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# 'As loyal citizens.....'

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The relationship between New Zealand Catholicism,  
the State and Politics, 1945-1965.

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
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at

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## Abstract

This thesis has asked how both Church and state worked with one another across three areas of mutual concern, namely education, welfare and the anti-communist campaign. They were moderately successful. A combination of ecclesiology, ideology and pragmatism underpinned the interaction between the parties. Ordinary Catholics, like other Christians, were influenced by both secular and spiritual concerns, and there were a variety of viewpoints within the Church on those issues where the state was involved.

The relationship of church and state during the twenty years from 1945 to 1965, was both confrontational and highly supportive. Education had been the point of conflict since 1877, while the anti-communist activity sponsored by the Church actively supported successive governments in rebuffing communism. As the Welfare State expanded, there were differences as to how far the state should intrude into the lives of its citizens. Catholic social teaching was always wary of a slide into totalitarianism, but Church and state co-operated in the provision of a range of caring services whose cost effectiveness was helped by a low cost religious workforce. Such social services were needed for ordinary Catholics amidst the demands of modern living.

Until the reforms of Vatican II, the Church was principally concerned with itself and its people. Catholic separatism was accepted by the state as a condition for participation. By 1965 it was evident that reform would change the nature of the relationship between the Catholic Church and the state. From the end of the Second World War until then, both the state and Church had to deal with a changing world: a rapidly expanding population; major changes to education; the slow dissolution of sectarian rivalry; the manner in which secularisation affected state sector policy and the increasing expectation that Christian values and viewpoint have a single unified voice. By 1965 these factors helped put the Catholic Church on a quite different relationship with the state than had been the case in 1945, although not one which saw a diminished role or influence.

## Acknowledgements

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Above all I owe an immense debt to my wife Sally. The demands of research and writing did have an impact but her patience and encouragement, especially during a period of illness, has been a major factor in completing this project. This thesis is dedicated to Sally.

## Introduction

In 1956, the Holy Name Society on behalf of the Catholic Church in New Zealand petitioned Parliament asking the government to change its education policy. This petition was the latest of many attempts by the Church to have the state provide substantial assistance to their extensive network of private schools. For most Catholics the state's refusal to pay for the teaching of the secular curriculum in their schools was an on-going injustice. But for the state and the majority of New Zealanders, a free, compulsory and secular state primary education system, established in 1877, was the best option. State funding for denominational schools would have contravened the secular principle, a principle about which there had been much debate leading up to the passing of the Education Act. This thesis addresses how that confrontation between the Catholic Church and the state and two other areas of mutual business during the two decades between the end of the Second World War and 1965 were mediated. It analyses how Church and state chose to interact with one another. In particular, it considers the tensions that existed as the state exercised its prerogatives while the Church sought to uphold certain values that appeared at odds with the modern democratic state and how those tensions were resolved.

This thesis concentrates on a relationship. It is not a history of the Catholic Church in New Zealand after 1945, although the three themes obviously do form part of that history. 1945 was chosen as the starting point for this study as it marked the beginning of a new phase in the lives of New Zealanders and a new role for the state. For the Catholic Church in New Zealand, war-time had brought about an unprecedented opportunity for influencing secular affairs in the form of the Inter Church Council on Public Affairs. This opportunity was about co-operation with other denominations, but not ecumenism. While the immediate post war emphasis was upon re-establishing the peacetime Church, 1945 began a period of challenge, a challenge not driven by doctrinal or theological concerns, rather the broader societal and political issues from which the Church was not exempt.

## Thesis structure

The thesis consists of six chapters divided into three sections; politics and Catholic education; welfare and social justice; anti-communism.

### Politics and Catholic education.

This section is not an exploration of Catholic education per se, but rather how the politics, or the lack of it, forced the Catholic Church to confront the realities of balancing their traditional values with the demands of the modern secular state. The Church saw itself as a vital and conscientious component of New Zealand society, and in the main its values were consistent with those of the welfare state. The state was not particularly concerned with the internal governance of religious denominations, and since there was no state church, the Catholic Church enjoyed the same privileges as any other Church.

### Welfare and Social Justice

The thesis argues that the traditional authority of the bishops was at issue as the welfare state in New Zealand expanded after World War II. This expansion of the state's role in the delivery of social services was, in itself, not unwelcome since the broader beneficiaries included Catholic citizens, both lay and religious. While the Church's social justice teachings became more attuned to understanding the dynamics of democracy, they warned of the risk of the state encroaching upon people's lives. Strongly influenced by the excesses of totalitarianism and communism, the Church held that the state cannot simply assert control, but must allow individuals and groups to make decisions at a local level.

The Church was finding that it was now dealing with a state where the old models of delivering welfare were being overtaken by new models. Labour's view of welfare had encompassed the language of 'applied Christianity' and the growing welfare bureaucracy wanted greater state control to achieve the desired ends more efficiently.<sup>1</sup> The burgeoning welfare portfolio saw more direct state funding to non-governmental welfare providers. But with that funding came the call for greater accountability. Suspicion of the welfare state was linked to concerns over the degree of control the state was demanding in exchange for funding voluntary welfare services. Fears of excessive government control were a significant feature of the National Party's successful 1949 election campaign. Not only was

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Joseph Savage used the term in 1937 to describe Labour's social security scheme, see Gustafson, Barry. *From the Cradle to the Grave. A biography of Michael Joseph Savage*. Auckland: Penguin Books (NZ) Ltd, 1988. p216. Examples of Savage's Christian thinking and its relation to politics can be seen on pp212-3.



episcopal authority threatened but the reach of the state seemed to challenge the notions of subsidiarity, a key principle of Catholic social teaching.

In New Zealand, the Church wanted to be seen as an unthreatening and valued partner in the Protestant dominated state and the traditional Catholic charities remained an important feature of the social fabric.<sup>2</sup> These charities, hospitals, orphanages, old people's homes and other institutions, survived on a combination of charitable donations, community support and assistance from both central and local government. However as the welfare state expanded, these institutions were having to consider how their core charitable functions were to be exercised. Denominational institutional care was being replaced by an improved public health system and Catholic welfare services were becoming one option among many, including non-denominational organisations, offering a similar range of services. Catholic welfare needed to stay relevant and the challenge for the Church in the post-war period was how to effect a change without losing its identity.

### Anti-communism

Communism had long been condemned by the Church. New Zealand had a functioning communist party by the 1920s and the communist claim to be the natural leader of the working class was a threat to the Catholic Church whose membership was, at this time, predominantly working class. During the 1930s the Catholic hierarchy made clear that there was a distinction between radical socialism and the more moderate socialism of the Labour Party. This distinction meant many Catholics could support that style of socialism and reject the temptation of communism.

