta, this social shift from a liberal-accommodating stance to a more rigid secularism threatens the existence of Catholic separate schools.

Freedom of Religious and Freedom of Conscience

The final section of Bouchard and Taylor's (2008) report helps to understand Taylor's (2007) mind on legal issues and accommodation, specifically from a religious perspective, and

the various charters, including the United Nations' *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. ([*UDHR*] United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 1948).

In the public hearings prior to Bouchard and Taylor's (2008) report, some people suggested that religious beliefs, unlike conscience rights, could be considered optional. This position was problematic for Bouchard and Taylor. For example, accommodations granted to the disabled are unlike religious accommodations because the disabled do not choose their disability, whereas believers can decide to accept or relinquish certain practices or beliefs. On the surface, this might sound convincing; however, Bouchard and Taylor stated that, in reality,

> certain 'religious choices' were actually experienced as non-optional. To infringe on these choices of conscience and religion would be tantamount to interfering with the individual's moral integrity and would entail relegating choices stemming from a deep-seated conviction to the level of a simple desire or whims. (p. 48)

Hence, Catholic education and Catholics' right to it are not optional but are a deep-seated moral choice to ensure the best education for their children.

Taylor's (2007) writings are a vast deposit of ideas, rationales, and thoughtful reflections that inform Catholic education and the various legal issues surrounding it. His understanding of Canadian law, especially with regard to the concept of religious and cultural accommodation and, by extension, religious and denominational education opportunities and rights, is important in defining the rights of religious minorities in Canada. Taylor's experience and work with the Quebec *Charter of Values* has resulted in great insight into the secular reality of Canadian courts and the challenges regarding the interchange between freedom of religion and conscience and individual rights versus secularism and community rights. The answers are complex, and the courts are a venue in a pluralistic society for open discussions, accommodations, and decisions regarding conflicting rights.

Denominational Education and Catholic Schools—Rights and Privileges

The *Canadian Constitution*[18] provides for the right and privilege of Alberta religious minorities (Catholic and Protestant) to parallel or separate education systems. In the majority of cases outside Quebec, Catholics form the religious minority. The right and privilege of forming separate schools protects a diverse and unique educational tradition that has existed since the 19th century in Western Canada.

Rights and privileges in this context are important to Catholic education. The framers of the BNA Act (1897, Government of Canada, Justice Laws Website, 2021, Section 93), and later the Alberta Act (1905, Section 17), used the language of minority rights and privileges to protect French-Catholic citizens from assimilation by the rapidly increasing number of English Protestants in the West. The federal government agreed to respect the rights that French-Catholic settlers held in the Northwest Territories when Alberta joined Confederation. Canadian leaders also extended the privilege of minority education rights (i.e., safety from the tyranny of the majority) to Protestants in French-Catholic majority areas.

In 1982 Canada repatriated its *Constitution*, which gave the country full control over its legal and constitutional future, rather than the United Kingdom. This repatriation, which included the addition of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (Government of Canada, 1982), began a process of reinterpreting Canadian law and constitutional matters in light of the new charter. The incorporation of the charter has impacted almost all areas of Canadian life, including Canadian denominational schools. At the same time, significant cultural shifts with

[18] Unlike other constitutions, a single document with amendments, the Canadian Constitution is an assortment of documents, agreements, treaties, charters, legislation (e.g., Alberta Act, 1905; BNA Act, 1867), and other writings and conventions that were adopted into the Constitution Act of 1982. An important example of an obscure piece of legislation included in the Constitution Act is the NWT Education Ordinances of 1901, which preserves denominational education rights and the system of 4x4 separate school formation. It is still in use today.

religion and secularization and rapid demographic change led to the growing diversity in Canadians' views and values, including the rights of churches regarding publicly funded schools. Conflicting ideologies and beliefs have resulted in many challenges to the current system of fully funded denominational education in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Northwest Territories, Yukon, and Ontario and partial funding of independent religious schools in Quebec, Manitoba, and British Columbia.

Since Confederation, the courts have adjudicated various aspects of denominational education to define the rights and privileges of religion in schools and religion's role in the public sphere. The main battleground for many of these societal and cultural changes was in the courts (I. T. Benson, personal communication, October 25, 2020). The following is a brief sampling of constitutional cases on denominational education in Canada, with a focus on the ability of Catholic education to support Catholic values and teachings among the teaching staff and students of the schools. Modernity's conflict with Catholic values and teachings highlights secular societies' discord with religion in the public sphere. Knowledge of the rights and privileges of schools and teachers is important to the faith formation of preservice and veteran teachers.

When Rights Collide in Catholic Education

Canadian jurisprudence has no hierarchy of human rights (Bouchard & Taylor, 2008; Government of Canada, Department of Justice, 2021). When the courts make decisions on conflicts of rights, including denominational rights, they recognize that human rights are not hierarchical and that living together in a pluralistic society requires trade-offs. The vast majority of teachers in Catholic schools today are laity; and, unlike previous generations, the ability of the school and the Church to exercise strong moral authority over staff has changed.

Historically speaking, Catholic teachers are a homogenous group, with similar religious beliefs and societal values that reflect Church teachings. Today, teachers are heavily influenced by a post-Christian culture that is often at odds with the Church; that is, people often disagree with Catholic moral teaching on marriage, divorce, abortion, and contraception. This reality often leads to conflict in Catholic educational institutions.

Students too encounter similar conflicts regarding lifestyle and the freedom to express views counter to Catholicism in the school setting. How do Catholic educational leaders balance the rights of Catholic education and the individual rights of Canadians who work in or attend Catholic schools? What about the conflict between modern and traditional values in the curriculum of public institutions such as schools? The following cases illustrate such difficulties.

Denominational Rights and Catholic Teachers

Catholicity Clause

One of the most contentious issues for teachers in Catholic schools in Alberta is the Catholicity clause. The past 40 years have seen Catholic school boards in Alberta and across Canada challenged by teachers' associations, who perceive such clauses as unwarranted and the illegal intrusion of school divisions into the moral lives of teachers. Court decisions, including from the Supreme Court of Canada, have consistently reaffirmed the right of Catholic schools to hold teachers to a more distinctive moral standard than other professionals in Canada are.

The courts have given separate (i.e., Catholic and Protestant) school boards the right to the discriminatory hiring practice of staff based on religion (Young & Ryan, 2014). Teachers unwilling to meet school boards' moral expectations can be dismissed because of their failure to model Catholic values and beliefs. Because of the complexity of and conflict in these situations in Alberta (Feehan, 2008), Grand Prairie Catholic Regional Schools, the Alberta Teachers'

Association, and the ACSTA reached an agreement to add an employment clause to Grand Prairie Catholic Regional Schools' Catholic teachers' contracts to inform them on the moral and lifestyle expectations prior to signing contracts.

Following the agreement, the ACSTA, which represents all English Catholic school boards in the province, encouraged all 17 of its members to include similar clauses in their teachers' contracts in the future. The Alberta Teachers' Association denied that the insertion of the negotiated clause has any bearing outside Grand Prairie Catholic. However, until the clause is challenged in court, Catholic schools in Alberta have used it to hold teachers accountable to a particular moral standard and dismissed teachers based on this clause.

The Catholicity clause, which outlines the obligations of teachers to maintain a Catholic lifestyle, has been controversial because *lifestyle* is an obscure concept at best. Three cases that are important to an understanding of school boards' and teachers' rights in defining Catholicity are (a) *Casagrande* v *Hinton Roman Catholic Separate School District No. 15* (Supreme Court of Canada, 1987), (b) *Caldwell v Stuart* (Supreme Court of Canada, 1984), and (c) *Daly v Attorney General of Ontario* (Ontario Court of Appeals, 1999).

Casagrande v Hinton Roman Catholic Separate School District No. 15 (1987)

A Catholic school district in Alberta dismissed a teacher after she applied for maternity leave twice in three years, despite the fact that she was never married. The Supreme Court of Canada (1987) upheld a lower-court decision that the constitutionally protected right of separate schools to exist necessarily includes the right to maintain the denominational character of that school, including the right to dismiss teachers for denominational causes. The lower court concluded that separate schools had the right in 1905, and the trustees, as employers, sought to maintain the moral character of the Catholic school.

The court determined that teachers' behaviours, both in and out of school, cannot be separated from their specific teaching duties as representatives of the church. Separate schools can hold teachers to the values and teachings of the church that they represent as employees. The right of separate schools to establish Catholic schools allows the division to maintain the values and mission of the ratepayers who established the division:

> The constitutional rights granted to separate schools involved more than a guarantee of the right to establish separate schools. The right to establish such schools necessarily included the right to maintain the denominational character of the school and included the right to dismiss teachers for denominational causes, . . . [and] included the rights and powers necessary to maintain the denominational character of such schools, and more specifically included the right to dismiss teachers for denominational causes. (Justice McFadyen, pp. 388-390).

The Supreme Court of Canada (1987) upheld the decision of Alberta Court of Queen's Bench Justice McFadyen. The judgment did not imply that Catholic schools were not subject to the *Constitution* or the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (Government of Canada, 1982), but they were protected from the suppression of their denominational rights to maintain the Catholicity of their schools "within reason." It is essential that the Catholic nature of schools be maintained as per section 93 of the *Canadian Constitution* and Section 29 of the accompanying *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (Vail, Feehan & Cagrain, 2009). Employees can challenge preferential employment practices with regard to advancement, promotion, dismissal, or actions that they perceive as unreasonable, but not issues regarding Catholic morality and teachers' lifestyle.

Caldwell v Stuart (1984)

Caldwell v Stuart (Supreme Court of Canada, 1984) recognized that denominational schools have a unique character and position in the community that allows for the imposition of rules that require teachers to adhere to certain religious and moral standards and permit the dismissal of teachers for failing to adhere to those standards. This case was initiated in 1979,

prior to the implementation of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (Government of Canada, 1982), under the British Columbia Court of Human Rights. Caldwell was dismissed from a Catholic independent school for marrying a divorced Protestant in a civil ceremony. The Supreme Court ruling upheld the board's dismissal based on the religious nature of the school and the importance of teachers' being religious role models; in this case, following the teaching on matrimony and annulment (Young & Ryan, 2014).

The Supreme Court of Canada (1984) ruled that Catholic schools, because of their doctrinal basis and connection to the Church, are distinct from public schools. The Catholic Independent Schools Vancouver Archdiocese (represented by the principal, Mr. Stuart) claimed that Caldwell would not be an appropriate moral role model for students because she failed to abide by Roman Catholic teaching regarding marriage. Although she was professionally competent, her marriage outside the Church was deemed significant enough that she no longer served as an authentic witness to the teachings of the Church:

> The relationship with the teacher to the student enables the teacher to form the mind and attitudes of the student the church depends not so much on the usual form of academic instructions as on the teachers who, in the imitation of Christ, are required to reveal the Christian message in their work and as well in all aspects of their behaviour. (p. 608)

The *Caldwell v Stuart* (Supreme Court of Canada, 1984) case demonstrated that nothing justifies the dismissal for reasonable cause except the need for teachers to adhere to the teachings of the Church. The school board acknowledged Caldwell's outstanding conduct and competence as a teacher otherwise; however, the courts reaffirmed the substantial Canadian legal tradition of enabling the right of Catholic schools to maintain their religious character. In this case the Court affirmed the rights of the Catholic community over the rights of an individual teacher, and following the teachings of the Church is a bona fide religious qualification for Catholic teachers (Young & Ryan, 2014).

Daly v Attorney General of Ontario (1999)

The right to staff schools with Catholic witnesses extends beyond the dismissal of a teacher to include the hiring of teachers based on religious qualifications and beliefs. Extending full funding to Ontario Catholic high schools, which until 1985 received funding only to Grade 10, challenged Ontario schools on the right of Catholic schools to hire Catholics discriminately only for new Grade 11 and 12 positions. Both in the *Reference re: Bill 30, An Act to Amend the Education Act* (Supreme Court of Canada, 1987) and *Daly v Attorney General of Ontario*, the Ontario Court of Appeals (1999) upheld the decisions. In *Daly,* Justice Sharpe, writing for the court, stated that Catholic trustees and schools have every right to discriminate and give preference to Catholics in hiring:

> Implicit in the recognition of the constitutional right to dismiss a teacher for denominational cause is an acknowledgment of the importance of the faith of the teacher to Catholic education. In my opinion, this right to dismiss necessarily has as its corollary a right to consider the faith of prospective teachers. (p. 53)

Justice Sharpe identified and restated the importance of "religious faith" to Catholic education as the justices of the Court of Appeal upheld the requirement of denominational standards and, according to Benson (2000), thereby allowed scope for genuine pluralism in education.

Catholic Education, Students, and the Rights of Sexual Minorities

The past two decades have seen an increase in human-rights legislation, antibullying measures, social-justice advocacy, and related issues that have escalated the number of flashpoints in society and the Catholic Church; by extension, Catholic schools have become the focal points of these clashes. These clashes extend to relationships, hiring, benefits, and many other areas of human resources, as well as the rights of the individual students. The fact that it is such a recent phenomenon in the public sphere means that little case law exists in the field of

students' rights in Catholic schools. The following two Ontario situations involved the gay rights of a student and school graduation exercises, and the potential for litigation over GSAs.

***Hall v Durham Catholic School Board* (2002)**

In anticipation of a Grade 12 prom, students were requested to present the names of their guests to the school in advance. Marc Hall, a gay graduating student, gave the school the name of his 21-year-old boyfriend. The school authorities denied permission for the boyfriend to accompany him as his date because the staff and principal reasoned that permitting a same-sex couple to attend together could be considered an endorsement and acceptance of a position that the principal considered contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church. When the student appealed the principal's decision to the school board, the Durham Catholic Board upheld the decision (Kremer et al., 2017, p. 136).

Hall sought an emergency application to the Ontario Superior Court of Justice (2002) to prevent the school from prohibiting the couple from attending the prom together. Justice MacKinnon found that the school's position would violate Section 15 of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (Government of Canada, 1982; everyone has equal protection and freedom from discrimination), which means that denominational rights would be impermissible grounds for excluding Hall from the prom. Although Section 15 does not expressly address sexual orientation as a prohibited ground for discrimination, the Supreme Court of Canada has held in previous decisions that sexual orientation is analogous to the rights listed in the *Charter*. Justice McKinnon questioned whether Catholic schools' denominational rights extended to the right to control extracurricular events such as proms. He added that no school board, Catholic or common (public), had an explicit statutory right in 1867 to hold school dances and control those who could attend or not attend.

This seems to contradict the Ontario Court of Appeals (1999) comments in the *Daly* case, where teachers exerted important influence, especially in regard to the Catholicity of extracurricular activities, including attendance at mass, choir practice, and other social clubs, at school. Because this was an injunction rather than a complete court case, the findings were held to a much lower standard than would be applied to most civil litigations. Hall dropped the case before it went to full trial, and it was never determined whether denominational rights applied in this case (Kremer et al., 2017, pp. 137-138).

Catholic Schools and GSAs

The challenges that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) students face in Canadian high schools are particularly serious and need to be addressed (Donlevy et al, 2013). Many strategies have been developed to assist marginalized students, support them, and promote their success in schools. Studies indicate that four strategies are effective in assisting LGBTQ students: (a) creating safe spaces for LGBTQ students, (b) creating a positive school climate in which tolerance and respect are valued and promoted, (c) involving the entire school community in the process of support, and (d) providing LGBTQ youth with resources outside the school to address their specific needs and lifelong strategies (Liboro et al., 2015, pp. 158-159). Schools that have implemented programs and create groups by using these strategies have tended to create inclusive climates, reduce bullying, and help LGBTQ youth to develop stronger self-identities and positive self-images.

The most common means used by schools of addressing the bullying of LGBTQ youth is by creating groups or clubs called GSAs, which include students, staff, and community organizations, to deliver various antibullying strategies and establish a structure to implement measures including promoting a climate of gender inclusion, and affirming and cultivating

respect for identity differences in schools. Canadian politicians who seek safer schools and the elimination of bullying in schools have legislated the creation of GSA clubs when students in Ontario and Alberta requested them. The clash of rights between sexual minority students, LGBTQ organizations, and the Church and its teaching on sexuality, have created tension in these two provinces and increased calls for the defunding of Catholic schools in general, especially in schools that resist the formation of these clubs. No litigation with regard to GSAs has occurred, despite the controversy over their establishment in both Ontario and Alberta.

The first legislation, *Bill 13, Accepting Schools Act, 2012* (Province of Ontario), to create GSAs when requested in Canada occurred in Ontario. In response, Cardinal Thomas Collins, speaking for the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario, expressed serious concern regarding the legislation. Cardinal Collins reiterated that bullying in all forms is wrong and that the core of Christianity is to welcome and accept all people with love and respect (Donlevy et al., 2013, p. 28). Collins worried that the legislation failed to take into account that education, especially on human sexuality, is the primary responsibility of parents and should be based on the Gospels. In contrast, members of the public expressed the concern that Catholic schools, if they had the option, would use Catholic/Biblical language with regard to homosexuality that might be considered homophobic. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Catholic Church, 1993) uses terms such as *intrinsically immoral*, *grave depravity*, and *objectively disordered* (paras. 2357-2358), which might be considered disrespectful to LGBTQ students, and unintentional expressions of homophobia that *Bill 13* banned.

The Church also expressed the concern that society might consider GSAs in Catholic schools as normalizing what the Church considers a disordered condition. The Catholic community agreed that gay students must be protected from bullying; however, in Catholic

moral teaching, homosexuality is not an acceptable sexual orientation. GSAs in Catholic schools would create a clear conflict between the theological position of the Church and the positive approach to homosexuality that GSAs offer that homosexuality is an acceptable, normal, healthy, human sexual orientation (Donlevy et al., 2013).

Catholic school leaders, bishops, and stakeholders in Ontario and Alberta questioned the exclusivity of GSAs as the primary antibullying measure in schools. Antibullying measures exist in education legislation across the country, and critics have argued that focussing their attention on one group, LGBTQ, could distract from other antibullying measures against discrimination based on race, religion, economic underprivileged, physical size, and so on. However, few researchers have demonstrated the effectiveness of such anti-bullying groups compared to the positive results from GSAs?? (Donlevy et al, p. 29; Liboro et al., p. 160).

Following the Alberta election in 2019, the UCP government eliminated all GSA legislation, which impacted school boards, administrators, and teachers who were called upon to enact it. Principals were forbidden to speak to senior leadership about GSAs; students and student groups had authority over principals to organize events and bring in speakers, which could be contrary to the vision and mission of the school; and teachers were prohibited from answering parents' request for information on their children and on extracurricular groups. The legislation moved teachers and school divisions into dangerous legal territory that the courts have yet to address. Were teachers informed of all of the legal and personal responsibilities that the legislation entails? Did principals understand the implications of their decisions? What role did parents play in the educational decisions of their children?

However, should GSA legislation be reintroduced, two issues would need legal clarification: the clash of rights between parents and students and the privacy rights of students

under 18 who join a GSA. Many groups and parents publicly challenged the government, but no legal action was taken before the 2019 election and the overturning of the legislation (Loparco, 2018).

Literature on Catholic Education and the Law

Because publicly funded Catholic education exists in only three provinces in Canada, only a limited number of published academic studies on it and Canadian constitutional law exist. Canada has no Catholic education academic journals in Canada, and it is rare to find English language journals that include Catholic education issues in Canada. Instead, law and education journals published in Canada are more likely to address the legal and constitutional issues with regard to denominational education. The following survey of articles written in the past two decades reveals major issues and arguments at the intersection of denominational education, law, and secularism for faith-based schooling in Canada.