The New Zealand Catholic Church's vigorous and repeated attacks on communism were not only in line with that of the international Church, but was fully in accordance with general public opinion and government attitudes as regard the threat communism posed. Both National and Labour politicians denounced communism and regularly used public occasions, such as the opening of schools, to praise the Church's hostile attitude towards communism.

Communist influence in the trade union movement was a deliberate and proven strategy for the small Party to achieve influence in the country's affairs. This brought vigorous opposition from both the Federation of Labour (FOL) and the Government. Aside from its

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<sup>2</sup> Belgrave, Michael. *The Mater. A History of Auckland's Mercy Hospital 1900-2000*. Palmerston North: Dunmore Press Ltd, 2000. p26.

public condemnation, the New Zealand Catholic Church chose to fight communism through an educated laity who would join study groups, and by applying social justice principles, have a moral and practical basis for effective participation in their trade unions.

The Auckland diocese took this a step further and formed a group to counter communist activity in the trade union movement. Partly modelled on the Australian Catholic anti-communist 'Movement', this Auckland group of Catholic men active in the trade union movement, met regularly, identified those who were communist or sympathized with communism and planned how best to neutralize their influence or, by contesting executive positions in the unions, remove known communists from office.<sup>3</sup> They kept their activities under cover, as this type of activity could lead to accusations of the Church having an undue interference in politics. Although the group's activities began to decline by the 1960s, they played a small but useful part in the wider campaign against communism in the trade union movement.

Anti-communism was not the main preoccupation for the Catholic Church in New Zealand. It was the state aid campaign. But, the thesis will argue, the efforts made to challenge communist influence and prevent the New Zealand Communist Party from gaining political power were consistent with the Church's international struggle, although stopping well short of the actions of the Catholic Church in Australia. But the events in Australia had a relevance for the New Zealand Church, in that the admix of secular politics with the affairs of the Church in a functioning democracy was a recipe for disaster.

By 1965, anti-communism again came to the fore in New Zealand. At question was the decision by the Holyoake Government to send combat troops to Vietnam. Public opinion was increasingly becoming more divided on the issue of New Zealand's deepening involvement and most church leaders expressed some form of opposition, with notable exceptions being the Catholic Metropolitan of New Zealand Archbishop Peter McKeefry and the Anglican Bishop of Wellington. But for the Catholic Church the issues at stake were much more complex and divisive than had been the case during the 1950s.

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<sup>3</sup> The Movement originally came about from a 1942 meeting, organised by B.A. Santamaria, of Victorian politicians and trade unionists willing to fight communism in the Australian Labor Party and the Union Movement. Predominantly Catholic, they called themselves the 'Freedom Movement.' In 1945 Australian bishops agreed to the establishment of the Catholic Social Studies Movement which became a national organisation and was simply known as the Movement. see Duncan, Bruce. *Crusade or Conspiracy? Catholics and the Anti-Communist Struggle in Australia*: University of New South Wales Press Ltd., 2001. pp61-62,73-86. The 'Movement', its impact upon both Australian politics and the Australian Catholic Church and the connotations for New Zealand are considered more fully in Chapter 1.

This study does not explore impact of the Vietnam War on the relationship between the Catholic Church and the state. By 1965 the Church was beginning to undergo its own reforms. The Second Vatican Council had mollified the Church's attitude to communism, seeking dialogue rather than outright condemnation, and for many Catholics the issues were political rather than having religious connotations. Catholic attitudes to the Vietnam War and the relationship with the state belong to a later period, as the implications of the Vatican Council together with the broader social changes began a time of momentous change for the Church.

The section on anti-communism addresses two aspects of the anti-communist campaign. There is an extended introduction and background which focuses upon the actions of the Catholic Church in Australia and provides a wider context against which the anti-communist campaign of the New Zealand Church can be set.

## Themes

The six chapters of the thesis examine specific topics, all of which come under the broad heading of 'church and state'. However there are, of course, a number of themes which run through these chapters, each of which has a relevance because they form part of the wider 'church and state' dynamic. The following themes provide background and context around issues raised in the thesis chapters, especially for the Catholic Church with its Irish and European roots and the separateness it sought in its dealings with the state.

### Church and State

This thesis has, as its underlying premise, the notion that Catholics in New Zealand lived in a state in which the Christian religion, rather than any one denomination, had a degree of official support and sanction from the state. The events in Australia (see pp209-235 for background on the Australian situation) forced Australian Catholics to recognise that they were members of a pluralist society and 'to think out their position for the first time vis-à-vis such a society', as the Church was quickly portrayed in some quarters as being fundamentally undemocratic and inimical to a free society.<sup>4</sup> Aside from bitterness within the Church, the

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<sup>4</sup> Charlesworth, Max. *Church, State, and Conscience*. St. Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 1973. pp xiii,1. Charlesworth refers, as an example, to Tom Truman's *Catholic Action and Politics* (published 1959), as being 'invincibly ignorant and ham handed' in its attempt to show the position of the Catholic Church in the wake of the 'split' in the ALP and the scandal in the Church. p35.

scandal was given energy by non-Catholic Australians who believed they saw the beginnings of a surreptitious Catholic coup in the actions of the 'Movement'.

New Zealand Catholics were not subject to that degree of scrutiny, but were not entirely immune from questions that queried their loyalty to the state. Although many non-Catholics would have been bemused and puzzled by Catholic ritual, and not really understand the reasons for the insistence upon separateness in terms of religious instruction and practice, Catholics saw themselves as first and foremost New Zealanders who were Catholics.

The Catholic Church, as Lord Acton observed, was 'more free under Protestant than under Catholic governments'.<sup>5</sup> Yet the Catholic Church brought to the church state relationship in New Zealand a perspective that was drawn from the struggles of the Catholic Church in Europe in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and in particular the condemnations of liberalism, of modernity and the sovereignty of the ordinary people. At the same time the Church was developing a distinct set of principles as to the role of the state and how social justice was intertwined with the state's responsibilities. Papal anguish over modernity had no impact upon New Zealand's liberal democracy, although the Church's policies on schooling for Catholic children were grounded in that anti-modernity. Catholic social teachings, on the other hand, did provide meaningful contributions to the 'fabric of welfare'.<sup>6</sup>

### **The nature of the state**

It is important to make a distinction between the terms 'state' and 'government'. Since this work concerns the Catholic Church, the state and the government, these terms appear frequently. Although at the popular level state and government may be treated as synonymous, for the Church the state is much more than government. It is a natural society based on the social nature God has given to humanity. Because human beings are social, they need to live in various structures and associations such as the family, neighbourhoods, cultural, religious and educational organisations as well as the political community in order to achieve fulfilment and happiness. The state, therefore, is in existence because of creation and human nature. It is not only natural, necessary, and good but limited. The political community is only one aspect of the state but its purpose is

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<sup>5</sup> Dalberg-Acton, John Emerich, Baron Acton. *Essays in Religion, Politics and Morality*. Edited by J Rufus Fears. Vol. III, *Selected Writings of Lord Acton*. Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1988. p32. Acton was referring to the situation in Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when, in his view, '...the absolute monarchy in Catholic countries has been, next to the Reformation, the greatest and most formidable enemy of the Church.'

<sup>6</sup> Tennant, Margaret. *The Fabric of Welfare. Voluntary Organisations, Government and Welfare in New Zealand, 1840-2005*. Wellington: Bridget Williams Books Limited, 2007. p222.

the pursuit of the common good. Government is a major element that political community and has, within its set of institutions, the ability to bring about that common good.<sup>7</sup>

Prior to the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century most Catholic thinkers shared Martin Luther's understanding of the state. He regarded the state in much more coercive terms and allowed the right for the state to use force in order to preserve order. Sin and the effects of sin led to self destruction and the state was a bulwark against this. The state, then, was primarily concerned with preserving order and keeping people alive, even if the order was imperfect and actually harmful.<sup>8</sup>

However this thesis is not examining the relationship between the use of power, the state, and the Christian tradition, but it is pertinent to note four basic models of church/state relationships that have an historical context; Theocracy, Erastianism, Separation of Church and state-Friendly, and Separation of Church and state-unfriendly.<sup>9</sup> Theocracy, where the state is under the control of religious leaders for essentially religious purposes, was seen in early biblical times (especially of the Judges period), and repeated across societies such as puritan America, and a number of Moslem countries. Although present in medieval Catholic thought and a term often used to describe the papacy up until Vatican II, in reality Catholic theocracy was rarely experienced. Erastianism, or the political leadership controlling religion for purposes of the state, is the opposite of theocracy, at least in theory, especially as religion is highly exploitable for political ends.<sup>10</sup> The post-reformation history of the Church of England had a strong erastian influence.<sup>11</sup> John Evans makes the point that some of these models applied in various stages in the earlier history of church-state relations in New Zealand. '...there was a theocracy prior to 1840, a variety of establishment during the Crown Colony period, and with the 1877 Education Act ... separation of church and state-friendly (although the Catholic hierarchy would have thought

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<sup>7</sup> Curran, Charles E. *Catholic Social Teaching 1891-Present. A Historical, Theological and Ethical Analysis*. Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2002. pp137-145.

<sup>8</sup> Wogaman, J Philip. *Christian Perspectives on Politics*. London: SCM Press, 1988. p12. See also Curran. *Catholic Social Teaching 1891-Present. A Historical, Theological and Ethical Analysis*.p139.

<sup>9</sup> Wogaman. *Christian Perspectives on Politics*. pp188-93.

<sup>10</sup> Niccolo Machiavelli, in his advice to the prince on the subject of religion, gives a cynical but shrewd comment on the power of religion in politics. 'It is unnecessary for a prince to have all the good qualities...but it is very necessary to appear to have them...to appear merciful, faithful, humane, religious, upright, and to be so, but with a mind so framed that should you require not to be so, you may be able and know how to change to the opposite.' It was very important to appear to be religious as everyone sees what the prince does, and in the end, 'one judges by the result.' Machiavelli, Nicolo. "The Prince." Constitution Society [www.constitution.org/mac/prince.pdf](http://www.constitution.org/mac/prince.pdf).

<sup>11</sup> Cox, Noel. *Church and State in the Post-Colonial Era: The Anglican Church and the Constitution in New Zealand*. Auckland: Polygraphia Ltd., 2008. pp30-31.

otherwise).<sup>12</sup> Examples of separation of church and state-unfriendly would have been anti-clericalism in Mexico and the attitude of most Marxist countries. Yet in most unfriendly states religion was tolerated, albeit until the population matured into a more scientific outlook.

## Secularism

Traditionally the word 'secular' has been taken to mean life lived without references to religious reality. Lloyd Geering has pointed out that the common practice of defining 'secular' in solely terms of 'religion', where it becomes simply the antonym of religious, is unsatisfactory. Both words are difficult to define, because they are not neutral but rather value-laden, reflecting competing and often conflicting values.<sup>13</sup> When defining 'secular' in terms of 'religion' there is little insight into what it really is except to indicate what it is not. Another difficulty is that anyone committed to any particular religious faith is bound to oppose both secularization and secularism on the grounds that they must be false if they are anti-religious.<sup>14</sup> But the antonyms are valid if religion is defined as the other-world component of a two-world view of reality, that the other-world is the special domain of God and the final destiny of men. In this case secularization is anti-religious as its emphasis on this-world undermines the very basis upon which religion is said to depend.<sup>15</sup> This was the attitude of the Catholic Church from the mid nineteenth century until the Second Vatican Council.

In the years between the First and Second Vatican Councils (1870- 1962), the Catholic Church had dismissed the secular from the spiritual life of the Church. Modernity was rejected and infallibility and papal primacy were entrenched in church doctrine regarding secular issues.<sup>16</sup> Enlightenment emphasis on individual and human freedom was seen as cutting off any relationship to God and God's law. There was a connection made between

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<sup>12</sup> Evans, John Adsett. "Church State Relations in New Zealand 1940-1990, with particular reference to the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches." PhD, Otago, 1992. pp27-28.

<sup>13</sup> Davaney, Shelia Greeve. "The Religious-Secular Divide: The U.S. Case." *Social Research* 76, no. 4 (2009): 1327-1332. p1331.

<sup>14</sup> Geering, Lloyd. "What is Secularisation?" In *Secularisation of Religion in New Zealand*. Wellington: Department of University Extension, Victoria University of Wellington, 1976.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. Geering provides a distinction between secularization and secularism. Secularization refers to a process of change which, if true, should be observable to the objective enquirer. Those who point to and describe this process of secularization are not committed to any particular evaluation of it. Some may welcome it, others may deplore it. Secularism refers to a set of convictions and the secularist is committed to promote and defend what he/she claims as a secular outlook and secular values.

<sup>16</sup> The First Dogmatic Constitution on the Church of Christ promulgated by the 1st Vatican Council in July 1870 set out, *inter alia*, the power and character of the Roman Pontiff.

the Enlightenment and Protestantism since the Reformation personified religious liberalism by exalting the conscience and freedom of the individual believer. Protestantism first felt the effects of historical and literary criticism which, together with science and the growth of knowledge, helped undermine the authority of the Bible by challenging the traditional dualistic world-view. The Syllabus of Errors of 1864 unequivocally set out the Catholic opposition to the Enlightenment and democracy. The Church became a 'supernatural fortress set against the world, its walls manned night and day by the committed, its lonely leader almost an oracle of heavenly wisdom.'<sup>17</sup> It was not until Vatican II and, in particular, the document *The Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et Spes)* where secular autonomy was recognised as a condition necessary for the Church to properly function in the modern world.