Catholic Education as a Human Right

Russo (2015) asserted that access to Catholic education and religious education within a public education system is a fundamental human right. Much of the world's population lives in circumstances that severely restrict religious freedom, and countries such as Canada, Australia, and Western Europe, where religious schools receive state funding, have ongoing conflicts over religious pluralism, the diversity of ideas, and the nature of curricula. Despite the promotion of a plurality of viewpoints, hostility exists between believers and nonbelievers, and the states' and courts' call for neutrality has made faith-based schooling in these countries difficult. As the world became increasingly pluralistic, the constrictions on religious freedom have grown as well.

Russo (2015) explained that education, as a fundamental human right according to the *UDHR* (United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 1948), is to be directed

at the full development of the human personality. The declaration's major influencer, Jacques Maritain, a well-known philosopher of Catholic education, believed that education must strengthen respect for fundamental freedoms and promote understanding and friendship among the nation's racial and religious groups. To do this, parents must have the right to choose the kind of education that their children should receive (United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 1948). Under the right-leaning United Conservative Party, the Alberta government recently included the *UDHR* in the *Choice in Education Act* (Legislative Assembly of Alberta, 2020) to reinforce and protect educational diversity in the preamble to the Education Act (Province of Alberta, 2012). Catholic schools were consulted on the formation of the language in this law to ensure the protection of the denominational rights provided in the *Constitution*.

Human Rights Tribunals and Christian Privilege

Seljak (2016) argued that, historically, Canadian society has favoured certain religious and cultural backgrounds: Catholic and Protestant, French and English. The growth of racial and religious pluralism, mainly through immigration, transformed Canadian society and resulted in challenges to Western assumptions and seemingly privileged groups in provincial human rights tribunals. The collapse of historically authoritative traditions and hierarchies that defined and defended certain religious beliefs and practices also allowed human rights tribunals to shift the understanding of religion, ethnicity, gender, and ideologies in the public sphere. This shift in social imaginaries has caused claims of religious freedom to clash with individual rights, including those associated with equality of gender and sexual orientation, immigration, human rights, global politics, and public policy. Applying and adjudicating human rights codes has

meant that these tribunals have had to attempt to balance the evolving culture, ideologies, individual rights, and the protection of human rights.

Prior to 1960, wrote Seljak (2016), the Canadian social order was deeply rooted in an expanding free-market economy, a binational liberal democratic political regime, and a quasi-official Christian public culture. Since 1960, a period that Seljak described as one of rising secularism, religion's power decreased substantially, and attempts to remove religion from public life began. With increasing societal diversity, often a result of immigration and the expansion of religious diversity, Canadian society had to reimagine the role of religion and has changed dramatically from religious organizations' to government or nonreligious institutions' leading of societal institutions such as education, social services, and health care. It has resulted in the perception of religion's public role as more of a problem than a solution to society's ills. Canadian society, Seljak claimed, must address the lingering Christian privilege that is still evident in daily life. An example of this Christian privilege is the funding of Catholic schools.

Seljak (2016) argued for open rather than closed secularism to navigate the postsecular world. The postsecular world needs to reevaluate the definition of religion, its perception of human rights, and how the courts' tribunals and commissions interpret these rights to ensure equal protection for all. Closed, or exclusive, secularism, Seljak commented, as exemplified in the Quebec *Charter of Values*, could promote a single ideology. Institutions such as human rights commissions need to clearly articulate and define language such as religion, secularism, pluralism, and competing rights when they determine decisions.

Privileging Christians

Canadians take great pride in their multicultural society. Stewart (2008), however, questioned their degree of multiculturalness when they fund Roman Catholics schools in Ontario

yet refuse to grant other groups the same funding rights as Catholics. With the Ontario government's unwillingness to defund Catholic schools but reluctance to fund alternatives to public schools, was it investing in structural discrimination? Did this decision not violate the Canadian *Charter of Freedom and Rights* (Government of Canada, 1982)? Stewart believed that Ontario violated the Multicultural Act by funding only Catholic schools, removing all religious instruction from public schools, and failing to provide other groups (religious, language, cultural) with separate schools (see Supreme Court of Canada, 1996). Stewart referred to Taylor (2007) and stated that, because no education in a liberal society is neutral, public schools themselves thus offer an ideology and a worldview. The recognition of denominational funding in Ontario, Alberta, and Saskatchewan and the failure to fund schools for other religions should be considered a failure of multiculturalism and plurality in Canada.

Definition of Secular in the Courts

Iain Benson, a Canadian Catholic attorney and professor of law, has participated in many cases involving religious education, freedom of religion, and secular society. Benson (2000) questioned the courts' and society's understanding of the word *secular*, which, he noted, has come to be understood as neutral or religion free. Historically, the word secular referred to nonsectarian viewpoints or activity focussed on the world, not to the exclusion of faith as we understand it today. Benson argued that states cannot be neutral towards metaphysical claims. Being inactive towards claims of transcendence and faith affirms immanent worldviews and value systems to the exclusion of religion. This often "anti-religious stance embodied in secularism excludes and banishes religion from any practical place in culture" (p. 520), including the courtroom.

Benson (2000) insisted that courts need to properly understand secularism and recognize the purpose and value of religion in the public sphere. The accommodation of religiously informed beliefs from a variety of cultures is necessary in making decisions because the legal system is based on laws and principles that were often originally enacted in a different time and with a different understanding of secularism. It is essential that the courts respect and incorporate various religions and spiritualities in deliberations and that this is evenly understood and demonstrated.

Benson (2000) recognized the existence of many belief systems, including nonsectarian and nonfaith, and that each system carries values and the truth, none of which the public forum would neglect. When judicial and political decisions elevate implicit or secular faith and submerse the explicit faith of many, this poses a genuine threat to freedom of religion. When institutions profess the notion of neutral ideology (nonfaith), and that notion is used regularly in schools, courts, and government, society fails to acknowledge that faith traditions have the right to share the public sphere. Benson argued that, over time, natural faith has morphed into *Charter* (Government of Canada, 1982) values and the "religion of humanity" (Benson, 2000, p. 521) at the expense of traditional faith communities. The shared belief in progress as moral certitude and the sole faith allowed in the public sphere, including schools and the courts, makes it difficult to understand how the courts and society can accommodate and foster minority religious views.

In constitutional cases that involve morality and religion, courts have made a diverse array of decisions, and this complexity makes constitutional cases that involve religion difficult. This also includes Catholic education issues. Benson (2000) wrote:

> Constitutional cases increasingly resemble games of chance more than debates of principle. . . . Lest anyone say that this is how law has always been, the inconsistent approaches of similar cases under the Charter makes the current situation different from

> the always difficult task of predicting legal outcomes, and the inconsistency is visible with regard to the treatment of religion and the nature of the "secular" as well. (p. 527)

I. T. Benson (personal communication, October 25, 2020) contended that the courts have not solved this problem. In fact, the issues might be worse today given the recent Trinity Western University Law School (Supreme Court of Canada, 2015a) case in which the Supreme Court dismissed a lower-court decision by using an inconsistent application of the law regarding religion and the secular.

Constitutional Evolution of Denominational Rights

Two constitutional documents (Kremer et al., 2017) laid the foundations for the denominational rights and legal status of Catholic schools in Alberta. The first, the Constitution Act, 1867 (Government of Canada, Justice Laws Website, 2021), gave each provincial legislature the right to make laws in relation to education. The one limit was that "nothing in any such Law shall prejudicially affect any Right or Privilege with respect to Denominational Schools which any Class of Persons have by Law in the Province at the Union" (section 93). The second, in the Alberta Act (1905) amended the *Constitution* to include Alberta's historical denominational rights and privileges as determined in "chapters 29 and 30 of the Ordinances of the Northwest Territories passed in the year 1901, or with respect to religious instruction in any public or separate school" (Section 17).

The Canadian courts defined the scope of denominational rights through several court cases, and, as constitutional provisions, sections 93 of the *Canadian Constitution* and 17 of the Alberta Act take precedence in determining whether a particular law interferes with denominational rights (Kremer et al., 2017). Denominational school rights are not unlimited; for a right to be protected, it must be denominational or religious in nature. Because denominational schools accept public funding, governments regulate the

nondenominational aspects of these schools, including curricula and funding. Separate schools are subject to provincial legislation—for example, zoning laws, administration, curricula, and other nondenominational aspects—and do not enjoy unlimited privilege. To be protected today, the denominational privileges in Alberta and Saskatchewan had to be in place and recognized.[19] Any determination by the courts of denominational rights required that the courts examine the historical status of separate schools at the relevant time (Kremer et al, 2017), which added even more complexity to denominational education law (e.g., the current Saskatchewan case *Good Spirit School Division No 204 v Christ The Teacher Roman Catholic Separate School Division No. 212* (2018).

Kremer et al. (2017) explained the process to resolve conflicts between denominational rights and others in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (Government of Canada, 1982). Any law or policy that conflicts with the rights protected under Section 93(1) of the Constitution Act of 1867 (Government of Canada, Justice Laws Website, 2021) or Section 17 of the Alberta Act (1905) is rendered unconstitutional and has no force or effect in the conflict between denominational rights and charter rights. In short, the *Charter* does not supersede the denominational rights found in the *Constitution*. This also extends to provincial human rights and labour legislation. No legislation in the province of Alberta can override the denominational rights found in Section 93(1). For example, Canadian courts have ruled that the provincial legislation that prohibits discrimination based on religion does not apply to Catholic school boards when they hire teachers for their schools.

[19] The courts use 1901 as the year to determine denominational rights and privileges prior to Alberta joining of Confederation in 1905. The 1901 School Ordinances of the Northwest Territories were the last major territorial legislation that set the direction for public and separate schools in Alberta prior to 1905.

Current Legal Issues in Catholic Education

Catholic schools in Alberta exist under the ecclesial jurisdiction of the local bishop (*Code of Canon Law*, codes 796-806; Canon Law Society of America, 1983) and were established and operated by the Ministry of Education pursuant to the Education Act (Donlevy et al., 2013; Province of Alberta, 2019). In Canada, Catholic institutions such as schools, hospitals, and social services must strike a balance between the secular and the religious, recognizing the authority of both authorities. Secular courts have referred to the *Code of Canon Law*, the legal code that governs the Catholic Church, in issues that involve Catholic institutions. Secular courts (British and Canadian) have used the code to understand and interpret questions about Catholic institutions, including Catholic education.[20]

The issues that Donlevy et al. (2013) outlined included litigation on the right to admit non-Catholic schools into Catholic school districts as found in *Good Spirit School Division No 204 v Christ The Teacher Roman Catholic Separate School Division No 212* (2018) and the requirement to establish GSAs in schools in Ontario and potential mandatory creation of GSAs in Alberta.

Donlevy et al. (2013) suggested that in the Good Spirit School Division case (*Good Spirit School Division No 204 v Christ The Teacher Roman Catholic Separate School Division No 212*, 2018), the inclusion of non-Catholic students in Catholic schools is evidence of the inclusivity of Catholicism and Catholic education's witness to the dignity of all students. They also recommended that Catholic schools not reject, but embrace,

[20] The role of Canon Law in Civil Law in Canada is far beyond the scope of this paper. An interesting reading is the transcripts of a speech by Fr. Francis Morrissey entitled *Canon Law and its Intersection with Civil Law Throughout Canadian History* (Cardus, n.d.).

GSAs to demonstrate against the criticism of progressives that Catholic schools do not accept LGBTQ students. Donlevy et al. believed that, if Catholic separate schools are to survive and thrive in Alberta, Catholic school supporters must be informed and understand Catholic School constitutional protections, build bridges with the public, and avoid controversial actions that involve conflict in school division formations and the treatment of minorities in Catholic schools.

Individual Students' Rights versus Teachers' Rights

Young and Ryan (2014) suggested that the courts hold teachers to a higher Catholic standard than they do students and the general community. What are the implications for different standards in a rapidly changing moral and secular age? How long can Catholic schools in Alberta continue to hold to moral teachings that seem increasingly at odds with secular culture and still receive public funding? Do minority rights in a pluralistic society outweigh society's demands for conformity? Young and Ryan expressed concern over the rights of Catholic teachers and the role of institutions in teachers' private lives in a modern society.

Spirituality and Religion in a Pluralistic Society

Some voices have embraced the postmodern worldview and secularism but have also seen a place for spirituality and religion in schools. Miedema (2014) called for the inclusion of religion in all schools, including secular schools. Canada, a multicultural pluralistic society with a diversity of religious beliefs, has recognized the validity of different worldviews and belief systems. It is an injustice to students, their religion, and spirituality not to create forums for discussion on and the construction of a society that accepts and understands differences in religion. Miedema called for the mandatory study of religion in all schools.

Nash (2001), an atheist, was deeply attracted to spirituality and, working with Parker Palmer's notion of spirituality and education, believed that teacher-formation programs need to expose all preservice teachers, especially those in secular colleges and universities, to spiritual formation. Nash used the work of Fowler and Palmer and many of his own experiences to create a course on education and spirituality for preservice teachers. The course delves into the nature of spirituality and the search for meaning in which all humans engage. Nash explained that religious-spiritual beliefs are really attempts to discover a person's own narrative—a story that guides and offers meaning and direction for moral living. Both scholars tried to find ways to engage rather than ban religion and spirituality from schooling.

Legal Issues, Catholic Teachers, and Teachers' formation: A Summary

Catholic education exists in a precarious position because it straddles a number of rights that both the *Charter* (Government of Canada, 1982) and the *Constitution* (Government of Canada, 1982) protect. It is important to constantly address the balance between personal rights such as religious freedom, freedom of conscience, and freedom of assembly and the communal rights and values of society and a Church that seems to be growing in separate directions. When individual human rights collide with the teachings and beliefs of a religious group and the constitutional rights and privilege granted at Confederation, at some point Canada's courts will be required to determine what is allowable and acceptable.

Taylor (2007), although he did not directly address Catholic education, spoke to the rights of religious minorities in a pluralistic, secular society. Using the analogy of reasonable accommodation, an open secularism, and the Bouchard-Taylor Commission (Bouchard & Taylor, 2008), the rights of minorities, including those who hold strong religious beliefs and their

ability to express and share them with their children, can shed light on Catholic education in Alberta.

To protect minority rights, the promises to religious and linguistic minorities in Western Canada, or the compromises with them, included the right and privilege to educate children in the religious beliefs of their parents. Taylor (2007) clearly believed that accommodations for many groups—religious and other—might often be in the best interests of society. He asserted that fairness does not equal equality and that at times privileges can be granted to address and redress unfair situations. In regard to Catholic schools, many have wondered why only Catholics (and, technically, Protestants) receive these privileges.

However, the courts seem to have consistently treated students and teachers differently. Individual students have the right to protect their individuality and personal rights (Young & Ryan, 2014). When teachers have represented the school or the Church community, their rights have been limited with regard to the precedence of the mission and vision of the school. Further, the denominational rights of Catholic schools to permeate the curriculum with faith, demand that teachers follow the teachings, and make the school authentically Catholic have been reaffirmed as recently as *Quebec v Loyola* (Supreme Court of Canada, 2015b).

As Taylor (2007) suggested, dialogue and not the courts can best address issues of conflicting rights, because the courts have yet to determine the balance of rights in a definitive manner. Catholic education must actively embrace this conversation and the formation of members to engage both internally and externally, nationally and provincially rather than simply allowing the courts to determine the place of religious education in schools.

It is necessary to take a few initial steps before a dialogue on Catholic education in a secular age is possible, especially in light of Taylor's (2007) critical account against a closed-

minded secularism. Few teachers, inservice and preservice, understand and recognize the legal and historical basis of Catholic education and their rights as teachers, staff, Catholics, and citizens in a pluralistic society such as Canada. Students' rights and the relationship between teachers and students in law are also fields for expanding litigation and courtroom decisions and could be a fruitful place for conversation.

An unsettled issue in the courts is Catholic education and LGBTQ teachers and students with regard to sexuality, same-sex marriage, gender identity, and the rights of students and teachers within a Catholic institution. Pope Francis, since his election as pope has clearly set the Church on a new path of acceptance and compassion but did not change the doctrine and traditional Catholic teaching on gender-identity theory and human sexuality. As Donlevy et al. (2013) pointed out, this will continue to be a highly contentious issue, and the courts will most surely have to make a determination. I believe that Catholic institutions, using the model of dialogue, mercy, and compassion that Pope Francis and his meeting with parents of gay children in September, 2020, demonstrated, can lead rather than follow. As part of the mission of the Church, and in recognition of the preferential option for the poor (*the poor* is a broad term that describes all who are marginalized), rather than asserting constitutional rights, education, formation, dialogue, and prayer should dominate the discussion and engagement with minority groups. In the Trinity Western case (Supreme Court of Canada, 2015a), the Supreme Court set precedence in this area. Not only legally, but based on the Church's teachings, this is the proper thing to do.

Teacher-formation programs should include an historical examination of the constitutional basis for Catholic education in addition to instruction on the Christian anthropology of the human person. It is vital that teachers and those in formation who work in

the schools understand the legal basis for the existence of Catholic education, the many cases on the rights of Catholic schooling, and their own rights as individuals.

History has much to do with this situation, but Alberta has over the year sought to address this inequity by partially funding any religious group willing to create independent schools. The solution for many is to defund all schools with religious foundations and leave only one publicly funded system, with one ideology and worldview, in the province. In recognition of Taylor's (2007) view on secularism, today, however, rather than the need for uniformity and the reduction of the rights of all religious groups, a reasonable accommodation could be to fund all groups who desire to run their own schools. The current reality is that only schools that follow the provincial curriculum receive funding; these criteria can be maintained.

Much of this has to do with the definition of secular. Both Taylor (2007) and Benson (2000) raised the problem of the conflicting views and definitions of secular in society and, by extension, in the courts that make it difficult to determine the rights of religious minorities and the majority to impose a social imaginary upon society. This conflict is evident in various legal decisions regarding Catholic education, including students and teachers. The courts, according to Benson, are unable to agree upon a single definition of secular and the role of religion in society. Until an agreed upon definition of secular is found (a nearly impossible task), the courts and Catholic education will continue to search for a middle ground to resolve the issues of rights, responsibilities, and religion.

In the previous four chapters I have sketched out some of the topics that create the context for the complications, and a possible point of dialogue, in Catholic education in Alberta. In Chapter 7, I concentrate on the framework of teachers' formation in Alberta and of Catholic witnesses in the postsecondary and professional development of teachers. The majority of

teachers in Alberta are formed in secular universities. What implications does this have for the formation of students in Catholic classrooms? Publicly funded Catholic schools do not receive funding for religious education, teachers' formation, or Catholic school culture and must thus draw funding for these projects from other programs. What impact does this have on theological and spiritual faith formation?

CHAPTER 7: FORMING CATHOLIC WITNESSES

> The influence of educators, especially on young people, depends more on who they are as persons and on how they live than on what they say. . . . [Teachers] can therefore be an effective formator of young people. Every good formator must receive a solid formation. It is necessary to form formators. (Pope Francis, 2015b, para. 4)

The universal Church is challenged today to offer a coherent vision for Catholic teachers' formation in faith. On one hand, it recognizes that a variety of attitudes, values, and worldviews shape teachers (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977); on the other hand, it has failed to create a definitive document and path for the formation of Catholic teachers. Franchi and Rymarz (2017) made the point that the Church seems to be struggling to come to grips with the constant shifting of the cultural realities that influence Catholic education universally and locally. One method or resolution is not adequate for a globalized church.