During the near century between Councils, the Church's concerns about secularism were intertwined with a romantic nostalgia for the Middle Ages, when liberalism, individualism and selfishness did not exist. God and the Natural Law were recognised by kings and rulers who defended the poor and downtrodden and maintained social solidarity through the guild system. The Christian ideal was a hierarchical, static and predominantly agrarian society, with none of the problems of the Industrial Revolution and socialism.

Scholasticism, in the form of the theology and philosophy of Thomas Aquinas was used as a basis for resisting the dangers of liberalism and socialism. In developing its philosophy and theology on the church and state, papal teachings opted for a middle way between the extremes of liberalism and socialism, especially in terms of what developed in the twentieth century. Secularism was equated with the growing distance between church and state and its dangers were articulated as those traits in society that gave the individual greater discretion, such as materialism or moves by the state to take over functions that had previously been done within the community. The growth of the welfare state attracted criticism for its secularizing tendencies and one example was in the consequences for religious organisations. As the state grew and provided options in terms of welfare delivery, people could choose or reject a religious option. Other organisations without any specific religious affiliation were able to provide welfare related services, often having humane service and inclusive justice as values without having anything distinctly 'Christian' about

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<sup>17</sup> Hastings, Adrian. "Catholic History from Vatican I to John Paul II." In *Modern Catholicism*, edited by Adrian Hastings. London SPCK, 1991. p3.

them. Religious orders and committed Christians remained the mainstay of faith based organisations, but the populace had a distinct choice.

Secularism in education was largely accepted as being a safeguard against the sectarianism of the Old World, and successive governments upheld this principle in New Zealand until well into the second half of the twentieth century. Secularism, as Colin McGeorge notes, did not exclude God, the clergy or incidental references to religion from schools. What it did rule out was 'religious instruction as part of the official work of schools.'<sup>18</sup> Yet public primary schools continued to be run in a clearly Christian, albeit Protestant setting. Nevertheless, many Christians feared that in not having Christianity taught in schools, Christian civilization and morality were at risk.

Schools were not intended by the framers of the 1877 Education Act to be the only agency for education as contributions from home and church were expected to complement that of the schools. However it was quickly recognised as an unequal relationship, given the children were 'under the air-pump of secularism for five days out of seven', leaving little opportunity for anyone else to teach religion.<sup>19</sup> Whether the politicians were motivated by doctrinaire secularism or saw the secular provisions as a solution to educational tensions caused by denominationalism, the churches themselves were partly responsible for the secular conditions of the 1877 Act. From then on they agitated for the teaching of religion and morality to be accorded a more significant role in state education. The widespread Nelson system for religious education in state schools had not made 'a major cultural and educational difference', while supporters of Bible in Schools had hoped that religious exercises and a half hour of Bible teaching would Christianize the nation's schools. That hope was not realized.<sup>20</sup> A real problem with teaching religion and Christian ethics in state schools was determining which set of Christian values to teach different age groups, but more fundamentally, as Ian Breward observed, 'the notion that values can be detached from personal faith and life in community because they are simpler than dogma and

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<sup>18</sup> McGeorge, Colin "Religious Aspects of the Secular System before the Great War." In *Reinterpreting the Educational Past*, edited by Roger Openshaw and David McKenzie. Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research, 1987. p167.

<sup>19</sup> Breward, Ian. *Godless Schools? A Study in Protestant Reactions to the Education Act of 1877*. Christchurch: Presbyterian Bookroom, 56/58 Lichfield Street., 1967. p108.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.* p113.



preparatory to faith has taken such a theological beating.....that one can only marvel at the power of the protestant tradition.'<sup>21</sup>

The Catholic tradition on the other hand responded to the 1877 legislation by expanding its network of schools. A secular education was condemned by the Catholic Church. Christian education was of 'supreme importance' and the Catholic Church considered herself as having the 'preeminent' mission to educate.<sup>22</sup> The secular nature of state education was routinely castigated, for example at the opening of Catholic school facilities, where comparisons would be made as to the merits of the Catholic schooling as against the lack of purpose in the secular education, especially as religion was absent. Yet the issue of secularization was implicit in the broader doctrines of the Church concerning its relationship with the state and remained so until Vatican II proposed a descriptive language that replaced the old dualism of this-world and the other-world, with terminologies that recognised both human achievement and failure in relation to the gospels of Christ.<sup>23</sup>

This study does not purport to examine secularization or its history, but rather to recognise that it was a subtext through each of the themes of this thesis. The timeframe, that is the two decades after 1945, is important as the wider debates about secularism and secularization began in the latter years of the 1960s when Christianity was declining in power, popularity and prestige. The mid 1960s also saw the beginning of reforms within the Catholic Church, opening the 'supernatural fortress' to unprecedented self-examination and scrutiny from the world.

### Loyalty to the state

For much of the time the Catholic Church has been in New Zealand, it had been subjected to accusations or innuendo over its loyalty to the state. This charge was always strenuously denied, with the strong riposte that many New Zealand Catholics died in war defending the state. Yet the accusations had some considerable history, not least in England in 1874 when the former Prime Minister William Gladstone published the pamphlet 'The Vatican Decrees'. He charged that Catholics could not be good citizens of the state if they were indeed good Catholics. Gladstone, influenced by the German Catholic

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid. p108.

<sup>22</sup> See [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/pius\\_xi/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-xi\\_enc\\_31121929\\_divini-illius-magistri\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_31121929_divini-illius-magistri_en.html), paragraphs 6,27.

<sup>23</sup> McDonagh, Edna. "The Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et Spes)." In *Modern Catholicism*, edited by Adrian Hastings. London SPCK, 1991. p98.

theologian Ignaz von Döllinger and the English Catholic historian and writer Lord Acton, had for some time been concerned about the political implications arising from the decree of papal infallibility made during the Vatican Council of 1870 as well as the views expressed in the 1864 papal document, the *Syllabus of Errors*.<sup>24</sup> Recognizing the theocratic nature of the Catholic Church, Gladstone was of the view that before 1870 Catholics could resist, possibly at some cost, papal interference in political affairs of their own country.<sup>25</sup> However after 1870 and the decree on infallibility, the pope was able to claim absolute authority and power over every aspect of life, including the political order. Catholics, he argued, were forced to renounce their 'mental and moral freedom' and place one's civil loyalty 'at the mercy of another'.<sup>26</sup> The language used in the *Syllabus* especially put the Church on the defensive against liberalism which, for Pius IX, was at the heart of the radical changes that were taking place during the nineteenth century.<sup>27</sup>

In New Zealand accusations that good Catholics could not be good citizens were to regularly resurface during the first half of the twentieth century, but by the late 1950s allegations of a Vatican conspiracy against the state had largely dissipated. One of the last times some of the mainstream Protestant churches presented such a claim was to the Parliamentary Committee hearing the petition from the Holy Name Society in October 1956.<sup>28</sup> Unsurprisingly, the Committee did not refer to this evidence when rejecting the petition.

It was the writings of Leo XIII in the late nineteenth century which focused on the church-state relationship. The Church was to develop a considerable body of teachings on social

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<sup>24</sup> The *Syllabus of Errors* was an annex to the encyclical *Quanta Cura* of Pius IX. The encyclical condemned a number of propositions concerning 'modern errors', in what amounted to a war against liberalism.

<sup>25</sup> Gladstone was not a Catholic, but had been a friend of Acton for some years. The issue of papal infallibility was of concern to him as he had earlier written a book on church-state relations (*The State and Its Relations with the Church*, London, 1838). Döllinger and Acton were both strongly opposed to the ultramontane ambitions of the papacy and lobbied hard against the doctrine of infallibility during the First Vatican Council of 1870.

<sup>26</sup> Charlesworth. *Church, State, and Conscience*. p13.

<sup>27</sup> The main errors condemned by Pius XI were; rationalism and the denial of Christ's divinity, gallicanism which made the power of the Church dependent upon the state, *étatisme* which gave the state a monopoly over education, naturalism which aimed at the complete separation of church and state and the unrestrained liberty of the press and of conscience, and which denied to the state any right to bring sanctions against those who violated the Catholic religion. Amongst the eighty propositions were the condemnation of indifferentism (all religions to be of equal value), socialism, communism and freemasonry, the denial of the temporal power of the popes, and liberalism (that 'The Roman Pontiff can, and ought to reconcile himself, and come to terms with progress, liberalism and modern civilization') Ibid.p18, see also

<http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Pius09/p9syll.htm>

<sup>28</sup> "Catholics 'Seek A Nation In A Nation.'" *Auckland Star*, 19 October 1956, New Zealand Baptist Union. "Submission to the Parliamentary Committee." In *ACDA, Lis 191*. Auckland, 1956.

justice and the relationship with the state was intrinsic to its evolution. At heart were the basic prescriptions for the pursuing justice, public well-being, personal prosperity and common good. From a theological point of view, the state 'owes its origin to God's promise to preserve human beings in existence after sin has occurred.'<sup>29</sup> Leo's most celebrated encyclical *Rerum Novarum* set out that the first duty of the state 'should be to make sure that the laws and institutions, the general character and administration of the commonwealth, shall be such as of themselves to realize public well-being and private prosperity.'<sup>30</sup> This defined the relationship with the state as being inextricably tied in with social justice, with the state being much more than being a mere guardian of law and order. The state's ultimate aim was the pursuit of the common good.

Leo identified church and state as two societies, each autonomous and pursuing their own ends. For civil society the aim was the temporal and material good of the human race, while the church was primarily concerned with spiritual well-being. However the two societies were never completely separated as they intersected in the life of the ordinary citizen and, as such, both church and state must always work harmoniously together for the well-being of those citizens.<sup>31</sup>

Natural law, the Thomistic approach to the participation of man as a rational creature in the eternal law, provided the methodology for Leo's social teaching. This allowed Leo to give the Catholic Church a dual role; the guardian of divine revelation and the interpreter of natural law. As interpreter of divine law the Church, Leo declared, has the capacity to assess the compliance by the state with the natural law, allowing it to judge if the state is undertaking moral or immoral action.<sup>32</sup> But there were limits. The Church did not have expertise in the political or economic spheres and could not propose technical solutions to political or economic problems. Rather economic and political plans could be critiqued to determine if they were in accordance with the natural law, on the grounds that any economic or political plans which affect society were always moral issues.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Curran. *Catholic Social Teaching 1891-Present. A Historical, Theological and Ethical Analysis*. p139.

<sup>30</sup> [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/leo\\_xiii/encyclicals/documents](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents) para 32.

<sup>31</sup> Griffin, Leslie. "The Integration of Spiritual and Temporal: Contemporary Roman Catholic Church-State Theory." *Theological Studies* 48, no. 2 (1987): 225-257. p227-8.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.* p229.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.* p230; Curran. *Catholic Social Teaching 1891-Present. A Historical, Theological and Ethical Analysis*. pp68-69.

Yet Leo rejected the modern liberties of freedom, equality and participation. He saw society as a top down hierarchy, where rulers led and protected so long as it was in conformity with natural law. Strongly opposed to the notion of sovereignty of the people, Leo considered rulers should share and participate in the power that comes from God, ruling not for their own good but for the good of all. This was consistent with eighteenth and nineteenth century Catholic opposition to religious, political or philosophical liberalism, whether that be the Protestant Reformation, the democracy of the French Revolution or the philosophical Enlightenment.<sup>34</sup> Economic liberalism was also seen as excessive. God's law put limits on what capitalists and owners could do.

*Rerum Novarum* set the parameters for the development of Catholic social teaching and the understanding of the state well into the twentieth century. By advocating the notion that the state's purpose is to pursue the common good, the extremes of individualism and collectivism were avoided. What is good for the community is good for the individual.<sup>35</sup>

Perhaps the other most significant contribution to the development of church-state teaching was that of Pius XI (1857-1939). His most important encyclical, *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931) introduced and repeatedly used the term 'social justice. Although *Rerum Novarum* set the agenda for the development of social justice and made a brief mention of redistributive justice, *Quadragesimo Anno* developed the theme of justice, the idea that the basic goods of creation should be made available to all humanity, highly relevant at a time of global depression.<sup>36</sup> He also wrote of subsidiarity, the principle of limiting the role of the state. Higher levels of society should not absorb the functions of the more basic levels, allowing individuals, families, local organisations and groups to accomplish what they could before government intervenes. Government should only do what those more basic levels cannot achieve on their own. Pius had hoped subsidiarity would, in practice, restore some of the Church's authority that had been taken over by the state in various European countries. *Quadragesimo Anno* was important in increasing Catholic understanding as to the role the state plays, especially in bringing about a just society.

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<sup>34</sup> Curran. *Catholic Social Teaching 1891-Present. A Historical, Theological and Ethical Analysis*. pp146-48.

<sup>35</sup> Traditional Catholic understanding held that no conflict existed between the good of the community and the good of the individual. However this fails to recognise the difficulty in agreeing on what constitutes the common good, how conflict and sin impact upon such an understanding and the tendency for individuals or groups to pursue their own self interest. Ibid. p145.

<sup>36</sup> Thompson, J Milburn. *Introducing Catholic Social Thought*. New York: Orbis Books, 2010. pp26,28.