Because of the complexity of the situation of living in a secular age, including modernity, immanence, anthropology, and legal issues, teachers (formators) require formation, as Pope Francis (2015b) asserted. This education must be steeped in theology, spirituality, pedagogy, and anthropology to engage the mission and aims of Catholic education effectively and teach and witness in a Catholic school authentically. In light of the pressing issues that I have presented in the four previous chapters—religious education, anthropology, ecospirituality, and ecopedagogy; as well as human rights and freedom of religion—how can postsecondary education and professional development prepare Catholic teachers? How can Taylor's (2007) views assist Catholic school divisions and universities in the evangelization of secular society and the application of those ideas to faith-formation programs?

The Need for Teachers' Faith Formation

The Church has repeatedly expressed the aim of Catholic education and the need for the solid faith formation of its teachers to achieve its mission (Congregation for Catholic Education,

1982, 1988; Second Vatican Council, 1965d). Educational researchers have confirmed the value and necessity of formation for Catholic teachers. D'Souza (1996) described the difficulty of forming witnesses in a pluralistic and postmodern society; Earl (2013) described the struggle of developing Catholic identity and the necessity of spiritual, character, and moral formation for teachers in Catholic schools; Rymarz (2018) wrote of the loss of teachers to retirement that has accelerated the need to form a new generation of teachers in a rapidly changing social context; and Groome (1981) questioned whether teachers can lead others to conversion if they have not been converted first, which require sound preparation and formation to share faith (Groome, 2011).

It is essential that Catholic institutions develop a diversity of formation opportunities for teachers to fulfill the mission of leading students to personal holiness (Gardner et al., 2017). For Catholic educators, teacher education is a union of two "highly contested terms: Catholic education and teacher education" (Franchi & Rymarz, 2017, p. 7). The need to attain academic qualifications is essential, but for Catholic divisions it is also an opportunity to prepare those destined for Catholic institutions to fulfill the mission of the school and the Church (D'Souza, 1996).

All education shapes the growth and development of human beings not only within a particular cultural framework, but also with a specific worldview; for Catholic education, that worldview is often at odds with the secular worldview. Gardner et al. (2017) worried that a lack of religious education in especially public schools is harmful to a modern diverse society. Religious literacy and the presentation of many worldviews, both religious and secular, are essential to education in a democratic, multicultural society (Gardner et al., 2017). Alberta is an interesting case study that represents a vast range of educational choice, and the formation of

preservice teachers and the professional development of inservice teachers should reflect that choice.

Both Church teaching and the researchers of the current literature on Catholic education have stressed the importance of the professional development of Catholic teachers and the school's responsibility for the faith and spiritual formation of its staff. Even when ordained/ vowed religious staff worked with the laity in the past, it was difficult to ensure a critical mass of qualified, faith-filled, professionals who were familiar with and supportive of the social, theological, institutional, and educational aspirations in this Catholic educational enterprise (Mulligan, 2006).

Making things increasingly difficult is the rise of fundamentalism (Taylor, 2007), both religious and nonreligious. Taylor (2007) complained about a form of fundamentalism called *scientism* that evolved during the Enlightenment and declared that nothing existed outside the measurable realm, which discounted transcendence and faith. Although he suggested that this idea was philosophically refuted in the 20th century, it remains a dominant narrative in academia:

> We can come to see the growth of civilization, or modernity, as synonymous with the laying out of a closed immanent frame; within this civilized values develop, and a single-minded focus on the human good, aided by the fuller and fuller use of scientific reason, permits the greatest flourishing possible of human beings. . . . What emerges from all this is that we can either see the transcendent as a threat, a dangerous temptation, a distraction, or an obstacle to our greatest good. (p. 548)

Taylor (2007) was concerned about the possible restrictiveness of academia toward transcendence because of its focus on the immanent frame. Institutions created for the open exploration of ideas can limit voices outside the current or public narrative. Schools of formation and educational institutions often reflect the beliefs of the public sphere and reject or silence diverse transcendent worldviews, beliefs, and ideas. This point of view overlooks the complete formation of Catholic teachers.

Catholic educational institutions in Alberta face many challenges. Publicly funded Catholic schools often need to compete with public schools and employ strategies and models for education that can lead to Catholic schools' increasing focus on discipline-driven knowledge and market-driven neoliberalism. At the same time, they must maintain the Christian ethos and identity, anchored in the teaching and mission of the Church. Hiring teachers and offering them ongoing professional development become challenging. How can a school division share a Christian narrative with meaning and relevance to contemporary teachers in a manner that promotes the distinct character of Catholic education within secular teacher-preparation programs?

How can secular and Catholic institutions cooperate in the formation of Catholic teachers in a public-separate schooling structure such as that in Alberta? How can school divisions assist teachers in their lifelong faith journeys so that they too can be witnesses to the Catholic faith in the classroom? Taylor (2007), although not directly addressing education, teacher preparation, and curriculum, offered suggestions in a short reflection on evangelization and re-enchantment of the world in *A Secular Age*.

Taylor, Evangelization, and Teachers' formation

Although Taylor (2007) did not offer a list of solutions for teachers' formation today, his philosophical framework highlights some points of interest that help to better understand the formation of both preservice and inservice teachers in Catholic schools in Alberta.

Community and Relationship

Despite the rise of individuality or exclusive humanism, people still desire to belong to groups and communities, including religious communities. Taylor (2007) believed that community and belonging are still essential to human flourishing; however, the structure of the

groups and the interactions within the groups differ from those of previous generations. In the past, communities offered mutual benefits for people who desired relationships and communal bonds. These traditionally strong collectives that were found in communities greatly enhanced the possibility to encounter the transcendent as well.

As a result of the need for community, the current secular age has replaced historical religious feasts and gatherings with modern secular spectaculars. Concerts, stadiums, arenas, the public celebration of New Year's, and national holidays have taken on a religious fervour that replicates the carnival of old. The notion of festive is still important, Taylor (2007) noted, and "people still seek those moments of fusion, which wrench us out of the everyday, and put us into something beyond ourselves" (pp. 516-517).

Some gatherings and celebrations were obvious to Taylor (2007), such as World Youth Day, a visit to Taize, religious pilgrimages/assemblies, or event such as funerals of well-known persons; they all present a departure from the everyday. Taylor believed that, in spite of individualism, people still long for a sense to belong to something greater and that, even within immanence, humanity desires to belong to a community beyond itself. These activities are attractive to those who are open to the transcendent experiences.

Can nonreligious events such as concerts, raves, and others fill this possible void? These are complicated, according to Taylor (2007), because they take people out of the everyday and bring together a community of diverse individuals who share a powerful sense of belonging. However, these events do not fit into the secular world of individualism easily. They often lead to a sense of enchantment—a powerful phenomenological feeling that individuals can touch or connect with something greater than themselves. The activities from within an immanent, natural

worldview lead to opportunities for the transcendent to break through; yet, unless they are recognized as such, they can be explained within the immanent understanding of the world.

Taylor (2007) considered this openness humanity's spiritual intuition at work, with the creation of "a strong feeling of spiritual affinity or moment of blinding insight" (p. 518), which can lead to meditation or prayer. He argued that many people are uncomfortable with a "momentary sense of wow" (p. 518), which leaves them with a feeling of dis-ease. This unsettling, however, can initiate a process of searching and lead some to take it toward traditional forms of faith.

Churches and religious events still attract people for special occasions and life guidance, despite the decline in church attendance, decrease in the practice of communal and individual devotions, and absence of traditional Christian spirituality in public. Taylor (2007) suggested that these experiences and connections are still powerful for people. They search, and Christmas, special feasts, and holidays retain at least a semblance of their Christian identity. Death, tragedy, and fear lead people to rally around religious symbols and language. Whereas secularism is a strong option, people hesitate to let go of the sense of the transcendent and unitive role of community celebration.

Faith communities are still important to many people, and the attachment to historical identity and practices, however tenuous, still exists. A great decoupling of belief and practice might happen in this age, but outward incarnations of historical traditions remain in the public sphere. Taylor (2007) used a powerful image of the Church as a star and each member as a body orbiting the star; many are at greater distances than others, much like their relationships to faith communities. This means that many consider the Church a reference point for their lives despite the fact that they no longer baptize their children or attend services (pp. 518-522).

This might be considered a form of Christian nominalism—identification with a particular church with little understanding or practice (or even belief) in it—and yet still present is a believed connection. Whether this occurrence is a loose affiliation or simply openness to transcendence is unclear, but according to Taylor (2007), the need for the spiritual and a sense of belonging to a community is still present.

The desire for community and a connection to the Church, despite being precarious, could be a means of engaging teachers who are raised in secular homes. Spiritual practices that continue to attract people include meditation, charitable work, study groups, pilgrimages, and prayer. The Catholic Church has a meditative tradition that involves a variety of prayer forms that could be the foundation for spiritual growth and an introduction to a more traditional prayer life; numerous examples include *lectio divina*, the rosary, praying the office or the office of the hours, and contemplative prayer.

Taylor (2007) referred to prayer in action or charitable activities as a means of outreach and evangelization. Giving people opportunities to become involved in organizations such as Peace and Development, Habitat for Humanity, food banks, and clothing banks, as well as local and international relief activities, can be powerfully effective means of leading people to the transcendent in their lives.

Challenge and relationships in pilgrimages offer an experience of fullness. They are an ancient form of piety, usually in groups, that can have a profound spiritual effect on the participants. Today, people often think of pilgrimages as grand experiences such as the Hajj for Muslims or The Way of St. James (*Camino de Santiago*) in Spain, but local pilgrimages exist everywhere. As a child, I attended the annual pilgrimage to Skaro, Alberta, for the Marian Feast of the Assumption and the St. Anne Shrine at Lac St. Anne. For young adults and teachers the

World Youth Day pilgrimages are a powerful reminder of the universality of the Church and opportunities for life-changing encounters with the transcendent.

Is a Life Without God Enough?

In the current secular age, belief and religion are just one alternative among many for engaging, imagining, and relating in the world. Religious belief became for Taylor (2007) one of many choices of belief or disbelief. In historical Christianity a wide range of spiritual options and creeds existed, and the decline in belief could be considered either a loss or an opportunity. Taylor suggested that choice facilitates new means of entering and engaging the sacred or spiritual, either individually or in groups, and in some cases outside a direct relationship with God.

In an interview, Taylor was questioned regarding the appearance that modern people are stuck between two poles — Strong Atheism and Strong Religiosity — with the average person somewhere in the middle. Taylor explained that most people are in a fragile state regarding belief:

> I think it's a very, very widespread phenomenon today . . . That's what people often mean when they say, "I'm spiritual, but not religious." 'Not religious' means I don't belong to any tradition with a pre-existing formula that I would have to sign up to; but I'm 'spiritual' in that I'm exploring this whole area. (Bloor, 2009, para. 30)

Taylor (2007) believed that not only is traditional secularization theory, which holds that modern societies will increasingly embrace science and drop religious beliefs, false, but also that a rebound in religion and spirituality was evident at the beginning of the 21st century. Taylor explained that *conversion* means breaking free of the immanent frame and often includes an epiphanic or self-authenticating experience. Conversion requires a paradigm shift in which God,

good, and evil become realities. A shift in individuals' moral perspective is a strong motivator to reassess their current perspectives and can lead to conversion. However conversion occurs, the shift begins within the immanent frame and probably upsets their lives and relationships.

Russia, following the fall of the Soviet Union, served as an example of the large-scale conversion that is possible under the right conditions. Over an extended period of time, people in Russia attempted to eliminate all religion; despite this active campaign of restrictions, a period of great resurgence of belief followed. Taylor (2007), borrowing from sociologist Robert Wuthnow, suggested that most people could be categorized as *dwellers* or *seekers*, and in the postatheistic environment, Russia became "a fertile field unfettered by historical bias" (p. 533) for the growth of religion.

Drawing from the above insights from Taylor (2007), the current generation of preservice and full-service teachers will be evangelized in the immanent frame. This reality requires new methods and creates different challenges than previous generations faced (Taylor, 2012). In a similar vein, Groome (1980) referred to the Road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35) as a model of his approach to religious education. Like Jesus in the Gospel story, leaders need to walk beside teachers and guide, answer questions, point out truths, and create opportunities for encounters with transcendence as a means of conversion today. Educators need to understand that transcendence is a viable option in a world filled with options. In light of this point, Taylor offered two conditions that for faith formation: community and the desire for "something more." Instead of a defensive or catechism-based approach to faith formation, participation in communities and an introduction to and reflection on alternative options for belief are vital.

Reflecting on the work of Taylor (2007), Gallagher (2010b) believed that, through gentle and compassionate love, the Spirit of God pierces the buffered self and enables a person to fully

flourish. Taylor wrote that philosophers, sociologists, and historians too often overlook the spiritual dimension of life today. Perhaps we could add educators to this group. He suggested that, in a secular age, "People forget the answers to the great questions of life. But what is worse is that they even forget the questions" (p. 114). Spiritual formation of teachers could lead them to ask the right questions.

Background: Canadian University Teacher Education

In Canada, K-12 education is a provincial responsibility, and most teacher-education programs exist to serve the schools in their provinces. Although provincial ministers of education and staff in education ministries and faculties of education across the country engage in dialogue and work together when possible,[21] no detailed national or Canadawide unifying document(s) or set of principles exist on the formation and training of teachers. Agreements in principle include the acknowledgement that all teachers in Canada require a bachelor's degree in recognition of their teaching credentials. Beyond these, the provinces and their universities, provincial ministries of education, and school boards define the requirements for future teachers (Perlaza & Tardif, 2016). Often these formation requirements involve political interplay among the provincial governments,[22] teacher associations, school divisions, and universities in dialogue over the rights and requirements of formation and certification (Zeichner & Hollar, 2016).

Faculties and schools of education at different universities in the provinces include a variety of different methodologies and programs (in both type and length) for teachers' formation. Perlaza and Tardif (2016) identified four different types of structures: concurrent,

[21] This collaboration takes various forums, including the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (n.d.), in which ministers of education and their staff communicate and share policies and materials on teacher education.

[22] In Alberta the Education Act (Province of Alberta, 2012) gives the Minister of Education the ability to determine the requirements for the certification of teachers "iii) respecting education, training and experience and character and other eligibility requirements of applicants for certificates" (Regulation 201(1) a(3)).

consecutive, graduate, and sole-degree models. In Alberta, universities that prepare teachers have variations of all four models, and in some cases a single university offers multiple paths, which suggests that the formation of teachers varies considerably, depending on the program and school.

Programs across Canada have undergone constant restructuring as the move towards professionalizing teaching has change teacher-education programs. The professionalization of education and teacher training in universities and the creation of professional associations, in Alberta at least, have actively restricted religious language and refocussed members on secular vocabulary in the public and professional domain, which has impacted Catholic education formation. Public associations and public universities have advocated for professional, secular practice in teaching and education; and even in Catholic institutions, Catholicity can no longer be assured or the vitality of the program assumed (Paletta & Fiorin, 2016; Stuart-Buttle, 2019).

Perlaza and Tardif (2016) wondered whether the changes or reforms in professionalizing teaching actually moved from theory to practice in teacher-education programs to such an extent that they have changed the nature and impact of education in Canada. Attempts to reform teacher-education programs from a more traditional perspective were based on the direct transmission of knowledge to a more holistic approach, including social-constructivist learning and the need to form "the whole teacher"; however, the many political and social challenges involved in teacher education have often made the teacher-education enterprise difficult (p. 211). Friesen (2018) explained that this reality is not surprising given the complex nature of education. Postsecondary institutions need to seriously reflect on and evaluate how they form teachers in a rapidly changing society.

The educational literature is more concerned with the type of programs offered than the actual content of the programs, and they demonstrate considerable diversity in comparing elementary to secondary formation routes; however, according to Crocker and Dibbon (2008, as cited in Perlaza & Tardif, 2016), Canadian teacher-education programs generally share similar content across the country. Wilson (2003, as cited in Perlaza & Tardif, 2016) stated that all programs provide knowledge and formation "about who is taught (learners), what is to be taught (subject matter and curriculum), how to teach (principles and practice teaching), where the teaching takes place (context) and why teach (foundations of teaching)" (p. 4).

According to Rocha (2019), the institutional study of education itself in schools of higher education have imperiled education. Education, he argued, is an art, not a subject to be studied, such as the natural sciences. Rocha considered education more of an exchange that occurs within relationships between teachers and students, as more complex than a simple transmission of knowledge and skills. Education formation programs need to focus renewed attention on teachers and students and less on the methodology or science of teaching. Both a scientific and a humanistic formation are necessary.

Public Postsecondary Schools Form Catholic Teachers

Both educational institutions and the professors who instruct have a worldview and bias towards specific ideologies and values. Kirylo and Aldridge (2019) explained that teacher-education programs generally reflect the mission, philosophy, instructional approaches, and content of the curriculum of the institution. Taylor (2007) suggested that scientism is the dominant ideology in academia, which is a concern in the formation of Catholic teachers in public institutions. Only three provinces support publicly funded minority Catholic education, and public institutions rarely, if ever, explicitly address religious education and the theological

and spiritual needs of preservice teachers for Catholic education systems (Franchi & Rymarz, 2017; Morey, 2012).

The formation of teachers for Catholic education in secular institutions can lead to tension when Catholic teaching presents beliefs on the human person and pedagogy that counter those in the public sphere. A Catholic understanding of the human person is reflected in teachers, and their pedagogy is the very heart and soul of Catholic education (Congregation for the Clergy, 1991, Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization, 2020; Groome, 2014; Morey, 2012). Even Canadian Catholic universities that maintain faculties of education often mirror the programs in secular faculties of education in Canada and offer the possibility of optional courses on Catholic religious education and/or theology. In most cases the instructors use materials, resources, curricula, and anthropology that are similar to those that their secular colleagues use and only occasionally pay attention to the distinctive Catholic anthropology that has shaped Catholic educational thought for centuries (Morey, 2012).

Public universities, with their formidable academic educational requirements and necessary practical teaching experiences, leave limited options for Catholic education courses, or access to Catholic education courses might not be available to those who want to teach in Catholic education as part of their formation experience (Franchi & Rymarz, 2017). In Alberta, this unwillingness or inability of colleges and universities and departments of education to attend to the religious dimension for students who desire to teach in religious schools is a serious omission. This inattention to a Catholic education approach, which has produced a vibrant educational legacy and body of knowledge for centuries, has restricted the educational landscape of children, adolescents, and young adults (Morey, 2012). It has severely limited and constricted the range of material in educational courses that students who want to integrate their faith and

learning can explore in secular universities—and not just Catholics, but all people of faith. Despite the fact that the public sphere is generally secular, many children in classrooms come from some faith background; as Taylor (2012) described them, they are *seekers* who have a strong curiosity about the spiritual and faith. All teachers, not just those destined for denominational education, are impoverished by the inattention to the spirituality of their students and the teachers themselves (Earl, 2005; Jones, 2005; Miedema, 2014; Nash, 2001; Palmer, 1993).[23]

Catholic communities look to Catholic schools for faith-filled witnesses, grounded in Catholic spirituality, beliefs, and theology; they must rely on secular universities in Alberta for formation in educational theory and practical experience for the classroom. The task of forming Catholic teachers, however, falls largely to the community, represented by school districts, parishes, and Catholic institutions, to assist and support the faith formation necessary to fulfill the mission of Catholic education.

Catholic Teachers' Professional Formation

Teaching in a Catholic school includes expectations with regard to the mission and spiritual dimension of the school. Proper pedagogical and spiritual formation of teachers is necessary to "guide the students [future teachers] to a self-formation that is both human and Christian, because this is the best possible preparation for one who is preparing to educate others" (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988, para. 63).