Under Pius, clergy were discouraged from political activity, which had been tolerated under earlier popes. Rather Pius called for the Church to have a purely spiritual and moral role. He was sceptical of the stability of political parties and chose to withdraw from political involvement. Catholics were permitted and encouraged to be involved in politics, but without any official backing of the institutional Church. As the American Jesuit theologian John Courtney Murray noted 'The Church has ceased to pursue her mission in the temporal order by direct immixture in its religio-social problems through the medium of the political process.'<sup>37</sup> Instead Pius preferred to support organisations such as Catholic Action with its emphasis on spiritual renewal. This emphasis away from political engagement was part of the effort to transform the Church into an apostolic organisation with the aim of rechristianising society.

In the post-World War II era, Pius XII continued to advance the Catholic understanding of the state. Although delivering no major encyclicals on the social question, he accepted a much more limited view of the state. Pius XII abandoned Leo XII's view that there was no distinction between society and state. Leo held there was no place for the sovereignty of the people but Pius made 'the first cautious acceptance of democracy as the best form of government'.<sup>38</sup> The state no longer had the paternalistic oversight of its citizens; rather it had the limited juridical function of defending basic human rights and ensuring the freedom of its people. Rulers were representatives of the people not the hierarchically ordained rulers of the Leonine model. The Church's dealings with totalitarianism however made for warnings about the dangers of the state overreaching its mandate, and for the Church in New Zealand, these caveats were an important factor in maintaining their independent schools.

Perhaps the most visible evidence at the beginning of the 1960s that there was little to fear from the Catholic Church interfering in the affairs of the state was in the United States and the election of John F. Kennedy as President. In the run-up to the election Kennedy had to counter charges that, as president, he would be in thrall to the Catholic hierarchy. At the time John Courtenay Murray wrote that anti-Catholicism, which he described as the oldest American prejudice, was as 'poisonously alive today as it was in 1928' and earlier.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Griffin. "The Integration of Spiritual and Temporal: Contemporary Roman Catholic Church-State Theory." p231.

<sup>38</sup> Curran. *Catholic Social Teaching 1891-Present. A Historical, Theological and Ethical Analysis.* p73.

<sup>39</sup> "Religion and Politics in America." *Tablet*, 16 November 1960.

Kennedy, for his part, firmly rejected the notion that a president, being a Catholic, would be told by a Catholic prelate how to act. He also made it clear that if ever he was put in the position of having to go against either his conscience or his oath of office, he would surrender that office. Kennedy's detachment from religion was both his main virtue and advantage. Gary Wills saw Kennedy's transcendence of ideology as allowing him to win both ways, 'by being (officially) Catholic *and* by being (functionally) non-Catholic'.<sup>40</sup> This ability to compartmentalise led Arthur Schlesinger to note that 'One can find little organic intellectual connection between his faith and his politics.'<sup>41</sup> Kennedy's ability to remain a Catholic but at the same time ignore it ultimately made him electable, albeit by a narrow margin.

### **A Catholic political party!**

The development of the Catholic understanding of the state was significant for the New Zealand Church. Although Catholicism was a minority in a predominantly Protestant state, and happily worked within the framework of a parliamentary democracy, the post Second World War papal teachings gave a substantive platform upon which to try and keep an expanding welfare state in balance. With the strong linkages between the role of the state and social justice, the Church was able to provide a balanced critique, while at the same time giving endorsement to the state efforts to improve the lives of its citizens without removing their individual freedoms.

It might be useful to consider why a Catholic political party never came into being in New Zealand, especially as the confrontation over education could have provided a *cause célèbre*. The short answer is the minority status of Catholicism made such a party unelectable and that many Catholics had already found a political home in the Labour Party. In comparison, Australian Catholics made up nearly 30% of the population, yet until the formation in 1955 of Democratic Labor, which was a conservative, anti-communist, Catholic based party, there was neither a Catholic political party nor any serious attempt to found one.<sup>42</sup> In both countries the labour aligned parties attracted significant Catholic

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<sup>40</sup> Wills, Gary. *Bare Ruined Choirs. Doubt, Prophecy and Radical Religion*. New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1972. p88.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.* p88.

<sup>42</sup> The Catholic Federation of New South Wales set up the Democratic Party in 1920 to contest state elections. It polled poorly and quickly languished as most Catholics had voted Labor. O'Farrell, Patrick. *The Catholic Church and Community. An Australian History*. Kensington: New South Wales University Press, 1985. p290.

support and this presence helped moderate the type of socialism to the point where it was acceptable to Church leaders. Labour, in both counties, had become the default party for most Catholics.

In Australia there was a much more obvious sectarian element to the two-party system. During the first part of the twentieth century Protestants were associated with the Liberal (non-Labour) grouping and Catholics with the Labour Party.<sup>43</sup> Class was not the sole determinant as non-Labour political parties, based on a British Protestant world view, were inhospitable places for Australian Catholics.<sup>44</sup> A Catholic-Labor alignment was to become central to Australian political history, reflecting militant anti-Catholic bigotry rather than economic determinism.<sup>45</sup> This sectarian divide was not as evident in the political choices of New Zealand Catholics. However the support given to the fledgling Labour Party by some senior clerics, especially after Pius XI had made a distinction between what was and was not acceptable in terms of socialism, helped increase their electoral appeal to Catholics. Labour, after winning office in 1935, gave the Church much better access to the government as well as increasing assistance to its schools.

However other factors were at play. Importantly in both the New Zealand and Australian Church, the local hierarchy had links with all existing political parties. In New Zealand the links with the Labour Party were never overt, but the bishops were able to comment favourably on the policies which began to parallel the social justice teachings of the papacy. But there was also had a cadre of Catholic politicians through whom the Church could speak with the Party and these politicians in turn used the parish structure to help develop their networks. Membership of, for example, the Holy Name Society was very useful. Likewise in Australia, strong parish links helped maintain the Labor presence amongst the mainly working class Catholics.

The political linkages in Australia were to come to the fore in the 1950s as B. A. Santamaria's anti-communist 'Movement' threatened Labor Party state organisations. In Sydney, both Cardinal Gilroy and his auxiliary bishop James Carroll had strong personal links into the New South Wales Labor Party. Carroll, in particular, rejected the right of the Movement to interfere in Labor Party politics and set about separating Sydney from

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<sup>43</sup> Melleuish, Gregory. "Religion And Politics In Australia." *Political Theology* 11, no. 6 (2010): 909-927. p911.

<sup>44</sup> Brett, Judith. "Class, Religion and the Foundation of the Australian Party System: A Revisionist Interpretation " *Australian Journal of Political Science* 37, no. 1 (2002): 39-56.

<sup>45</sup> O'Farrell, Patrick. "Double Jeopardy: Catholic and Irish." *Humanities Research* XII, no. 1 (2005): 7-12.