[23] In my experience as a graduate student in the Faculty of Education a significant number of readings came from educational theorists or philosophers who considered religion and spirituality important aspects of and influences on their work and life, including Levinas, Derrida, Noddings, Freire, Ricoeur, Palmer, Dewey, and Habermas. In each case the spirituality or religiousness of the writings and authors was sanitized or ignored. In particular, one reading referred to the philosophical work of Karol Wojtlya on phenomenology and personalism. When no one in the class, including the instructor, knew of Wojtlya, I finally responded with the answer - St. John Paul II. The conversation stopped, and we moved on to a different topic.

Because faith formation is a lifelong process, opportunities, especially early in the teaching career, are necessary; and the divisions and Catholic parishes must allow access. Once a Catholic school division in Alberta employs teachers, they are contractually obligated to both live and witness a Catholic perspective and lifestyle, not only at school, but also in their personal lives (Supreme Court of Canada, 1987; Wendel, 2017). This contractual obligation includes participation in personal and divisional faith-formation activities.

My leadership roles in Catholic education have revealed that the minimal requirements in most Catholic schools in Alberta include baptism in the Church and, in many divisions, a recommendation from parish priests that includes an attestation of faith prior to the offer of a continuous contract. Some divisions give priority to hiring teachers with previous coursework in theology and religious education. However, they often waive both requirements because of the severe shortages of teachers in specialized subject areas or the remote locations of some schools. In these schools, non-Catholic teachers are often hired to fill positions and subject specialties. A serious concern is the hiring of Catholic teachers who have little formation or no background in the Catholic faith. Those who lack proper formation can harm, often accidently, the authenticity of the Catholic school (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982; James 3:1ff; Second Vatican Council, 1965d).

Faith-Formation Programs

Rymarz (2018) advocated for professional development programs to address key aspects of the Catholic worldview. Two important findings emerged from his research. The first is the need to address the head, in that many teachers have a poor cognitive grasp of the vision, worldview, and mission of Catholicism. It is not only the lack of theology and lived experience, but also a deep sense of how teachings and beliefs are connected and integrated into a Catholic

school. The second addresses the heart. Cognitive-based programs should be followed by retreat experiences based on the integration of prayer, reflection, and liturgy to engage all human faculties in supporting and involving teachers in addressing the needs of the transcendent dimension of their lives.

Formation should be provided in two forms: theological (the head) and spiritual (the heart). Preservice and inservice teachers require formation of the mind and the spirit of Catholic education (Earl, 2005; Groome, 1998; Palmer, 1998; Pontifical Council for the Promotion for the New Evangelization, 2020); and, according to Rymarz (2018), this formation must be "informative, sequential, and focussed professional development" (p. 205; Paletta & Fiorin 2016). Although formation can take many forms, it is important to address both the head and the heart.

Finding a Catholic Voice in Postmodernism

Postmodernism philosophy, among many worldviews, shapes our culture in many ways, including its offering of competing views on feminism, the arts, and sexuality; diverse views on anthropology; and different understandings of human equality. Postmodernism has revealed and addressed serious wrongs in traditional society, including human rights, racism, and ecological issues. The Church is concerned about these issues; however, many of the solutions that secular society has proposed conflict to varying degrees with the Catholic worldview and a Christian anthropology.

This postmodern, secular view of the world, combined with decreased exposure to and practice of the Catholic faith among families, can cause confusion among teachers and in school communities and the Church. Many teachers are unfamiliar with Catholic teachings, especially on complex moral issues. Institutions that form Catholic teachers and the school divisions that

hire them have an obligation to provide them with the necessary theological knowledge and spiritual formation.

The academic literature on the faith formation of teachers has emphasized the need to support and foster the spiritual life of staff, to the point of leading teachers to a spiritual conversion. Taylor (2007) described people who are converted as "those who broke out of the immanent frame" (p. 728). Smith (2014) reminded us that, in the current secular age, because everyone lives within the immanent frame, conversion is a move from a closed take to an open take on the world; they are still within the immanent frame but perceived differently (p. 132). With preservice and experienced teachers essentially living and working in a secular age, Catholic education must create opportunities to grow their faith life and lead them to a Catholic spirituality (Earl, 2005) and openness to transcendence.

Focus on the Head: Theological Formation of Catholic Teachers

The literature highlighted that theological education must be a priority for teachers and an essential part of the teacher-formation process (Groome, 1998; Mulligan, 2006; Paletta & Fiorin; 2016, Pontifical Council the Promotion of the New Evangelization, 2020, paras. 143-150; Rymarz, 2018; Stuart-Buttle, 2018). To sustain the denominational character of the school, Catholic teachers require a clear understanding of the aims and goals of Catholic education, theology, and the Catholic worldview and philosophy of life. Many teachers in Catholic schools studied introductory courses at the undergraduate level, but few have felt comfortable and often lack enough confidence in their formation to teach and witness to children and adults (Gardner et al., 2017). Beyond the lack of content or the grammar of faith is a deficit in the lived experience of Catholicism that does not enable teachers to model the expected behaviours of the school and the Catholic community.

Theological formation and education must be meaningful, ongoing, and relevant to the lives of teachers and an aspect of the holistic growth and development of Catholic teachers over the course of their lives. Numerous theological programs are available to teachers in Alberta; however, two stumbling blocks consistently interfere with their ongoing formation. The first is the constant demands and the ever-increasing expectations that teachers face in the day-to-day activities involved in educating youth. With an increasing sense of professionalism and the accompanying requirements for accreditation and accountability, combined with the pressure on teachers to attend to each student individually, they have little time to actively engage in theological formation and training.

The second stumbling block, the price of these programs in an era of increasing costs with little to no increase in education funding, is problematic. In Alberta, Catholic education is publicly funded; however, the government provides no specific funds for religious education or theological or faith-formation programs. Catholic and public schools are funded according to the same formula, and funds are often directed toward specific educational tasks, which mean that boards often appropriate money from other programs to fund the ongoing theological formation courses, programs, and professional development. This reality results in a balancing act between educators' faith formation and the school's faith priorities, the requirements of the Catholic religious-education courses, the educational training of teachers, and their theological and spiritual formation.

Expertise in pedagogy and leadership is often the primary focus of professional development, whereas theological training and formation are often secondary. To counter the imbalance in formation, Catholic educational institutions, dioceses, and divisions have encouraged or mandated theological and religious education formation and ongoing professional

development, often as conditions of employment (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2014; Mudge & Fleming, 2013). In Australia, Mudge and Fleming (2013) identified 11 dioceses that have made initial theological and religious education mandatory for teachers to be hired, as well as ongoing professional learning: “These requirements were developed out of an awareness that the Catholic school community has a responsibility for providing appropriate and supportive yet rigorous pathways for the preparation and ongoing professional learning of teachers, especially in Religious Education” (p. 43).

Stuart-Buttle (2018) reported that teachers in Catholic schools often consider academic Catholic theology incomprehensible or irrelevant to their personal worldview or professional praxis. Often teachers view Catholic teaching as authoritarian, constrictive, and out of touch with the everyday world of choice and individualism. They are reluctant to engage in a theological worldview and Church teachings that differ from secular and popular social ideologies that are not part of their lives. Although teachers accept and understand their roles and responsibilities as teachers in a Catholic school, they struggle to negotiate faithfulness to Catholicism alongside their personal beliefs, professional standards, and contemporary educational and social theory. The reality has often created challenges and tensions for educational staff at Catholic institutions that identify, maintain, and promote the integrity of Catholic tradition, not only in the schools, but also in teachers’ personal lives and the practice of their Christian faith life.

Mandating theological courses or theological accreditation as a contractual requirement is dangerous, suggested Stuart-Buttle (2018). Mandatory academic courses and participation in faith-formation programs can result in an outward adherence and give some teachers the language for faith, but they have little impact on their inner faith lives. Authentic Christian belief and participation in the community emanates from sincere reflection on one’s own religious

identity and life experience. Mandatory courses and contractual obligations can be institutional mechanisms for domination and control over teaching staff (Stuart-Buttle, 2018). Ensuring that teachers have the right language and an enforced code of conduct means that theology becomes utilitarian and is viewed only as a coerced, professional responsibility. Stuart-Buttle believed that engaging teachers by using motivational tactics such as invitation, evangelization, dialogue, and a loving, respectful community to form witnesses through professional development is more in keeping with the Gospel message.

The theological and spiritual formation of everyone involved in Catholic education is essential. Mulligan (2006) summed it up as follows: Religious knowledge (i.e., theology) ensures that teachers are competent, spirituality defines that commitment, and, together, as a result, teachers become "authentic witnesses" (p. 249) in a Catholic school.

Focus on the Heart: Spiritual Formation of Catholic Teachers

> In the West, what we have is an immense growth in the number of people who are searching, who feel a real sense of spiritual need, though they wouldn't define it by that term. . . . And the opportunity is immense because there is a tremendous wealth of different spiritualities. We have in the Christian tradition and in particular in the Catholic tradition an immense wealth. . . . We have to put together this immense richness for these young people who are searching for this spiritual path, and that is a tremendous opportunity. (Taylor, as cited in Tadie, 2019, paras. 14-16)

Mulligan (2006) described the lives and teaching of educators in Catholic schools as a "poverty of spirituality" (p. 229). Silence and solitude, he argued, are lacking in the busy lives of educators; in silence and solitude teachers find time to focus on their inner lives and reflect deeply on their personal vocation. Not only is theology, but so are teachers, lived experiences, their lives in the spirit.

Teachers share values, beliefs, knowledge, and wisdom with the students whom they teach. More important, Palmer (1998) suggested that teachers share the very essence of

themselves. Palmer considered an understanding of the self and inner lives essential. Over time and from many influences, people's spirits grow, and people learn and experience the world. Exploration of the soul is equally as important as theological instruction and formation.

Not only must Catholic teachers be masters of their subject areas, but they must also demonstrate and witness a particular way of life, shaped by the beliefs, values, and moral teachings of Christ and the Church. The spiritual relationships among teachers, students, and Christ are essential to the aim and mission of Catholic education. The Christian spiritual relationship flows from the relationship with Christ—the starting place for Christian spirituality.

Defining spirituality is a difficult task. Groome (1988) and Palmer (2003), for example, argued that spiritual has no single definition because people encounter God or the spirit by many means. The word *spirit* comes from the Greek *pneuma* ("breath") and scripture often refers to God at work or the human person's meeting God within his or her heart and mind (Groome, 2019). Groome (2019) explained that Christian spirituality amounts to "all the symbols of stories, perspectives and practices, prayers and patterns the Christian engaged through which the spirit works to nurture them to live with integrity and mutuality as disciples of Jesus and thus into authenticity as human beings" (p. 151).

Palmer (2003) argued that teaching is a spiritual act that emerges from the inner self and joins teachers, students, and the subject matter in a relationship and that the definition of spirituality is elusive. However, "spirituality is the eternal human yearning to be connected with something larger than our own egos" (p. 373). He preferred the language of *heart and soul* when he talked about the inner yearning and recognized that different traditions use different terms, including *secular humanism*, which includes "identity and integrity" (p. 373). However,

everyone has acknowledged its ontological existence. Spiritual formation is an essential aspect of all teacher-formation programs, and teachers should tend to it throughout their lives.

Palmer (1998) believed that the community is essential in the process of inner reflection and spiritual growth; it is easy to become lost alone, and the guidance and support of a community are necessary. A teaching community includes many groups and subgroups who allow and encourage the sharing of the inner self confidentially and safely. Catholic school divisions, in particular, are well suited and have the available expertise from the parish, school division, and diocese to offer opportunities and diverse options to teachers.

What happens when the expression of spirituality and faith is suppressed or not encouraged in Catholic schools? Stuart-Buttle (2018) discussed the notion of a *faith closet*, which forms when people feel the need to suppress their faith in a professional setting. Research has indicated that many professionals construct, in essence, a safe place to hide their religious faith in a predominantly secular world. The faith closet has become a popular metaphor for a socially constructed safe place to hide the significant aspects of the self when it might be unsafe in public or people fear or are reluctant to share with others, who include those in Catholic institutions. Research has also shown that professionals who have a longstanding personal spirituality and religious faith and for whom adamant faith is foundational to their being are often afraid to be overly "religious" in professional practice.

To come out as Catholic (Miedema, 2014; Scott, 2014) in a Catholic school is very difficult. Professionalism becomes the standard mask for many and they hide their personal beliefs in the private realm. As religion and spirituality are pushed out of the public forum, they become taboo topics and are shunted to the safety of private lives, and the religious practices and patterns of belief today decline.

The notion of a faith closet also works in the reverse (Stuart-Buttle, 2018). Teachers who struggle with faith and fear being called out for a lack of faith hide their questioning and concerns. Struggling teachers fear that raising questions regarding faith presents outwardly as a lack of confidence in their catholicity and the mission of the school, but their faith closet hides these concerns behind professionalism and pedagogy. The ability to speak clearly and without fear is important, because Church documents have called for teachers and leaders to model and witness Christian faith and tradition their whole lives (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977, 1982, 1988).

Stakeholder Theory and Catholic Formation Programs

In a UK study, Stuart-Buttle (2019) studied denominational colleges and universities involved in teacher preparation to determine the amount of input that stakeholder organizations and communities have in the creation and presentation of teachers' formation for denominational schools. She investigated stakeholder theory and Catholic schools of education and reported that "stakeholder theory sees that collaborative strategies are needed to go beyond traditional corporate interest or linear movement of activity to invite partnership, dialogue and communication among the key players" (p. 302) to identify the impact of a religious studies program in light of the needs of Catholic education stakeholders.

Stuart-Buttle (2019) found that many stakeholders are involved in Catholic education, including bishops (although not all bishops share the same goals and views), parents, students, teachers, the educational community (both K-12 and postsecondary), and the government. The results of her survey show not only a variety of opinions on the effectiveness of the program, but also the perceptions of its key stakeholders, the students who take the program and the university that offers it, on its value.

A survey of the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies (CCRS) participants and stakeholders resulted in three key findings (Stuart-Buttle, 2019). The first is that Catholic universities and schools of education play an important role in the theological faith formation of their students. Universities and colleges provide academic insight and quality assurance to the smaller diocese, school boards, the greater Church community's learning, and teaching pedagogies that improve assessment practices and the provision of core resources.

The second finding is that stakeholders are concerned about the participants' perceptions of the formation program (Stuart-Buttle, 2019). When the CCRS course is accredited and used to meet teaching qualifications and frameworks, the program is more of an academic endeavour than personal faith formation. Yet, when the CCRS program is offered as an optional program specifically to Catholic school teachers, it is distanced or separated from mainstream academic and professional activity and no longer has the academic rigour of university formation programs. To be effective, clear goals and a purpose are necessary before the development of and while students are enrolled in theological formation programs; if not, students have reported that these studies are tangential or irrelevant to their studies.

The third indicator of stakeholder importance is higher-education organizations' commitment to the CCRS program (Stuart-Buttle, 2019). Despite the fact that Stuart-Buttle (2019) conducted her study in Catholic institutions, she found that simply having a Christian foundation no longer guarantees that the Catholicity of the institution can be found in the curriculum and pedagogy of the school. Instead, modern educational theory and the associated humanities and social sciences have marginalized the Christian faith, and the teaching of Catholic theology in faculties of education often prejudices students against claims of faith.

The Changing Nature of Society and Preservice Catholic Teachers

Unlike previous generations who had deep-seated connections to church communities, young teachers lack the same commitment to religious communities and the religious identity of many veteran teachers (Franchi & Rymarz, 2017; Rymarz, 2018). Rymarz (2018) believed that young people have a dynamic view of lived religion that is both engaged and individualized. Young people, raised in a world of options and choice, tend to develop a personalized spirituality and religiosity to satisfy the transcendental dimension of their lives. Rymarz supported the work of Taylor (2007), who described the vast number of cross pressures that lead to the nova effect, or the explosion of opportunities and possibilities for belief. Taylor contended that multiple choices for belief and spirituality lead to fragilization: the creation of fragile and cafeteria-style belief systems (Franchi & Rymarz, 2017; Smith, 2014; Taylor, 2007).

With so many alternatives, young people lean toward a negotiated religiosity and select from a range of behaviours, beliefs, and social actions that best met their personal needs. Youth look for religious affiliation that is neither too onerous nor requires strong affiliation and demands from the participants. What has become critical in formation is that universities, parishes, school divisions, and the Catholic education community support young teachers. Catholic school divisions must assume that teachers who enter the profession have no strong identification with and link to the Catholic community and use that as a starting point for formation (Franchi & Rymarz, 2017; Rymarz, 2018).

The Practice of Teacher Faith Formation

The literature identified many options for faith-formation activities and suggested Catholic schools around the world are working to engage teachers. Faith-formation programs

must be creative to ensure their effectiveness. The following are current models for formation that preservice and inservice teachers use.

Faith Days

The most popular form of large-scale faith formation in Alberta is the "faith day" event, in which staff from a single school or an entire division gather with a guest speaker and celebrate Mass. Taylor (2007) discussed the participants' desire for community and relationship despite their living in the Age of Authenticity and expressive individualism. These gathering days are important to introduce and initiate teachers into the larger faith community of the division; can powerfully evoke a spirit of reflection; and, through community and relationship, invite a sense of transcendence (Taylor, 2007).

Clarke (2012) agreed that whole-community days can be valuable community-building opportunities, yet she questioned their effectiveness as faith formation. She suggested that a one-day "kick start" to the school year is easy and inexpensive compared to offering rich and meaningful faith formation for staff development in spirituality. Retired Bishop of Calgary Fred Henry (personal communication, April 1, 2017) agreed and called these one-day events *company picnics*. They serve a purpose, but it is important to acknowledge the limitations and short-term effectiveness that result from the lack of personal commitment.

Group Programs and Courses

Most Catholic school divisions in Alberta create opportunities for their staff to participate in various group programs and access courses through Catholic institutions in the province. These programs range from Bible study, prayer groups, book clubs, lecture series, philosophy clubs, and other activities that the divisions, parishes, and dioceses subsidize and support. These programs give teachers an opportunity to reflect and share with others on the "big" questions

concerning faith and belief. Often the programs focuses more on the heart than the head and addresses spirituality and relationships, which are an important part of conversion, according to Taylor (2007).

Catholic school boards in north central Alberta developed a unique program called EXcellence in Catholic Education Leadership (EXCEL). In cooperation with Newman Theological College in Edmonton, teachers enrol in a two-year leadership program that forms them in faith leadership for their divisions. They can use the two courses that make up the program toward graduate degrees in religious education and Catholic school administration.

An example of a program for faith formation from the literature is the Catching Fire model, which the Archdiocese of Brisbane uses. The key to this model is the strategic approach: All "formative activities start with the reality of each person's story, spirituality and school community" (Graham, 2011, pp. 29). The annual goal setting of staff and schools is intended "to strengthen the faith lives of individuals and build systemic leadership capacity for a discipleship of staff that co-facilitates formation in schools" (pp. 29-30). Support materials are available to teachers online, in print, and in opportunities for retreat, coursework, and mentorship.

Mentorship

Mentorship programs are important to new teachers and people in new positions. Faith mentorship programs have gained popularity over the past decade, and Catholic divisions in Alberta are using them effectively. Brock and Chatlain (2008) argued that teachers are more likely to engage the mission of Catholic education if mentorship and induction programs include support for the religious dimension as well as administrative and pedagogical matters. They found that most new teachers feel challenged by the demands of teaching and incorporating the Catholic goals of the division.

The literature has shown that the spirituality and practice of school administrators is a key factor in the faith life of the school and the faith formation of the staff (Blacher-Wilson, 2004; Coll, 2009; Paletta & Fiorin, 2016). Coll (2009) found that, as important as the staff are to the faith lives of the students in the school, the school community can also be an important evangelizer of the staff. Coll indicated that first-year or new staff members are influenced most strongly by their administrators and that, if the administrators overtly practice faith, so do the staff in the school.

Research findings suggest that the principals' faith, if it is authentic and explicit, influences the whole school. Administrators who pray and attend mass have the greatest impact on building a cohesive and caring community, according to staff members. Principals who rarely talk about faith or do not regularly attend their parish tend to be less effective as administrators in communicating the aims and goals of the school and have less unified communities, and, according to Coll (2009), the staff do not support them as much.

Liturgy

To be human means being part of a community; to be Catholic means being part of an active Eucharistic faith community at a parish and, by extension, the school (Clarke, 2012; Doring, 1997). The communal celebration of the Mass, the central worship event of the Catholic community, can be important in the formation of faith. However committed they are to the mission of Catholic education, young people especially remain highly indifferent to and unattached from the Catholic community and consider the role of Catholic witnesses difficult. Belonging to a community, joining in ritual, and participating in charitable works are important not only to the individual faith lives of teachers, but also to the spirituality in the school.

Rymarz (2018) stated that when teachers join a Catholic school, they generally accept the emphasis on religious identity and are willing to support it, including attendance at Mass, sacramental preparation, and adherence to a particular religious framework. However, teachers prefer to choose the activities in which they will participate and the beliefs that they will accept, in both their classrooms and their daily lives. The teachers in Rymarz's study were not overtly hostile to religion but had a weak religious affiliation. This finding is consistent with Taylor's (2007) notion that people can negotiate and choose religion.

Individualized Formation and Experiences

Communal celebrations, belonging to a group with shared values, and individualized formation and personal experience are all important. Learners are complex and unique; authenticate learning transpires when their experiences are sustained, deep, and incorporated over an extended time into opportunities for reflection. Clarke (2012) and Doring (1997) suggested that dialogue, prayer, and reflection are necessary to authentic Catholic faith formation. Experiences must be personalized, and authentic school/faith witnesses must lead them. Activities in effective programs include individual faith plans, retreats, spiritual direction and mentorship, environmental spiritual experiences, and community service activities.

Review of Teacher's Faith-Formation

Catholic schools are not alone in their concern about teachers' formation. Secular universities, journals, and professional associations consistently challenge current models and programs to ensure teachers' formation meets the needs of modern education. Writers such as Parker Palmer have greatly influenced teachers' formation by encouraging education that includes the holistic formation of teachers beyond academic and pedagogical training.

Researchers on the formation of Catholic teachers have analyzed best practices and the philosophy behind programs in Catholic teachers' education. Although sporadic attempts at both postsecondary and professional development in faith formation have begun strongly in many areas, few of these attempts have been coordinated, long-term commitments to action. Programs, both at postsecondary institutions and in Catholic divisions in Alberta, generally work independently of each other. Creating stronger links among Catholic organizations could make faith formation and Catholic professional development in Alberta more efficient and offer more opportunities.

Taylor's (2007) analysis of living in and his description of the secular age present important knowledge to assist divisions with their formation programs. People are searching and looking for fullness (Taylor, 2007); and, among an abundance of options, the invitation to faith must be one of joy and meaning. It is essential that opportunities to forge a sense of belonging in all formation opportunities follow the invitation. The desire for a welcoming, engaging, and loving spiritual community enables conversion; it is the first step toward witnessing.

Taylor's (2007) recognition of the current generation's desire for community and relationship but an individualized, self-selected faith requires that school divisions and universities reexamine their faith-formation program. Grounding these programs in principles to which teachers in modernity can relate creates the need to engage in more individualized programs that engage and open faith in a way that is attractive. Taylor recommended pilgrimages, retreats, prayer, and charitable works and actions to draw in youth and create opportunities to engage then in encounters with transcendence.

Partnerships with secular universities and Catholic colleges are important to the formation process. These institutions contain and foster the expertise, research facilities,

resources to engage both preservice teachers and inservice teachers in formation opportunities and programs. Catholic school divisions must access the best pedagogical, theological, and spiritual resources available. We have much to gain by incorporating both the religious and the nonreligious educational, social, historical, and pedagogical expertise that we find in educational institutions across the province.

With full funding of Catholic education in Alberta, the diocese, for a myriad of reasons, is often not considered a primary partner in Catholic education, but a secondary stakeholder. This is a great loss to the diocese, bishops, and Catholic schools. Integration and reaffirmation of the Catholic school in the mission of the Church must be part of consistent dialogue with teachers, students, administrators, governors, and bishops. Parishes especially long to be part of schools, and if the schools and their staff do not work together, they fail in achieving the schools' mission and the call to evangelize and sanctify (Second Vatican Council, 1966). The schools and their staff have great potential to breathe life and the Spirit into each other.

Teachers' formation is essential to meet the mission and goals of Catholic schools. Moving forward changes to the current practices and enhancing the structures of formation could assist Catholic institutions to provide instruction and skills to enhance this formation. The next chapter builds upon the previous chapters, and I offer recommendations for action and further research to enhance Catholic teachers' faith formation in Alberta.

CHAPTER 8: IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION IN A SECULAR AGE

> Young people need witnesses and teachers who can walk with them, teaching them to love the Gospel and to share it, especially with their peers, and thus to become authentic and credible messengers. (Pope Benedict XVI, 2011, para. 104)

In the last 40 years, religion's place in the Canadian public sphere has been significantly reexamined, which has implications for the role of Catholic education and teachers' formation. The work of Charles Taylor (2007) in his book *A Secular Age* created a vital lens through which to understand this context.

Canadian society has faced challenges to belief and religion, but opportunities and positive signs are also evident. Taylor (2007) explained that the current age is likely the most religious or spiritual age in history (p. 427; Folkins, 2020). The current age has presented opportunities to choose a belief, to seek and engage freely with religion and spirituality, which was not possible in previous eras. In the past, belief was expected and, in many cases, mandatory, but was it truly religion and spirituality in the most authentic sense? Church attendance alone is not an accurate indication of religion and spirituality. This nova effect, according to Taylor, presents to the present age a plurality of options with regard to belief and unbelief.

Religious belief and people's encounters with the transcendent have increasingly been swept away or voluntarily hidden from the public sphere for fear of offence, ridicule, or discrimination. The possibility of unbelief has led to the shattering of a shared experience of the Christian faith in the West, which has created a host of worldviews and possibilities that make Christianity just one of many options. One of these is a society in which exclusive humanism becomes possible and eliminates the need for God or the transcendent completely. With belief

still a possibility for people, questions haunt many in this era of fragilization: Did I choose the right belief? How do Catholic schools, in an age of such spiritual uncertainty, ensure the witnesses that are so vital to their goals and mission?

In Taylor's (2007) final chapter of *A Secular Age*, he shared examples of the experiences of those who have broken free of the immanent frame and encountered the transcendent, which is akin to conversion or openness to the transcendent. The ability to create witnesses, to lead others to encounter God (i.e., the transcendent), and to offer alternative perspectives and worldviews is necessary to Catholic education. Creating witnesses requires the intentional and authentic formation of Catholic educators. Taylor's strategy is similar to the goal of teachers' formation. The aim is not to demonstrate proof or the "truth" of God's existence, but rather to create a sense or intuition of transcendence, to reflect and create opportunities for the possibility of "something more." Belief, according to Taylor, goes beyond science and empirical foundations and is more of an invitation to join a story, a narrative, and a community that is felt more than understood (Smith, 2014). The developers of teacher-formation programs can learn much from Taylor's understandings and analysis of secularism, his descriptive terminology with regard to transcendence, and the story of how our culture has evolved to its current state.

My study reveals that more research is required on the effectiveness of teacher-preparation programs at both the preservice and the school-division level, especially in the contexts of Alberta and Canada. Traditional models of faith formation might not be as effective as they were in previous generations. Taylor (2007) suggested that each person is on an individual search; but together, the many people who are searching must approach and form this new religious/spiritual world of seekers differently and uniquely.

Taylor (2007) also believed that not all searchers will find what they are seeking, and many more will not find it in Christianity. Although the search is individual, this society longs for relationship and community. Taylor (as cited in Folkins, 2020) recently stated that churches will not disappear because community and shared celebration, which are necessary for meaning and flourishing, are themselves essential. Moreover, Christian education will accompany and support this flourishing.

Catholic school boards must work closely with bishops and Catholic educational institutions to ensure the proper formation of future teachers and create meaningful opportunities for current teachers to further explore faith, theology, and spirituality. As Mulligan (2006) argued, Catholic education leadership in Canada has not focussed enough time and resources on the spiritual and theological formation of their teachers. This must change to enable publicly funded Catholic education to assist in the mission of the Church.

Final Conclusions

Although Catholic education receives government funding in many countries throughout the world, Catholic education systems in Alberta, Ontario, and Saskatchewan are in a unique situation in that only three jurisdictions among the 50 American states and 10 Canadian provinces provide full government funding for denominational education. This educational option that taxpayers fully fund does not restrict who can access Catholic education in Alberta. It is currently the choice of 185,000 students (i.e., close to 28% of the school-age population) in the province of Alberta (ACSTA, 2020). Catholic schools and Catholic education depend on the availability of Catholic teachers to witness and share the values inherent in the Catholic Church (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977; Congregation for Clergy, 1997; Groome, 2011;

John Paul II, 1979a ; Mulligan, 2006, Rymarz, 2018) to educate students in schools permeated with faith, represented by the Catholic Church.

Catholic teacher education and ongoing professional formation is complex for a variety of reasons. Catholic teachers are raised and informed in a modern society replete with communication, social, anthropological, educational, legal, and political implications (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997). Fully addressing the formation of Catholic educators means that researchers must be aware of how the complicating factors interact and impact the lives of preservice and veteran teachers. The formation process must address these complexities and present them in a manner that will have a lasting impact on both individual teachers and the students whom they teach. Catholic school teachers exist within a Catholic community that has expectations, values, and beliefs that teachers who enter the vocation of Catholic education must respect and understand.

Taylor (2007) asserted that openness to new views of the person and society are evident in our current Western society and that faith and religious belief are among many worldviews that offer the meaning of and reasons for existence. This plurality of beliefs includes both immanent and transcendent perspectives. Taylor explained that belief in the transcendent is the ability to move beyond an immanent frame that limits belief to the discoveries of empirical research and the limitations of positivism and instead to enter the realm of sources of meaning that cannot be restricted to the limited frame of science and secularism. Taylor did not clearly and positively define the word *transcendent*, but used phrases such as “something beyond,” (p. 16), “transformation beyond ordinary human flourishing” (p. 430), and “communion with God” (p. 278) to express an image. Within this context, transcendence is one of many competing

"goods" that provide meaning and purpose to life but need not conflict with other approaches to seek the fullness of "human flourishing."

Taylor's (2007) definition of *secular* expresses the reality that Catholic school administrators and university professors find in undergraduates in Alberta university teacher-formation programs and young teachers whom Catholic schools in Alberta hire. These young people, although they do not reject transcendent beliefs, have been raised and educated in a culture and with school curricula that are intentionally and overwhelmingly secular and focussed narrowly on the immanent frame. To maintain the Catholic milieu and reinforce the spiritual leitmotif of the Catholic school, its teachers and administrators must be willing to be open to or actively seek the transcendent. Teachers in Catholic schools must be able to consider belief in the transcendent as a viable and necessary choice among many to imbue faith in Catholic schools.

Catholic school divisions across Alberta and throughout the world offer a variety of programs, courses, and retreats to foster and encourage the faith formation and spiritual growth of their staff members. Many teachers in Catholic education, and, by association, students and their families, find these programs beneficial and opportunities for deeper reflection. For some teachers and families, it leads to a transformation through the Gospel and Catholic teachings, beliefs, and values. However, these attempts at faith formation and spiritual growth are haphazard approaches with limited success in encouraging preservice and inservice teachers, who have chosen to teach in Catholic schools, into deeper encounters with the transcendent.

With this in mind, and based on the research, I offer the following recommendations to encourage the priority of faith formation for Catholic teachers and ensure the availability of faith-filled witnesses and Catholic education's unique voice in the mosaic of Canadian society.

Recommendations

1. I recommend that Catholic educational leaders (political and administrative), Bishops, and the Catholic education community engage in dialogue on all aspects of secular culture.

> The Church is absolutely convinced that the educational aims of the Catholic school in the world of today perform an essential and unique service for the Church herself. It is, in fact, through the school that she participates in the dialogue of culture with her own positive contribution to the cause of the total formation of man. (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977, para. 15)

Education is inherently a political activity (Freire, 1970/2000; Groome, 1991). Publicly funded Catholic education in Alberta has a conflicted existence; despite society's acceptance of diversity and pluralism in many areas, Catholic schools' funding is highly controversial. This means that certain realities—including competing anthropologies, morality, legal and environmental issues, and financial differences—put Catholic education in a precarious situation. According to many people and organizations, the idea of one religious group's receiving publicly funded education is an archaic and destructive holdover from history that is no longer necessary. These opponents would prefer the disestablishment of the denominational rights and privileges currently provided in the *Canadian Constitution* (Government of Canada, Justice Laws Website, 2021). Catholic stakeholders must be able to articulate clearly and witness the value in and need for separate denominational education.

Teachers, the most valued witnesses in Catholic schools, alongside trustees, parish priests, and parents must be formed with the knowledge, language, and spirituality to articulate the mission and teachings of Christ and the value of Catholic schools and share this mission with contemporary secular society. School divisions, trustees, or simply parents with children in the schools do not hold the rights and privilege of Catholic education; they are shared rights and the responsibility of the entire Catholic community. The bishop oversees Catholic education in a

diocese and, as pastor of the community, is ultimately responsible for all Catholic education (Code of Canon Law Society of America, para. 803; Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977; Grocholewski, 2008) and confers upon the school the right and duties of Catholic education in fidelity with the Church and its mission. Bishops, in concert with competent laity, politicians, and administrators, oversee the vitality and mission of the schools and are responsible for the education of teachers and for all those who support Catholic education and to ensure the role and rights of Catholic schools in Canadian society (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2013; Congregation for the Clergy, 1997, paras. 222-223; Second Vatican Council, 1965b).

Pope Francis (2020), in *Fratelli Tutti*, stressed that the Church must not remain silent: "She cannot and must not remain on the sidelines" in building a better world or fail to "reawaken the spiritual energy" (para. 276) to contribute to the betterment of society. Francis called upon the Church to engage in society through education and charitable works, to advance universal fraternity by bearing witness and openness to faith and love, and to work towards the unity of all peoples. This work of dialogue and witness must include bishops and Catholic institutions and communities (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2013).

Dialogue with everyone in our contemporary culture must occur at all levels and requires witnesses who are educated in the societal issues and theology of the Church, personally immersed in the world, and willing to dialogue and reflect on the nature of both the Church and society. Pope Francis, through a series of meetings and statements, has triggered a larger dialogue on the Church's view of the human person and Christian anthropology, which is a model for these encounters. Meeting with the parents of gay children in September 2020, he reminded their parents that they must love them "as they are" because they are "children of God"

(Lamb, 2020, para. 4). Both the words and the deeds of Pope Francis must serve as a model for Catholic schools' engagement with LGBTQ students and teachers.

In a podcast (Rubio, 2020), Francis supported civil unions for gays: "They're children of God and have a right to a family. Nobody should be thrown out or be made miserable because of it" (para. 5). Francis has consistently advocated, not for doctrinal change, but for change in tone and openness to dialogue, which could become the exemplar for dialogue among the Church, Catholic schools, and modern society.

This dialogue includes aspects of Catholic teaching and action that can positively impact the public sphere in Canada as well. Ecological awareness and education, the CST, and Catholic intellectual tradition can all inform education at the micro level and Canadian society as a whole at the macro level. Many people, Catholic and non-Catholic, are not aware of the great treasury of Catholic teachings on a variety of topics that can inform, form, and transform Canadian society.

Whether it is in secondary or postsecondary teacher-education programs or in ongoing faith programs, all Catholic education partners need to be part of this dialogue and must equip teachers with the resources, spiritual formation, and confidence to engage the greater culture. Catholic education leadership shares the responsibility for this task (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997).

2. Because its mission is based in part on relationship, interconnectedness, and human ecology, I recommend that Catholic education place special emphasis on care for creation and ecospirituality in its curricula and teachers' formation.

> I would say that the really big need we see in many Western societies today is for a sense of solidarity,. . . and somehow we need to reactivate a sense of our solidarity, solidarity with our fellow citizens, and solidarity with the whole of humanity, and a solidarity that goes beyond that, with the planet, which I think has been brilliantly presented by Pope

> Francis in his 2015 encyclical on the care of creation, *Laudato si'*. (Taylor, as cited in Tadie, 2019, para. 18)

Too often *Laudato si'* (Francis, 2015a) and the pope's messaging on care for creation is reduced to a cliché: reuse, recycle, and reduce. While not discounting these actions, the reality is that Pope Francis's and the Church's teachings have been much deeper and more powerful. Pope Francis wants humanity to intensely and profoundly reflect and renew its relationship with all creation. This broader viewpoint includes all human relationships. The recent Apostolic Exhortation, *Fratelli Tutti: On Fraternity and Social Friendship* (Francis, 2020) is an extension of *Laudato si'* and reminds all of the solidarity and connectedness of creation.

Formation programs, new curricula, parishes, and schools must be dedicated to solidarity with each other, the community, and the Earth. Schools are ideal communities to form young people into universal citizens and at the same time instill within them faith and an ecospirituality. Teachers must be formed with the right balance of theology, science, and spirituality to recognize and interconnect with all aspects of creation. Pope Francis and the Church have provided a curriculum and mission for Catholic education (see the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization, 2020 and Chapter 6 of *Laudato si'*, Francis, 2015a) that enables Catholic educators to reach out to the secular community and begin a process of engagement and dialogue.

Taylor's (2007) view of expressive individualism reminds us that we live in a society in which people are searching for meaning and relationship but struggle to open themselves to others and the transcendent. Ecospirituality provides a language and a mission that the Christian community can use to engage and encounter the realities of global warming, climate change, plague, and so on and find connection, fullness, and human flourishing through this ecumenical issue.

Educational institutions, parishes, and Catholic schools need to form all Christians, but especially teachers and other leaders in education. Courses, retreat programs, and professional development are necessary to sincerely understand and integrate CST and the message of care for creation.

3. I recommend that the staff in Catholic school divisions revisit and engage in their mission, goals, and policies on a regular basis through both internal and external audits of their adherence to the aims of Catholic education.

> It is important for Catholic schools to be aware of the risks that arise should they lose sight of the reasons why they exist. That can happen, for example, when they unthinkingly conform to the expectations of a society marked by the values of individualism and competition. It can also happen through bureaucratic formalism, the consumerist demands of families, or the unbridled search for external approval. (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2013, para. 56)

For most Catholic school boards in Alberta, Policy 1[24] is the foundational policy that describes and defines the Catholicity, the educational aims and goals, and the mission of the school division. The remaining policies in the governing documents of Catholic school boards across Alberta share similar language, values, and goals with their neighbouring public school divisions. Catholic boards have historically used language that non-Catholic organizations and boards have developed and adjusted some of the language to reflect the denominational character of their divisions. If the leadership of these divisions, beginning with the trustees and superintendents, are not formed, aware, and engaged in the uniqueness of a Catholic education, the meaning and value of Catholic language, rituals, and symbols, which present an opportunity for evangelization, witness, and formation, will be lost.