Melbourne, the headquarters of the Movement. A major split in the Labor Party in 1956 as a direct result of the Movement's anti-communist activities resulted in it being unable to gain control of the Federal government for the next sixteen years.

Supporters of the Movement were behind the formation of the Democratic Labor Party (DLP) in 1956. A group of Labor politicians, disaffected by the seeming ambivalence of Labor towards communism, were the basis of the new party and although not exclusively Catholic in its makeup, it did have a strong Catholic presence. But in Sydney, Bishop Carroll used his authority to ensure the laity, clerics and diocesan bishops unanimously opposed forming a Church party and anyone who joined the DLP was considered disloyal to the Cardinal.<sup>46</sup> For Gilroy and Carroll, as with the New Zealand bishops, the best interests of the Church were served in working with existing political organisations and attempting to influence policy through the mechanism of democratic politics, not through any confessional political party.

In Europe, between the wars, Catholic political involvement had expanded. Although European Catholic political activity had no direct bearing on the New Zealand Church, what was happening there influenced the Church's attitude to liberalism, communism and socialism and the issues they presented. After World War I the trend was for an increased Catholic presence in parliamentary politics. European politics had changed after the war and increased democratization led to a much greater participation in politics, presenting Catholics the chance to influence government policies as well as protect the Church against the threats posed by their liberal, socialist or communist opponents. New Catholic-inspired parties were established in Italy and Spain as well as the new states of eastern Europe. In the old heartland of European Catholic politics, Germany and the Low Countries, the older, well established pre-war parties had to adapt to a new democracy. This new democracy saw the rise of workers, peasant farmers and the young alongside the Catholic bourgeoisie.<sup>47</sup> A major feature was increased associationism (youth groups, women's organisations, trade unions) and a decrease in clerical political involvement, as Catholics were encouraged to participate in politics and work for moral political authority.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Duncan. *Crusade or Conspiracy? Catholics and the Anti-Communist Struggle in Australia*. p308.

<sup>47</sup> Conway, Martin. *Catholic Politics in Europe 1918-1945*. Edited by Geoffrey Crossick, John Davis, Joanna Innes and Tom Scott, *Historical Connections*. London: Routledge, 1997. pp2-10.

<sup>48</sup> In 1924 Pius XI forbade priests from belonging to political parties. Griffin. "The Integration of Spiritual and Temporal: Contemporary Roman Catholic Church-State Theory." p231.



A difficulty with confessional political parties and religion, with their need for dogmatic discipline, was basic incompatibility. Political parties relied upon electioneering, which was not in itself a concern for churches. In a country where Catholics were in the minority, having an independent party meant accepting the status quo and moderating the missionary activity. Where Catholics were in the majority, having a Catholic political party meant accepting that many Catholics had been organized into non-Christian and sometimes irreligious parties. But even a Catholic party needed to have a national perspective and faced the dilemma of holding a centre position, balancing the demands of both the left and right. Maintaining such equilibrium was often mistaken for liberalism, itself a heresy, and the various alliances Catholic parties were required to work with caused real unease.<sup>49</sup>

However by the late 1920s, early 1930s much of central and southern Europe replaced democracy with forms of totalitarianism.<sup>50</sup> This reorientation to the right was in large part caused by the economic depression of the late 1920s and a real dissatisfaction, amongst rural and middle-class Catholics, dealing with political systems that seemed unable to respond to their needs. New leaders would claim a Catholic inspiration for the demands for politics of law and order.

Catholic Action was a mainly young persons' movement whose aims were both spiritual and social. Sponsored by Pius XI, it presented a Church militant aiming to impose its values on a decadent and materialistic society which it would rechristianise. Prominent amongst the leadership were university based intellectuals espousing Thomist inspired

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<sup>49</sup> Ascoli, Max. "The Roman Church and Political Action." *Foreign Affairs* 13, no. 3 (1935): 441-452.

<sup>50</sup> Totalitarian theory was originally developed in the interwar years by Catholics writing against the traditions of the Enlightenment, arguing totalitarianism was the sinister outcome of modern freedoms. Scholarship usually credits the theory's beginnings to secular writers, and although there were a few liberals and socialists who were invoking totalitarianism theory in the mid-1930s, it was the in the Catholic public sphere where the theory received considerable prominence. However the significant point of difference from other writings was the inclusion of Bolshevism as totalitarian. Both National Socialism and Bolshevism revealed a new political form, quite different from the authoritarian ones of the past, and in particular the notion of the *stato totalitario* which had been used by both critics and defenders of Mussolini's regime since the 1920s. As early as 1932 Waldemar Gurian, a pupil of Jacques Maritain, wrote of both National Socialism and Bolshevism meeting the criteria of the total state. Two features of the total state that were fundamental to Catholic totalitarianism theory were (a) the inability of the Church to exist alongside a state which drove to politicise everything and convert it into a nationalist mythology and (b) the total state was a consummation of liberalism and disenchantment which only reproduced their nihilist worldlessness. By 1936 Maritain saw totalitarianism as being the fate of a Europe which ignores Christian principles, the tragedy of secular modernity. Maritain and Gurian went to the United States in 1938 where they continued to write and speak about totalitarianism. Hannah Arendt and Carl Friedrich, both prominent totalitarianism theorists had academic ties to both Maritain and Gurian and later helped translate what was a fundamentally theological notion into acceptable secular language. Chappel, James. "The Catholic Origins of Totalitarianism Theory in Interwar Europe." *Modern Intellectual History* 8, no. 3 (2011): 561-590.

spiritual renewal and political protest. For them, Catholicism and its values provided the answer to liberal individualism and Marxist collectivism. One noticeable consequence was in the attraction away from democratic political involvement, as many young militants sought to transform society and became unwilling to work within the confines of parliamentary democracy. Fewer young people were being recruited into those Catholic parties, leaving them without the next generation of leaders.

The complex mosaic of European politics in the 1930s and the conservatism of most Catholic politics helped pull it into the orbit of the authoritarian and anti-parliamentary right.<sup>51</sup> However as the forces of liberal parliamentarianism, Soviet communism and German and Italian fascism squeezed the space available to autonomous Catholic parties in the political sphere, Catholics were increasingly torn between those different ideologies, none of which were suitable.

After the war Christian Democrat parties successfully established themselves as major electoral forces in the politics of western Europe. Their commitment to parliamentary democracy, private enterprise as well as promoting social security and welfare was received favourably by Catholics and non-Catholics. Much of their electorate was Catholic and many Catholics continued to support a political party committed to the defence of the Catholic Church. A connection between religious faith and support for a political party had been evident with Catholic voter patterns during the inter-war years and continued to be a strong factor in the Christian Democrats electoral success in the post-war era of western European politics.