[24] For example, Elk Island Catholic Separate School Division (2019), Evergreen Catholic Separate Regional Division No. 2. (2018), and Calgary Catholic School District (2020).

If “Catholic schools’ primary responsibility is one of witness” (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2013, para. 57), the policies should clearly reflect this. The aim and mission of Catholic schools is fundamentally different from those of other schools in the province; this should be reflected in the fundamental guiding documents of the division and be part of the discussion and essence of each discussion and decision. The Catholic ethos should permeate the foundational policy equally in finance, human resources, facilities, and treatment-of-students policies.

Remaining true to a school’s mission is essential. Berner (2017) shared a cautionary tale about a 2009 large-scale UK study on faith schools that revealed that Anglican schools are no longer particularly Anglican. The UK study suggested that few principals can articulate what makes their schools different. School leaders have failed to demonstrate and engage the Christian faith and permeate the school with a coherent Christian rationale for learning and students’ lives. Berner wondered how the nation’s largest single provider of education could lose its focus on mission and its purpose to exist. She made three suggestions:

> It could have been the tacit desire not to offend non-Anglican students. It could have been a consequence of teacher preparation programs that de-emphasized philosophical differences. It could have been the pursuit of other goals, such as prestige, that urged leaders to chase trends that inadvertently subverted the school mission. (p. 115)

Leaders in Catholic schools in Alberta must regularly reflect on their missions and evaluate their purpose and role within the Church. School leaders must be able to articulate what makes Catholic schools unique and vital. Church, university instructors, and school leaders must educate trustees, senior administration, school leaders, and staff on the importance of the mission and purpose of their Catholic schools to ensure that they are authentically and intentionally Catholic schools.

Living out a division mission statement requires that it be known, reflected on, actively shared, and evaluated on a regular basis. Too often the exercise of board and division self-evaluation is either self-fulfilling or does not extend beyond a small group of people. Without bringing in authentic, knowledgeable, and independent external reviewers with deep knowledge of the aim and purpose of Catholic education to evaluate, dialogue, and recommend changes and improvements, a division cannot and will not grow in its catholicity.

Most Alberta Catholic school divisions rely on a small set of former superintendents to facilitate Catholic board self-evaluations; they generally contract them from the public Alberta School Board Association. Many of the contractors are non-Catholic, and those who have served on Catholic boards have expertise in board governance and school-division administration; few have the theological, spiritual, and moral formation to evaluate and recommend enhancements to the mission and aim of Catholic education. I therefore recommend that school divisions, potentially through the ACSTA, hire former administrators as contractors to conduct board evaluations who have the necessary experience and knowledge of Church teaching to either complete the evaluation or assist the current contractor in the area of Catholic education.

My work with the ACSTA has revealed one exemplary school division in this regard. This division holds regular school audits with retired Catholic school principals and interviews students, parents, teachers, administrators, and parishioners with criteria based on Church education documents. The division staff hired to complete the audits write a report and share it with the district staff and the public in an effort to strengthen their Catholic identity and mission. The evaluation is based on the *Five Essential Marks of Catholic Schools* (Miller, 2006), which the ACSTA developed at its Growing Forward Symposium held in 2013. The final report includes both commendations and recommendations for the school to assist in the ongoing

continuous improvement of its Catholic identity. This type of activity should be standard practice across the province.

4. I recommend that Catholic school divisions and their leadership give strategic and operational priority to the ongoing faith formation of their staff: “Those who have leadership positions are duty-bound to guarantee that all personnel receive adequate preparation to serve effectively” (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2013, para. 77).

For Catholic school divisions to realize their aims and goals, intentional and sustained faith formation of the staff must play a central role in the annual education planning and operations of the school division. Rymarz (2010) believed that Canadian Catholic schools face many challenges now and will in the future. Most of these challenges have arisen from a rapidly changing culture, and “attention needs to be given to developing a critical mass of educators, parents and students in schools who can give human embodiment to the professed goals of the schools” (p. 307). Faith formation must be an operational priority, readily available, and take into consideration the busy lives of teachers; and it is important to ensure that this formation is part of day-to-day life in the school division. Because it is an operational priority, the staff must be fully informed and aware of the school division’s expectation of participation in faith formation as part of the responsibility of teaching in a Catholic system.

As an employer, Catholic school divisions have certain rights and expectations that are set out in both policy and employee contracts that the staff in their care will be fully formed with an understanding of the aims and mission of Catholic education. These must include academic, moral, and spiritual expectations and the participation required of each member of the teaching staff, who serve as witnesses to the children whom they teach.

Each division sets its strategic and operational priorities annually, which is required for submission to Alberta Education (2020b). The division must align its goals and objectives with Alberta Education's goals and objectives. Catholic school boards must incorporate goals and aims that are legally required; but, morally, they must also align these priorities with the mission of the Church, including faith formation, both spiritual and theological.

One possible means of prioritizing faith formation is by including it as a requirement in teachers' professional growth plans. Regular inclusion of faith formation as a priority in discussions between teachers and administrators, as well as administrators and superintendents, makes both the activity and modelling of senior administrators essential to the transmission and importance of faith formation for the district. Being held accountable through discussions and expectation can assist the division in setting a goal for the ongoing formation of teachers. Requiring the inclusion of faith-formation goals in the professional growth plans also makes it the division's responsibility to create opportunities and a variety of faith-formation activities, courses, retreats, pilgrimages, and so on in which staff can participate to accomplish these goals.

Formation in faith leadership is also essential. When teachers are formed in faith, they become the leaders and evangelists of the future. Earl (2005) emphasized that Catholic schools must be more than "schools of academic excellence and a religious memory" (p. 514). Faith leadership must take intentional action, with a focus on the Catholic mission of the school. With Alberta Education's (n.d.-a) recent provincial requirements for leadership quality standards for school leaders, an opportunity for Catholic educational leadership programs and professional development are clearly present.

5. I recommend that Catholic school divisions give financial priority to ongoing faith formation.

Mulligan (2006) paraphrased Sr. Clare Fitzgerald, an American Catholic school administrator and leader: “Show me your budget and I will tell you a board’s priorities” (p. 252). Do Catholic schools take seriously the need for teachers’ formation? Do they supply appropriate resources for the faith formation of all staff, support staff, trustees, administrators, and teachers? Mulligan quoted a Newfoundland teacher following the demise of government-funded Catholic education in that province: “The test of your belief in Catholic education comes when you are willing to invest money in formation. We failed that test” (p. 241).

Alberta Catholic schools cannot afford to fail this test. In an informal survey of the audited financial documents of the 16 Catholic English school boards in Alberta (Alberta Education, 2020a) only one board had differentiated faith formation from other professional development or staffing budgets. The same board made a commitment to spending a defined amount of the annual budget on teachers’ faith formation on an annual basis (Elk Island Catholic Schools, 2020, p. 14). The level of designated funding for formation activities demonstrates that teachers’ professional, spiritual, and theological formation is an operational priority that is central to the mission of the school.

Catholic school divisions must remain true to their mission. Attempting to provide diverse programs is costly but often necessary because the mission of the school must remain at the forefront of all decisions:

> For those who occupy positions of leadership, there can be a strong temptation to consider the school like a company or business. However, schools that aim to be educating communities need those who govern them to be able to invoke the school’s reference values; they must then direct all the school’s professional and human resources in this direction. School leaders are more than just managers of an organization. They are true educational leaders when they are the first to take on this responsibility, which is also an ecclesial and pastoral mission rooted in a relationship with the Church’s pastors. (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2013, para. 85)

To fund formation activities, Catholic schools require that school divisions find savings in other areas because the government does not provide funds for Catholic activities and formation. In an environment of school choice, too often Catholic schools in Alberta compete with Francophone, public, charter, and independent schools. Instead, Catholic schools must strive to be fully Catholic and avoid the temptation to fall into the trap of competition for students with other schools. This will enable Catholic education to stand as the antithesis of the market-driven, competitive, and growth mentalities of many schools today.

6. I recommend that the academic formation of both preservice and experienced Catholic teachers include learning about Catholic theology, Christian anthropology, ecological perspectives, legal issues, and the historical background of denominational rights in Canada.

In this this study I have focussed on the major themes in the literature on Catholic education that have been stumbling blocks to authentic Catholic education in this secular age. Those engaged in Catholic education require the tools to engage in authentic discussions with Catholics and non-Catholics, supporters and opponents of Catholic education. To fully understand and defend Catholic education and understand the aims and mission of the work, academic formation must mirror the issues that Catholic teachers, administrators, trustees, and parish priests will encounter in sharing the mission of Catholic education.

Religious education is the key to the solid formation of witnesses. Well-crafted programs, curricula, and strong pedagogy offer opportunities to connect and open the hearts of people to the wonder and awe of the transcendent. Taylor (2007) and Groome (2011) stressed the need for freedom of belief and invitation. Taylor (as cited in in Folkins, 2020) spoke of the current generation of searchers who are looking for meaning and “fullness,” but under their terms. Groome referred to the Road to Emmaus story from Luke (24:13-35) as the basis for shared

praxis, which hinges on invitation and "walking with" (p. 264) learners as they journey together toward freedom.

People are searching for meaning and flourishing. Religious education and formation must create openings to search for answers. Growth and learning often emerge from the experience of both calm reflection and great challenge. Taylor (2007) wrote of the opportunities that arise from life's disruptions, in which people are forced to leave their comfortableness and see the world anew. Groome (2011) used similar language in working with the theories of Freire and presented his idea of "generative theme" (p. 286); he used great questions, issues, problems, fears, and challenges to ignite thought and unsettle listeners to lead them toward great motivation.

Current society has presented ample generative themes, including environmental crises, climate change, human conflict, sexuality, suicide, eschatology, and human rights and freedoms, to provide the spark for religious education and faith formation. It is the responsibility of the educational institutions that form teachers and the divisions that employ them to make formation available and arrange access to resources and opportunities.

Ideally, this work should involve a partnership among divisions, superintendents, trustees, bishops, educational institutions, and Catholic education leaders in Alberta. The role of postsecondary institutions is vital to the success of this enterprise. Catholic theology, advanced religious education, and academic teaching and research in Catholic education are scarce commodities in Western Canada. In collaboration with secular and Christian universities in Alberta, Catholic postsecondary institutions need to work together to build the capacity to create opportunities for teachers for the theological and multidisciplinary study of the skills and knowledge that they need to ensure successful and authentic Catholic education in Alberta.

The *General Directory for Catechesis* (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997) reminds educators that all formation must be permeated with a Christocentric focus and be ecclesial, within the context and mission of the Church, in nature. Catholic teachers "must be able to be, at one and the same time, teachers, educators and witnesses of the faith" (para. 237). The pedagogical formation of Catholic teachers should follow a pedagogical style that teachers of faith can use in their classrooms. It is important that proper formation be modeled and not leave Catholic teachers to improvise something that they have never seen (para. 237).

Biblico-theological formation and moral education are essential to teachers and foundational to the Christian life and teaching. Modern and scientific methods of education, communication, sociology, and the economic realities are also important. The Church lives in the world, and Catholic teachers' formation requires that the best of the social sciences be studied and employed (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997, paras. 241-242; John Paul II, 1979a, para. 58).

Historically, the ACSTA, working closely with the Catholic Bishops Conference of Alberta/Northwest Territories, has provided leadership in this work at an annual symposium (Blueprints for Catholic Education), through curriculum development (Hoven, 2015a) and at various conferences; but, over time, the responsibility for and nature of these projects has changed. The last two decades the Council of Catholic School Superintendents of Alberta (2019) has initiated events and created resources (e.g., "The Ideal Catholic Teacher" and "The Ideal Catholic Leader") and has begun biennial Catholic leadership conferences, which have been welcome additions and improved the provincial coordination of formation. Although creating one organization provincially to oversee all formation is difficult politically and financially, structures that currently exist—ACSTA, the Council of Catholic School Superintendents of

Alberta, the Alberta/NWT Bishops Conference, and the three Alberta Catholic postsecondary educational institutions—could work together to facilitate, research, and share best practices in a more intentional manner. This unity of the stakeholders that focusses on Catholic educational research requires the sharing of resources and authority, which has proven difficult in the past.

7. I recommend that Catholic teachers' formation include spiritual formation and opportunities for personal and communal growth.

Taylor (as cited in Lincoln, 2011) stated that the heart of spirituality is "a sense of and aspiration toward human flourishing and fulfilment" (para. 5.2). Taylor (2007) suggested that *fullness* is difficult to define and used terms such as "a richness; that is, in that place (activity or condition), life is fuller, richer, deeper, more worthwhile, more admirable, more what it should be" (p. 5). In the end, he conceded, it is not possible to offer a clear definition. He argued that, over time, many cases have shown the disconnect of spirituality from the idea of transcendence and traditional religion and that, for many people, the range and diversity of understandings of human flourishing has expanded greatly and given them a great deal of choice and freedom in spirituality. He stated that fullness and human flourishing are possible within the immanent frame, but he personally equated the fullness of human flourishing with the transcendent (p. 10).

Spirituality has taken on a variety of new forms and practices, including what Taylor (2007) described as "new forms of religions in our world" (p. 483). Expressive individualism has presented society with a consumer culture that includes spirituality. In the past, the larger Catholic faith community, through participation in devotions, Mass, and pilgrimages and the presence of sacramentals, formed the spirit of the community and of each member. Since Vatican II, regular church attendance of the Catholic community has steadily declined, especially among those in early adulthood (Bibby & Reid, 2016; Mulligan, 2006). Many Catholic teachers

are now part of the faithful who no longer find nourishment in the sacraments or traditional Catholic spirituality and are searching for individual expressions of spirituality that will lead them to human flourishing and give them a sense of fullness.

Spiritual practices that are more individualistic and more personalized will grow as individuals gain more control over their spiritual lives. These practices include "mediation, or some charitable work, or a study group, or a pilgrimage, or some form of prayer or a host of such things" (Taylor, 2007, p. 515). Taylor (2007) explained that pilgrimages to sacred places, whether churches, shrines, or pilgrimages to shrines, can bring people closer to "higher time" (transcendence) than everyday places can (p. 96). Taylor referred to a pilgrimage to the Catholic Church's World Youth Day as an example of a starting place for encounters that could lead to prayer groups, meditation, and so on and that could then become everyday practice and lead to connection with a faith group.

School divisions must view spirituality as vital to their goals as ecclesial communities and as a valued part of Catholic education formation. This task will be difficult and expensive and requires, in cooperation with the Church, that local bishops and priest, retreat leaders, spiritual directors, and teachers/staff formed in spirituality and theology lead such programs. Bibby and Reid (2016) believed that if spirituality is the major goal of the Church, the Church must be willing to provide the resources, financial and people, to assist in the important work of evangelization through schools.

Mulligan (2006) reminded the Catholic education community that *unchurched* does not mean non-Christian or Catholic (p. 273ff). Bibby and Reid (2016) also found that younger Catholics (and Christians in general) do not reject faith but, rather, have not been exposed to religious faith and Christianity in a systematic and positive manner. Youth are often apathetic to

faith because it seems irrelevant. In their studies Bibby and Reid found that, if adults (and children) consider the work and activity of the parish engaging and meaningful personally, youth will become engaged and active in their faith and spirituality. Too often, programs focus on the theological, to the detriment of the spiritual and personal. The *GDC* (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997) reminds Catholics that the Christian faith is not a theology or academic exercise, but a relationship with a person, Jesus Christ (para. 98). Spiritual formation is not an academic endeavour, but a relational one.

The research has repeatedly indicated that professional development and faith formation must be sustained, engaging, and long term to make a lasting impact. Activities that have the greatest impression include retreats, the formation of small communities, opportunities for reflection and prayer, and relationship building. Many divisions and schools offer mentorship programs as tools to engage new teachers.

Pilgrimages and service projects are also effective means of engaging Catholic teachers, especially those who are younger and newer to the profession. Pilgrimages can be sources of great spiritual growth and encounters with the self, others, and God. Pilgrimages in Europe have recently been rejuvenated. Our Lady of Walsingham in England and the Camino de Santiago in Spain are two of the more famous in Europe that have extensive histories and detailed routes.

In Canada, most of the traditional pilgrim routes are in Quebec, but I sustained my own faith by engaging in the annual trip to Skaro, north of Edmonton, and the Grotto on Mission Hill in St. Albert as a child. Often these pilgrimages work hand in hand with service-related projects such as food drives, fundraising, building projects, and so on. Pilgrimages and service projects can become spiritual activities that draw people to faith through prayer and community.

Final Reflections

Belief in an age of unbelief is difficult. The tensions of different cross pressures are often evident. Those who believe in God, who practice a faith tradition, who belong to a community of faith, and who willingly submit their will to a "higher power" or the transcendent often feel that their faith is fragile and difficult in a world of competing beliefs and values. Yet, Christianity offers a bold and clear vision and a fullness and sense of human flourishing that we must celebrate and live. Witnesses are those blessed with the spirit of hope, joy, and resolve of those who have encountered this fullness of life found in the transcendent.

It is interesting that Taylor (2007) ended his book with a discussion of the saints. To the Church, saints are those who show us the way and lead us to God, who have lived a life worthy of emulation. Taylor believed that the Communion of Saints is not populated by perfect people but is a communion of persons who have "directed their lives toward God" (p. 757), imperfections and all. These are the witnesses whom Catholic schools need to share the good news in schools. Catholic schools and the Church community rely on witnesses to share faith and lead our students to a view of fullness and human flourishing not only in the present, but that extends to the transcendent and is for eternity.

Catholic school divisions, together with the institutional Church and Catholic community, must take this responsibility seriously and take action in the faith formation of preservice and professional teachers. Paul VI (1975) stated that the evangelized will go on to become the next generation of evangelists (para. 24), and the Catholic community must take seriously its responsibility to ensure that future evangelists are in schools and effectively carry out the mission and vision of the Church.

St. Augustine (as cited in Urbanczyk, 2009) wrote that “all who teach are mere shadows of the one great teacher and witness, our Lord himself (para. 9). For Augustine, the real true teacher was Christ; and when teachers are witnesses, Christ acts as the teacher. Urbanczyk believed that Paul VI (1975) reminded us that “the teacher is simply someone using words who witnesses to the Word Himself, who is finally the Teacher” (para. 9). Moreover, such teachers, who are witnesses to the one who sent us, must and always will be compelling.

Catholic school divisions must work closely with the Christian community, theological institutions, and educational organizations to ensure the proper formation of future teachers and meaningful opportunities for preservice and inservice current teachers to explore faith, theology, and spirituality freely. Taylor (2007) confidently argued that spirituality and religion will not go away. The search for meaning and human fullness enjoins people to gather in community.

“If you have some sense of the importance of the sacraments, then there’s got to be a church for you. Not necessarily a building, but there’s got to be some kind of community where they say mass, or whatever the ritual is” (Taylor, as cited in Folkins, 2020, para. 55). As long as there is belief, education will be present to assist, support, and guide that belief; as long as there is a Catholic Church, Catholic schools will assist in its mission, and witnesses will be needed to accomplish that task.

The last word goes to Francis (2013b), a teacher, witness, and prophet:

> Do not be disheartened in the face of the difficulties that the educational challenge presents! Educating is not a profession but an attitude, a way of being; in order to educate it is necessary to step out of ourselves and be among young people, to accompany them in the stages of their growth and to set ourselves beside them. Give them hope and optimism for their journey in the world. Teach them to see the beauty and goodness of creation and of man who always retains the Creator’s hallmark. But above all with your life be witnesses of what you communicate. Educators . . . pass on knowledge and values with their words; but their words will have an incisive effect on children and young people if they are accompanied by their witness, their consistent way of life. (para. 1)

REFERENCES

Abbey, R. (2010). A secular age: The missing question mark. In I. Leask (Ed.), *The Taylor effect: Responding to a secular age* (pp. 8-24). Cambridge Scholars.

Alberta Act. (1905). https://www.solon.org/Constitutions/Canada/English/aa_1905.html

Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association. (2020) *About us*. https://www.acsta.ab.ca/about-us

Alberta Education. (2020a). *2018-2019 school authorities audited financial statements.* https://open.alberta.ca/publications/2828632-2018-2019

Alberta Education. (2020b). *Ministry business plan: Education.* https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/cea65c12-a239-4bd9-8275-3ab54d84f5b3/resource/5793ca56-f46d-4d37-98d5-9dc19c95b2d3/download/education-business-plan-2020-23-english.pdf

Alberta Education. (n.d.-a). *Leadership quality standards.* https://www.alberta.ca/assets/documents/ed-leadership-quality-standard-english.pdf

Alberta Education. (n.d.-b). *Student population overview.* https://education.alberta.ca/alberta-education/student-population/everyone/student-population-overview/

Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association. (2020). *About us.* https://www.acsta.ab.ca/about-us

Barnes, L. P. (2015). Religious studies, religious education and the aims of education. *British Journal of Religious Education, 37*(2), 195-206. https://doi.org/10.1080/01416200.2014.953912

Beaudoin, T. (2005). The theological anthropology of Thomas Groome, *Religious Education, 100*(2), 127-138. https://doi.org/10.1080/00344080590932427

Bellows, P. (2013). Catechesis in the post-modern world: Challenge and celebration" *Journal of Religious Education*, Vol. 61 Issue 1, p33-42.

Benedict XVI. (2005). *Homily on the Passing of St. John Paul II.* http://www.vatican.va/gpII/documents/homily-card-ratzinger_20050408_en.html

Benedict XVI. (2007). *Address of His Holiness Benedict XVI to the participants in the Ecclesial Diocesan Convention of Rome.* http://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2007/june/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20070611_convegno-roma.html

Benedict XVI. (2009). *Meets with Canadian Indigenous leaders.* http://www.vatican.va/resources/resources_canada-first-nations-apr2009_en.html

Benedict XVI. (2010a). *Post-synodal apostolic exhortation Verbum Domini of the Holy Father Benedict XVI to the bishops, clergy, consecrated persons and the lay faithful on the Word of God in the life and mission of the Church*. http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cclergy/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_17041998_directory-for-catechesis_en.html

Benedict XVI. (2010b). *Ubicumque et semper: Establishing the Pontifical Council for promoting the new evangelization.* http://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/apost_letters/documents/hf_ben-xvi_apl_20100921_ubicumque-et-semper.html

Benedict XVI. (2011). *Post-synodal apostolic exhortation Africae Munus of his Holiness Benedict XVI to the bishops, clergy, consecrated persons and the lay faithful on the Church in Africa in the service of reconciliation, justice, and peace*. http://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_ben-xvi_exh_20111119_africae-munus.html

Benson, I. T. (2000). Notes towards (re)definition of the secular. *University of British Columbia Law Review, 33*(3), 519-550.

Berner, A. R. (2017). *Pluralism and American public education: No one way to school*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Berry, T. (2009). *The Christian future and the fate of the earth*. M. E. Tucker & J. Grim (Eds.), Orbis Books.

Bibby, R., & A. Reid (2016). *Canada's Catholics: Vitality and hope in a new era*. Novalis.

Blacher-Wilson, F. (2004). Spirituality and school leaders: The value of spirituality in the lives of aspiring school leaders. *Religion & Education, 31*(1), 80-89.

Bloor, C.(2009). Interview: Charles Taylor. *Philosophy Now.* 74, pp. 21-23. https://philosophynow.org/issues/74/Charles_Taylor

Bouchard, G., & Taylor, C. (2008). *Building the future: A time for reconciliation: Abridged report.* https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwjb1s3RzqzqAhWFpZ4KHU6pDRQQFjAAegQIBxAB&url=https%3A%2F%2Fred.pucp.edu.pe%2Fridei%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2Fbiblioteca%2FbuildingthefutureGerardBouchardycharlestaylor.pdf&usg=AOvVaw2YszjTKnwu7QBiMnQoWxjK

Brock, B. L., & Chatlain, G. (2008). The status of teacher introduction in Catholic schools: Perspectives from the United States and Canada. *Journal of Catholic Education, 11*(3), 370-384.

Buchanan, M. T. (2011). Pedagogical drift: The evolution of new approaches and paradigms in religious education. *Religious Education, 100*(1), 20-37.

Bushnell, H. (1953). *Christian nurture*. Yale University Press.

Calgary Catholic School District. (2020). *Board policy handbook.* https://webdocs.cssd.ab.ca/BoardOfTrustees/Governance/ReportsPoliciesProcedures/Documents/BoardPolicies.pdf

Callaghan, T. D., & van Leent, L. (2019). Homophobia in Catholic schools: An exploration of teachers' rights and experiences in Canada and Australia. *Journal of Catholic Education, 22*(3), 36-57.

Campbell, M. (2017, February 28). Schools are teaching values. But whose values? *Macleans.* https://www.macleans.ca/education/schools-are-teaching-values-but-whose-values/

Canon Law Society of America. (1983). *Code of Canon Law.* https://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG1104/_INDEX.HTM

Cardus. (n.d.). *Canon law and its intersection with civil law throughout Canadian history.* https://www.cardus.ca/research/law/reports/canon-law-and-its-intersection-with-civil-law-throughout-canadian-history/

Case-Winters, A. (2007). *Reconstructing a Christian theology of nature : down to earth.* Aldershot, England: Ashgate Pub. Ltd.

Catholic Church. (1993). *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. *Citta del Vaticano, Libreria Editrice Vaticana*. https://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_INDEX.HTM

Catholic Earthcare Australia. (2010). *On holy ground: An ecological vision for Catholic education in South Australia.* https://www.cesa.catholic.edu.au/__files/f/4884/On%20Holy%20Ground.pdf

Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate. (2019). *Frequently requested Church statistics.* https://cara.georgetown.edu/frequently-requested-church-statistics/

Clarke, B. (2012). Recommendations for staff spirituality programmes in authentic Catholic schools. *Journal of Catholic School Studies, 84*(1), 6-11.

Clarke, P., & McDonough, B. (2012). The case for gay-straight alliances (GSAs) in Canada's public schools: An educational perspective. *Education and Law Journal, 21*(2), 144-165.

Cloutier, D. (2014) *Walking God's earth: The environment and Catholic faith.* Liturgical Press

Coll, R. (2009). From theory to practice: The experiences of Catholic probationary teachers. *Journal of Research on Christian Education, 18*(2), 140-159. https://doi.org/10.1080/10656210903046408

Congregation for Catholic Education. (1977). *The Catholic school.* http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19770319_catholic-school_en.html

Congregation for Catholic Education. (1982). *Lay Catholics in schools: Witnesses to faith.* http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19821015_lay-catholics_en.html

Congregation for Catholic Education. (1988). *The religious dimension of the Catholic school*. http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19880407_catholic-school_en.html

Congregation for Catholic Education. (1997). *The Catholic school on the threshold of the third millennium*. http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_27041998_school2000_en.html

Congregation for Catholic Education. (2013*). Educating to intercultural dialogue in Catholic schools: Living in harmony for a civilization of love*. http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20131028_dialogo-interculturale_en.html

Congregation for Catholic Education. (2014). *Instrumentum laboris: "Educating today and tomorrow."* http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20140407_educare-oggi-e-domani_en.html

Congregation for Catholic Education. (2019). *"Male and female He created them": Towards a path of dialogue on the questions of gender theory in education*. http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/index.htm

Congregation for the Clergy. (1997). *General directory for catechesis.* http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cclergy/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_17041998_directory-for-catechesis_en.html

Council of Catholic School Superintendents of Alberta. (2019). *LIFE framework.* https://www.ccssa.ca/documents

Council of Ministers of Education, Canada. (n.d.). *Home.* https://www.cmec.ca/en/

Curtis, N. (1999). *Teaching religious education: Defining the ideal and describing the reality*. [Paper presentation]. Annual AARE Conference, Melbourne, Australia. https://www.aare.edu.au/data/publications/1999/cur99462.pdf

Cush, D., & Robinson, C. (2014). Developments in Religious Studies: Towards a dialogue with religious education*." British Journal of Religious Education, 36*(1), 4-17. https://doi.org/10.1080/01416200.2013.830960

Davis, R. A., & Franchi, L. (2012). A Catholic curriculum for the twenty-first century? *International Studies in Catholic Education, 5*(1), 36-52. https://doi.org/10.1080/19422539.2012.754587

Deane-Drummond, C. (2012). Joining in the dance: Catholic social teaching and ecology. *New Blackfriars.* https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-2005.2011.01476.x

Deane-Drummond, C. (2016). Pope Francis: Priest and prophet in the Anthropocene. *Environmental Humanities, 8*, 256-262. https://doi.org/10.1215/22011919-3664369

Deenihan, T. (2002). Religious education and religious instruction: An alternative viewpoint. *The Furrow, 53*(2), 75-83. http://www.jstor.org/stable/27664459

Delio, I. (March 4, 2015). Why the earth won't green without us. *Global Sisters Report*. https://www.globalsistersreport.org/column/speaking-god/environment/why-earth-won%E2%80%99t-green-without-us-21036

Delio, I., Warner, K., & Wood, P. (2008). *Care for creation: A Franciscan spirituality of the earth*. St. Anthony Messenger Press.

Dettloff, D. (2018, April 20). Justin Trudeau's "celebrity secularism" and an examination of Canadian conscience. *America Magazine*. https://www.americamagazine.org/politics-society/2018/04/20/justin-trudeaus-celebrity-secularism-and-examination-canadian

Development and Peace. (2019). *Curricular resources.* https://www.devp.org/en/curricular

Dewey, J. (1916). *Democracy and education: An introduction to the philosophy of education*. Macmillan.

Diggins, J. (2007, December 7). The godless delusion: A review of *A Secular Age* by Charles Taylor. *The New York Times.* https://www.nytimes.com/2007/12/16/books/review/Diggins-t.html

Donlevy, J. K., Gereluk, D., Brandon, J., & Patterson, P. (2013). Current challenges to Catholic education in the Canadian provinces of Saskatchewan, Alberta and Ontario. *Journal of Religious Education,* 61(6), 23-32.

Doring, A. (1997). Faith development of teachers: A pilot study. *Journal of Research on Christian Education, 6*(1), 49-64. https://doi.org/10.1080/10656219709484839

D'Souza, M. (1996). The preparation of teachers for Roman Catholic schools: Some philosophical first principles. *Philosophical Inquiry in Education, 9*(2).

Earl, P. H. (2013). Spiritual formation for Catholic educators: Understanding the need. *Journal of Catholic Education, 8*(4).

Edwards, D. (2006). *Ecology at the heart of faith: The change of heart that leads to a new way of living on earth*. Maryknoll Orbis Books.

Elk Island Catholic Schools. (2020). *Elk Island Catholic Schools 2020-2021 budget report*. https://www.eics.ab.ca/download/278072

Elk Island Catholic Separate School Division. (2019). *Board of Trustees policy handbook.* https://www.eics.ab.ca/download/226602

Emman, S. (2016, March 14). Canada's publicly funded religious schools have to go. *Toronto Metro*. http://www.metronews.ca/views/opinion/2016/03/14/canadas-publicly funded-religious-schools-have-to-go.html

Evergreen Catholic Separate Regional Division No. 2. (2018). *Board policy handbook.* https://22.files.edl.io/28cb/07/29/19/143429-d48d6d14-cc0b-4073-945a-de5a38f2c765.pdf

Feehan, K. (2005). Legally speaking: Long before Alberta was a province. *Catholic Dimension.* http://www.acsta.ab.ca/publications/legally-speaking/spring-2005

Feehan, K. (2008). Legally speaking: The Santa Claus(e). *Catholic Dimension.* https://www.acsta.ab.ca/images/pdfs/legally_speaking/spring_2008_-_the_santa_clause.pdf

Feehan, K. (2011). Legally speaking: Catholic and public—Not an oxymoron. *Catholic Dimension.* https://www.acsta.ab.ca/images/pdfs/legally_speaking/spring_2011_-_catholic_and_public_not_an_oxymoron.pdf

Feinberg, W. (2006). *For goodness sake: religious schools and education for democratic citizenry.* Routledge.

Fletcher, R. (2018). Why does Alberta still have a separate Catholic school system? Here's a 2-minute explanation. *CBC News Calgary*. https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/why-alberta-saskatchewan-ontario-have-separate-catholic-schools-1.4614462

Folkins, T. (2020, January 13). "Coming to God without freedom is not coming to God": Philosopher Charles Taylor in seeing God in church decline. *The Anglican Journal.* https://www.anglicanjournal.com/coming-to-god-without-freedom-is-not-coming-to-god-charles-taylor-on-seeing-god-in-church-decline/

Franchi, L. (2011). Healing the wounds: St. Augustine, catechesis, and religious education today. *Religious Education, 106*(3), 299-311.

Franchi, L. (2013). Catechesis and religious education: A case study from Scotland, *Religious Education, 108*(5), 467-481. https://doi.org/10.1080/00344087.2013.835640

Franchi, L. & Rymarz, R. (2017). The education of teachers for Catholic schools: responding to changed cultural contexts. *International Studies in Catholic Education*, 9(1), pp. 2-16. (doi:10.1080/19422539.2017.1286905)

Francis. (2013a). *Lumen fidei: Light of faith.* http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20130629_enciclica-lumen-fidei.html

Francis. (2013b). *Speech to the students of the Jesuit Schools of Italy and Albania*. http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2013/june/documents/papa-francesco_20130607_scuole-gesuiti.html

Francis. (2015a). *Laudato si': On care for our common home.* http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html

Francis. (2015b). *Message of His Holiness Pope Francis to the President of the Pontifical Council for the Laity on the occasion of the International Study Seminar "Coaches: Educating People."* http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/pont-messages/2015/documents/papa-francesco_20150514_messaggio-allenatori-educatori.html

Francis. (2016). *Amoris Laetitia*: *The Joy of Love*. http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20160319_amoris-laetitia.html

Francis. (2017). *Address to the participants in the General Assembly of the members of the Pontifical Academy for Life.* http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2017/october/documents/papa-francesco_20171005_assemblea-pav.html

Francis. (2018). *Apostolic journey of His Holiness Pope Francis to Chile and Peru: Meeting with Indigenous people of Amazonia*. http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2018/january/documents/papa-francesco_20180119_peru-puertomaldonado-popoliamazzonia.html

Francis. (2020). *Fratelli Tutti*: *On fraternity and social friendship.* http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20201003_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.html#_ftn10

Freire, P. (2000). *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (30th anniversary ed.). Continuum. (Original work published 1970)

Friesen, S. (2018, September) A future wanting to emerge: Assumptions about teacher education. *Education Canada.* 58(3), pp. 14-17. https://www.edcan.ca/wp-content/uploads/EduCan_18-3_proof2-lowres-second-review-by-Jean-Claude-Sept-12-2018_SHB.pdf

Gallagher, M. P. (2010a). *Faith maps: Ten religious explorers from Newman to Joseph Ratzinger*. Paulist Press.

Gallagher, M. P. (2010b). Translating Taylor: Pastoral and theological horizons. In I. Leask (Ed.), *The Taylor effect: responding to a secular age* (pp. 113-123). Cambridge Scholars.

Gardner, R. S., Soules, K., & Valk, J. (2017). The urgent need for teacher preparation in religious and secular worldview education. *Religious Education, 112*(3). https://doi.org/10.1080/00344087.2017.130113

Good Spirit School Division No 204 v Christ The Teacher Roman Catholic Separate School Division No 212: 2017 SKQB 109: Saskatchewan Court of Queen's Bench (Canada): Layh J: 20 April 2017. (2018). *Oxford Journal of Law and Religion, 7*(1), 166-167. https://doi.org/10.1093/ojlr/rwx071

Government of Alberta. (2017). *The guiding framework for the design and development of kindergarten to Grade 12 provincial curriculum (programs of study) [2016-2017]*. https://open.alberta.ca/publications/9781460130971

Government of Alberta, Department of Education. (2020). *Ministerial Order #028/2020*. https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/270e1a34-3338-461d-b761-c761f943fa2d/resource/5a510797-645e-419f-acbd-6a9dfdb41cd0/download/edc-mo-28-2020-student-learning.pdf

Government of Canada. (1982). *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Part 1 of the Constitution Act: Schedule B to* the *Canada Act 1982* (UK), c 11.

Government of Canada, Department of Justice. (2021). *General principles for the interpretation and application of the Charter.* https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/csj-sjc/rfc-dlc/ccrf-ccdl/check/principles-principes.html

Government of Canada, Justice Laws Website. (2021). *Constitution Acts, 1867 to 1982: Constitution Act, 1867.* https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/Const/FullText.html

Graham, J. D. (2011). Daring to engage: Religious and spiritual formation of lay Catholic educators in Australia*. International Studies in Catholic Education, 3*(1), 25-39.

Gregg, S. (2018, April 19). Why is Macron courting the Church? *Catholic Herald*. http://catholicherald.co.uk/issues/april-20th-2018/why-is-macron-courting-the-church/

Grocholewski, Z. (2008). The Catholic school according to the Code of Canon Law. *Catholic Education: A Journal of Inquiry and Practice, 12*(2), 148-159.

Groome, T. (1980). *Christian religious education*. Harper and Row.

Groome, T. (1981). Conversion, nurture and educators. *Religious Education, 76*(5), 482-496.

Groome, T. (1988). The spirituality of the religious educator, *Religious Education: The Official Journal of the Religious Education Association, 82*(1), 9-20. https://doi.org/10.1080/0034408880830102

Groome, T. (1991). *Sharing Faith: A comprehensive approach to religious education and pastoral ministry.* Wipf and Stock.

Groome, T. (1998). *Educating for life: A spiritual vision for every teacher and parent.* Thomas More.

Groome, T. (2007). Religious education—No divorce for the children's sake. *Catholic Education*, 16(4): 12–14.

Groome, T. (2011). *Will there be faith?* HarperOne.

Groome, T. (2014). Catholic education: From and for faith. *International Studies in Catholic Education, 6*(2). https://doi.org/ /10.1080/19422539.2014.929802

Groome, T. (2019). *Faith for the heart: A Catholic spirituality.* Paulist Press.

Hare, C. (2017). *100th ARA: A celebratory event.* Alberta Teachers Association. https://www.teachers.ab.ca/News%20Room/ata%20news/Volume-51-2016-17/Number-18/Pages/100th-ARA.aspx

Harris, M. (1987). *Teaching and religious imagination.* Harper and Row.

Hart, W. (2012). Naturalizing Christian ethics: A critique of Charles Taylor's "A Secular Age." *The Journal of Religious Ethics, 40*(1), 149-170. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41348825

Hendrickson, D. (2020). Opening remarks to "The U.S. Catholic Church: Laudato Si', Creation Care, and the Climate Crisis." *Journal of Moral Theology, 9*(1), 26-29

Hettinger, N. (1995). Ecospirituality: First thoughts. *Dialogue & Alliance. 9*(2), 81-98.

Hiemstra, J., & Brink, R. (2007). *Faith-based school choice in Alberta: The advent of a pluriform public model?* [Unpublished manuscript]. https://cpsa-acsp.ca/papers-2005/Hiemstra.pdf

Hopkins, G. M. (1985). *Gerard Manley Hopkins: Poems and Prose*. Penguin Classics. (Original work published 1877)

Hoven, M. (2015a). "Rare beauty" and renewal: The consortium project for Alberta Catholic high school religious education. *Historical Studies, 8*, 53-72.

Hoven, M. (2015b). Teaching creation: Ancient belief meets modern science. *Journal of Religious Education, 63*(1). https://doi.org/10.1007/s40839-015-0014-9

Hyde, B. (2013). A category mistake: Why contemporary Australian religious education in Catholic schools may be doomed to failure. *Journal of Beliefs & Values, 34;*(1), 36-45. https://doi.org/10.1080/13617672.2013.759344

Hrynkow, C., & O'Hara, D. (2011). The Vatican and ecospirituality: Tensions, promises and possibilities for fostering an emerging green Catholic spirituality. *Ecozon@, 2*(2).

Ireland, L. (2013). *Environmental education framework: Pathways to environmental literacy in Alberta schools, supporting Alberta education's curriculum redesign.* Alberta Council for Environmental Education. https://www.abcee.org/sites/default/files/cms/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Alberta-Environmental-Education-Framework-Sept-9.pdf

John Paul II. (1979a). *Catechesi tradendae: Catechesis in our time*. http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_16101979_catechesi-tradendae.html

John Paul II. (1979b). *Redemptor hominis: The redeemer of humanity*. http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_04031979_redemptor-hominis.html

John Paul II. (1981). *Laborem exercens*: *On human work.* http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091981_laborem-exercens.html

John Paul II. (1988a). *Christifideles laici: The lay members of Christ's faithful people*. http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_30121988_christifideles-laici.html

John Paul II. (1990). *Peace with God the Creator*, *peace with all of creation.* http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/peace/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_19891208_xxiii-world-day-for-peace.html

John Paul (1993). *Veritas Splendor*. http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_06081993_veritatis-splendor.html

John Paul II. (2001). *Ecclesia in Oceania: The Church in Oceania*. http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_20011122_ecclesia-in-oceania.html

John Paul II. (January 9, 2002) General audience. http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/audiences/2002/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_20020109.html

Johnson, E. (2011, June 7). A theologian explains panentheism to the bishops, beautifully. *Fortnightly Review*. https://fortnightlyreview.co.uk/2011/06/%C2%B7-a-theologian-explains-panentheism-to-the-bishops-beautifully/

Jones, L. (2005) What Does Spirituality in Education Mean? *Journal of College and Character*, 6(7), pp. 1-7. https://doi.org/10.2202/1940-1639.1485

Kennedy, M. (2014). Q and A: Justin Trudeau in his own words. *Ottawa Citizen*. http://ottawacitizen.com/news/politics/q-and-a-justin-trudeau-in-his-own-words

King, D. (2016). *It's time for a referendum on separate schools*. https://www.ouridea.ca/referendum

Kirylo, J. D., & Aldridge, J. (2019). *A turning point in teacher education: A time for resistance, reflection, and change.* ProQuest Ebook Central. https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/ualberta/detail.action?docID=5646186.

Klaszus, J. (2014, December 8). Why Catholic school funding in Alberta is archaic. *Calgary Metro*. http://www.metronews.ca/views/calgary/urban-compass/2014/12/08/why-catholic-school-funding-in-alberta-is-archaic.html

Kremer, M. F., Pessione, H., & Fotheringham, A. (2017). Not merely the transmission of knowledge: Constitutional protection for denominational education in Canada, *Education & Law Journal, 26*(2), 93-145.

Lamb, C. (2020, September 18). Gay children are "children of God," Pope tells parents. *The Tablet*. https://www.thetablet.co.uk/news/13387/gay-children-are-children-of-god-pope-tells-parents

Lane, D. A. (2015). *Catholic education in the light of Vatican II and Laudato si'*. Veritas.

Lavery, S. D. (2011). Religious educators: Promoting an ecological balance. *Religious Education Journal of Australia, 27*(2), 16-20.

Legislative Assembly of Alberta. (2020). *Bill 15: Choice in Education Act, 2020.* https://docs.assembly.ab.ca/LADDAR_files/docs/bills/bill/legislature_30/session_2/20200225_bill-015.pdf

Leo III. (1891). *Rerum Novarum: Encyclical of Pope Leo XIII on capital and labor.* http://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_15051891_rerum-novarum.html

Levinson, M. (2002). *Demands of liberal education*. Oxford University Press.

Liboro, R. M., Travers, R., & St. John, A. (2015). Beyond the dialectics and polemics: Canadian Catholic schools addressing LGBT youth issues. *High School Journal, 98*(2), 158-180. https://doi.org//10.1353/hsj.2015.0000

Lincoln, A. T. (2011). Spirituality in a secular age: From Charles Taylor to the study of the Bible and spirituality. *Acta Theologica*, *31*(Suppl. 15). http://www.scielo.org.za/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S1015-87582011000400009&lng=en&tlng=en.

Llorent-Vaquero, M. (2017). Religious education in public schools in Western Europe. *International Education Studies; 11*(1). https://doi.org/10.5539/ies.v11n1p155

Loparco, A. (2018). *Legally speaking: Bill 24: Students rights vs. parent rights*. https://www.acsta.ab.ca/resources/legally-speaking

Lovat, T. J. (2009). *What is this thing called religious education?* David Barlow.

Lupul, M. R. (1974). *The Roman Catholic Church and the North-West school question: A study in church-state relations in western Canada, 1875-1905*. University of Toronto Press.

Lynch, C. (May 11, 2015). Can Pope Francis get the Catholic Church's mind off of sex? *Foreign Policy Magazine.* https://foreignpolicy.com/2015/05/11/can-pope-francis-get-the-catholic-churchs-mind-off-of-sex/

Mackenzie, T. (n.d.). *Ecospirituality resources*. http://ecospiritualityresources.com/

Maclure, J., & Taylor, C. (2011). *Secularism and freedom of conscience.* Harvard University Press.

McDonough, G. (2009). Can there be "faithful dissent" within Catholic religious education in schools? *International Studies in Catholic Education, 1*(2) pp. 187-199. https://doi.org/10.1080/19422530903138150

Merriam-Webster. (2021). Stay woke. In *Merriam-Webster.com dictionary.* https://www.merriam-webster.com/words-at-play/woke-meaning-origin

Miedema, S. (2014). "Coming out religiously!" Religion, the public sphere, and religious identity formation. *Religious Education, 109*(4).

Miller, J. M., Archbishop. (2006). *Five essential marks of Catholic schools.* https://www.catholiceducation.org/en/education/catholic-contributions/five-essential-marks-of-catholic-schools.html

Morey, M. (2012). Education in a Catholic framework. In J. J. Piderit & M.M. Morey (Eds.). *Teaching the tradition: Catholic themes in academic disciplines* (pp. 397-415). Oxford University Press Online. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199795307.001.0001

Morris, R. (2011). Cultivating reflection and understanding: Foundations and orientations of Quebec's ethics and religious culture program*, Religion & Education, 38*(3), 188-211.

Mudge, P., & Fleming, D. (2013) The heartbeat of religion: Vital connections between theology and religious education for classroom teachers. *Journal of Religious Education, 61*(1).

Mulligan, J. T. (2006). *Catholic education: Ensuring a future*. St. Paul University, Novalis.

Nash, R. J. (2001). Constructing a spirituality of teaching: A personal perspective. *Religion & Education, 28*(1), 1-20.

National Assembly of Quèbec. (2019). *Bill 21 (2019, chapter 12): An Act respecting the laicity of the State.* http://www2.publicationsduquebec.gouv.qc.ca/dynamicSearch/telecharge.php?type=5&file=2019C12A.PDF

Oliver, A. (2001). Postmodern thought and Christian education. *Journal of Research on Christian Education, 10*(1), 5-22. https://doi.org/10.1080/10656210109484914

Ontario Court of Appeals. (1999). *Daly v Attorney General of Ontario.* https://ctdj.ca/en/jurisprudence/daly-v-ontario-procureur-general-1999-44-o-r-349-c-a/

Ontario Superior Court of Justice. (2002). *Hall (litigation guardian of) v Powers.* CanLII 49475 (ON SC). http://canlii.ca/t/1w3mh

Paletta P., & Fiorin, I. (2016). The challenges of Catholic education: Evidence from the responses to the Instrumentum Laboris "Educating today and tomorrow." *International Studies in Catholic Education, 8*(2), 136-154. https://doi.org/10.1080/19422539.2016.1206397

Palmer, P. J. (1993) *To know as we are known. Education as a spiritual journey*, Paperback Edition. Harper San Francisco.

Palmer, P. J. (1998). *The courage to teach: Exploring the inner landscape of a teacher's life* (pp. 35-60). Jossey-Bass.

Palmer, P. J. (2003). *Teaching with heart and soul: Reflections on spirituality in teacher education.* https://www.couragerenewal.org/PDFs/Parker-Palmer_Teaching-Heart-Soul.pdf

Paul VI. (1971). *Octogesima adveniens: Apostolic letter of Pope Paul VI.* http://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/apost_letters/documents/hf_p-vi_apl_19710514_octogesima-adveniens.html

Paul VI. (1975). Evangelii nuntiandi*: Apostolic exhortation on evangelization in our time.* http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19751208_evangelii-nuntiandi_en.html

Perlaza, A. M., & Tardif, M. (2016). Pan-Canadian perspectives on teacher education: The state of the art in comparative research. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research, 62*(2), 199-219.

Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization. (2020). *Directory for catechesis*. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Province of Alberta. (2012). *Education Act: Statutes of Alberta, 2012 Chapter E-0.3*. https://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/Acts/e00p3.pdf

Province of Ontario. (2012) *Bill 13, Accepting Schools Act, 2012.* https://www.ola.org/en/legislative-business/bills/parliament-40/session-1/bill-13

Rausch, T. (2012). Catholic anthropology. In J. Peiderit & M. M. Moray (Eds) *Teaching the tradition: Catholic themes in academic disciplines*, (pp. 31-46). https://www-oxfordscholarship-com.login.ezproxy.library.ualberta.ca/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199795307.001.0001/acprof-9780199795307-chapter-3

Reuters Staff. (2018, April 10). *Macron's overtures to Catholic Church make waves in secular France.* https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-france-religion/macrons-overtures-to-catholic-church-make-waves-in-secular-france-idUKKBN1HH2L3

Rocha, S. (2019). Educational theory stifles education. *Church Life Journal.* https://churchlifejournal.nd.edu/articles/educational-theory-stifles-education/

Rolheiser, R. (2006). *Secularity and the gospel: Being missionaries to our children.* Crossroad.

Rossiter, G. (1982). The need for a creative divorce between catechesis and religious education in Catholic schools. *Religious Education*, 77(1): 21–40.

Rubio, J. H. (2020). In supporting civil unions for same sex couples, Pope Francis is moving Catholics toward a more expansive understanding of family. *The Conversation*. https://theconversation.com/in-supporting-civil-unions-for-same-sex-couples-pope-francis-is-moving-catholics-toward-a-more-expansive-understanding-of-family-148773

Russo, C. (2015). Religious freedom in education: A fundamental human right, *Religion & Education, 42*(1), 17-33. https://doi.org/10.1080/15507394.2014.945885

Rymarz, R. (2010). Religious identity of Catholic schools: Some challenges from a Canadian perspective. *Journal of Beliefs & Values*, *31*(3), 299-310.

Rymarz, R. (2011a). Catechesis and religious education in Canadian Catholic schools. *Religious Education, 106*(5), 537-49. https://doi.org/10.1080/00344087.2011.613355

Rymarz, R. (2011b). Faithful dissent and religious education in Canadian Catholic schools: a response to McDonough. *International Studies in Catholic Education, 4*(1), 82-91. https://doi.org/10.1080/19422539.2012.650493

Rymarz, R. (2011c). Some principles for the evangelization of younger Catholics in secular cultures. *Australian eJournal of Theology, 18*(2).

Rymarz R. (2018). "We need to keep the door open": A framework for better understanding the formation of younger teachers in Catholic schools. In R. Stuart-Buttle & J. Shortt (Eds.), *Christian faith, formation and education* (pp. 197-210). https://doi.org/org.login.ezproxy.library.ualberta.ca/10.1007/978-3-319-62803-5_13

Schweiker, W. (2009). Our religious situation: Charles Taylor's "A secular age." *American Journal of Theology & Philosophy, 30*(3), 323-329. http://www.jstor.org/stable/27944486

Scott, K. (2014). Inviting young adults to come out religiously, institutionally and traditionally. *Religious Education*, 109(4), 471-484.

Second Vatican Council. (1965a). *Ad gentes*: *Decree on the missionary activity of the Church.* http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651207_ad-gentes_en.html

Second Vatican Council. (1965b). *Christus Dominus: The Decree concerning the pastoral office of the Bishop*. https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651028_christus-dominus_en.html

Second Vatican Council. (1965c). *Gaudium et spes*: *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the modern world.* http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html

Second Vatican Council. (1965d). *Gravissimum educationis*: *Declaration on Christian education.* http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_gravissimum -educationis_en.html

Second Vatican Council. (1966). *Apostolican actuositatem: Decree on the apostolate of the laity*. http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651118_apostolicam-actuositatem_en.html

Seljak, D. (2016). Post-secularism, multiculturalism, human rights, and religion in Ontario. *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses, 45*(4), 542-565.

Smith, C., & Denton, M. L. (2005). *Soul searching: The religious and spiritual lives of American teenagers*. Oxford University Press.

Smith, K. A. (2014). *How (not) to be secular: Reading Charles Taylor*. Erdman.

St. Albert and Sturgeon Valley School Districts. (2012). St. *Albert and Sturgeon Valley School Districts Establishment Act, SA 2012, c S-1.5.* https://canlii.ca/t/53rh6

Stewart, A. (2008). Public funding, religious education, and multiculturalism in Canada. *Religion & Education, 35*(2), 42-58.

Stuart-Buttle, R. (2018). Theological education and professional practice. In R. Stuart-Buttle & J. Shortt (Eds.), *Christian faith, formation and education* (pp.149-163) https://DOI-org.login.ezproxy.library.ualberta.ca/10.1007/978-3-319-62803-5_9

Stuart-Buttle, R. (2019). Higher education, stakeholder interface and teacher formation for church schools. *International Journal of Christianity & Education, 23*(3), 299-311. https://doi.org/10.1177/2056997119865557

Supreme Court of Canada. (1984). *Caldwell v Stuart 2. S.C.R. 603*. https://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/5292/index.do

Supreme Court of Canada. (1987*). Reference re: Bill 30: An act to amend the Education Act.* https://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/228/index.do

Supreme Court of Canada. (1996). *Adler v Ontario 3 S.C.R. 609*. https://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/1446/index.do

Supreme Court of Canada. (2015a). *Law Society of British Columbia v Trinity Western University, SCC 32*. https://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/17140/index.do

Supreme Court of Canada. (2015b). *Quebec v Loyola.* http://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/14703/index.do

Tadie, S. (2019, December 3). Secularization is an opportunity for Christianity, says Ratzinger prize laureate. *National Catholic Reporter.* https://www.ncregister.com/blog/secularization-is-an-opportunity-for-christianity-says-ratzinger-prize-laureate

Taylor, C. (1989). *Sources of the self: The making of the modern identity.* Harvard University Press.

Taylor, C. (1992). The politics of recognition. In A. Gutman (Ed.), *Multiculturalism and the politics of recognition: An essay by Charles Taylor with commentary by Amy Gutman* (pp. 25-73). Princeton University Press.

Taylor, C. (1995). Two theories of modernity. *The Hastings Center Report, 25*(2), 24-33. https://doi.org/10.2307/3562863

Taylor, C. (2007). *A secular age*. Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Taylor, C. (2011). *Dilemmas and Connections: Selected Essays*. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Taylor, C. (2012). The Church speaks—to whom? In C. Taylor, J. Casanova, & G. F. McLean (Eds.), *Church and people: Disjunctions in a secular age* Taylor (2008) (pp. 17-24). The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy.

Taylor, C. (2019, December 23). Charles Taylor: We need to reactivate our sense of solidarity. *Millennial Journal*. https://millennialjournal.com/author/millennialj/

Teece, G. (2011). Too many competing imperatives? Does RE need to rediscover its identity? *Journal of Beliefs & Values, 32*(2). https://doi.org/10.1080/13617672.2011.600815

Tetlow, J. A. (1995). *An ecological spiritualty*. http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/environment/an-ecological-spirituality.cfm

Tkach, N. (1983). *Alberta Catholic schools: A social history.* University of Alberta, Faculty of Education,.

Topping, R. (2015). *The case for Catholic education: Why parents, teachers, and politicians should reclaim the principles of Catholic pedagogy*. Angelico Press.

Treston, K. (1993). *A new vision of religious education: Theory, history, practice, and spirituality for DREs, catechists and teachers*. Twenty-Third.

United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner. (1948). *Universal declaration of human rights (217 [III] A)*. https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Education/Training/Compilation/Pages/UniversalDeclarationofHumanRights(1948).aspx

Urbanczyk, A. (2009, December 3). Teachers as witnesses in a modern society. *The Catholic Thing.* https://www.thecatholicthing.org/2009/12/03/teachers-as-witnesses/

Vail, P., Feehan, K. & Casgrain, F. (2009, February). Catholic Separate schools and the protection of a distinct Catholic denominational philosophy: When religious rights meet employment rights: Part 2. *Risk Management in Canadian Education, 9*(4). https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwiO2Mqzwq3qAhXLqp4KHWK5AKcQFjAEegQIBRAB&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.fieldlaw.com%2Fportalresource%2Flookup%2Fwosid%2Fcp-base-4-7017%2FoverrideFile.name%3D%2FBAV_CatholicSeparateSchoolsP2.pdf&usg=AOvVaw1cX8jg9N4aDNd7indRYimx

Warren, M. (1981). Catechesis, an enriching category for religious education. *Religious Education*, 76(2): 115–127.

Watson, B. (2011). Democracy, religion and secularism: reflections on the public role of religion in a modern society. *Journal of Beliefs & Values: Studies in Religion & Education,* 32:2, 173-183, DOI: 10.1080/13617672.2011.600816

Wendel, C. (2017, Summer). The catholicity clause. *The Catholic Dimension*. https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwjpkJDV37bqAhUfCTQIHTxbAlwQFjAEegQIBBAB&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.acsta.ab.ca%2Fimages%2Fpdfs%2Flegally_speaking%2Fsummer_2017_-_catholicity_clause.pdf&usg=AOvVaw0KSe2tv-AWcOBWjCGQj3Ul

White, L. (1967). The historical roots of our ecological crisis. *Science*, *New Series, 155*, 3767. https://humanities.exeter.ac.uk/media/universityofexeter/collegeofhumanities/theology/beyondstewardship/files/HistoricalRoots_of_EcologicalCrisis_(1).pdf

Young, E., & Ryan, T. (2014). Canadian courts, constitution, charter and Catholic schools: Intersecting powers. *Journal of Research on Christian Education, 23*(3). https://doi.org/10.1080/10656219.2014.901933

Zeichner, K., & Hollar, J. (2016) Developing professional capital in teaching through initial teacher education: Comparing strategies in Alberta, Canada and the US. *Journal of Professional Capital and Community*, 1(2), pp. 110-123.