New Zealand and Australian Catholics were never tempted by the prospect of a political party along the lines of those in pre-war or post-war Europe. A large percentage of Australasian Catholics were Irish born or of Irish descent and their hierarchies had a similar makeup. In Ireland the bishops had actively intervened in political life by forming close links with the two main political forces (*Cumann na nGaedheal* and *Fianna Fáil*). This was the pattern for political activism in Australasia. Despite anger over the state aid to private schools issue, New Zealand Catholics had sufficient faith in their existing political structures to never seriously consider entering the national political arena of their own accord.

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<sup>51</sup> Burleigh, Michael. *Scared Causes; Religion and Politics from the European Dictators to Al Qaeda*. London: Harper Perennial, 2007. p153.

## The Tight Society?

The two decades from 1945 -1965 were the last era of pre-Conciliar Church, when triumphalism, clericalism, and juridicism, later to be condemned as 'vices', held sway.<sup>52</sup> It was also the period when the tight society in New Zealand was still a reality, although the bonds were beginning to be loosened towards the end of the 1960s. James Belich describes the tightening of New Zealand society in the forty years after 1880 where the processes of social, moral and racial integration were to 'harmonise, homogenise and even pasteurise' society. Differences were harmonised, others suppressed and camouflaged while purifying both form and content. Socially the tightening was in seeking to close the class gap and have any differences in status minimised, where classes worked in harmony rather than for themselves. Morally it sought to enforce purity and virtue in a crusade that was partly religious, partly secular. 'Moral evangelism' wanted to expel the demons of a colonial society, the looseness, disorder and immorality, constantly seeking to raise the standards of acceptable behaviour. Racial integration was the ideology which emphasised ethnic homogeneity, racially incorporating Maori, as well as Scots and Irish into a basically British race, the Britons of the South. This tightening, as Belich acknowledges, was 'challenged, resisted, subverted and sidetracked to a considerable degree', but in terms of myth and reality had a considerable degree of success.<sup>53</sup>

After the Second World War the tight society was still in evidence. The most obvious signs were in the alliance of workers, business, farmers and the state which, despite the defeat of the 1951 waterfront strike, achieved a considerable degree of 'sectoral harmony', aided by full employment and the modest increase in incomes. While the industrial crisis of 1951 was a defeat for the left, the hard right was given no space as the National governments, despite election rhetoric, opted for the continuity begun by the first Labour administration and maintained by Prime Ministers Holland and Holyoake. Racially, the tight society placed great pressure on ethnic groups to conform and assimilate by learning to deny and camouflage their difference.<sup>54</sup> The moral side of the tight society was evident in the laws

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<sup>52</sup> Triumphalism, according to Gary Wills, was the term developed in the 1960s to convey the stifling impact of Catholic parochialism and chauvinism. Wills. *Bare Ruined Choirs. Doubt, Prophecy and Radical Religion*. p44.

<sup>53</sup> Belich, James. *Paradise Reforged. A History of the New Zealanders from the 1880s to the year 2000*. Auckland: Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 2001.p121-25. In terms of the ethnicity in New Zealand, Belich argues that differences were minimized through tight immigration controls, 'reduced through culturally enforced conformism; concealed through the pretended or partial assimilation of ethnic minorities; and denied through a mix of myth, misunderstanding, statistical tricks and bare-faced lies.' p216.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.* pp218, 314-15.

governing the sale of liquor, gambling and censorship. Six o'clock closing, the prohibition on Sunday trading and bookmaking and the Customs Department censorship of books, films and comics all made for a society where moral vigilance remained a priority.

The Catholic Church was, in many respects, right at home in the tight society. Its own autocratic structure demanded a high level of conformity from both clergy and laity. Triumphalism manifested itself in the understanding that the Church was the kingdom of God on earth and a perfect society that alone offered secure salvation to human beings. It had the primary moral leadership role in leading the whole world to truth, justice and goodness.<sup>55</sup> As such it was immune from error. These 'vices' certainly made for a triumphalism which was most evident in the Catholic attitude to ecumenism, which in itself remained a political barrier. Nationally post war co-operation between Protestant and Catholic churches did occur through the Inter-Church Council on Public Affairs, but co-operation was not ecumenism. Working actively with Protestant Churches was one of the key elements to changing the government's attitude to increased assistance for private schools, but it needed signals from the Vatican that change was to take place before the influential interdenominational committee on private schools was able to convince the government. The Church remained distinctive and to a certain extent mysterious, with dogma and rituals which could baffle the non-Catholic.

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<sup>55</sup> Curran. *Catholic Social Teaching 1891-Present. A Historical, Theological and Ethical Analysis*. p234.

## Section One-Politics and Catholic Education

### Chapter One: The Post War Church in New Zealand

#### Introduction.

At the end of World War II, the relationship between the Catholic Church in New Zealand and the state was at a much more cordial level than at any earlier time.

This chapter will consider the relationship in light of the most significant issue that affected both the Church and the state. Catholic education and the ongoing campaign for state assistance had been a point of discord not only between the Church and the state, but with other denominations. State aid, as the campaign became known, had had some small successes and a somewhat more sympathetic ear since the Labour Government had come to power in 1935, but the key aspect for the Church was that the state should pay private schools for the secular curriculum they taught.

At the end of the War, and for a number of years afterwards, signs were hopeful that the government would make some significant concessions to the private schools. This expectation defined the relationship. However the National government of 1949 did not give state aid any real support and the rising optimism was dashed by an unsympathetic Minister of Education and unhelpful Prime Minister.

State aid, as an active political campaign, was dormant in the early years of the 1950s. That did not prevent Catholic leaders and Catholic media from routinely berating the government for its lack of interest in the issue. But the Church also had to cope with the impact of a major reform in education. The Thomas Report was released in 1944.<sup>1</sup> It proposed a new common core curriculum for post-primary schools. What greatly concerned Catholic authorities was the incursion by the state into the religious, cultural and educational values of its schools. But, at the same time, the Catholic bishops knew they needed to both protect educational standards of their schools and enhance the economic, social and educational interests of Catholic secondary pupils.

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<sup>1</sup> The Thomas Committee was a consultative committee set up in 1942, whose chair was Mr. W. Thomas, a former rector of Timaru Boy's High School. It was to advise the Government on how to reorganise the secondary school curriculum around the School Certificate examination. C. Whitehead, *The Thomas Report. Teachers and Curriculum Reform in New Zealand since 1936*, (Dunedin: 1972).

Catholic reaction to the Thomas Report involved considerable consultation within the Catholic teaching community and views of different groups in the wider Catholic community. Concern was expressed about the threat of 'progressive' values of 'new education'.<sup>2</sup> Any expansion to the Catholic secondary system would require a greater level of qualification for teaching staff. But the Church agreed to negotiate, and talks between a representative of the bishops and the Director of Education allowed for a compromise. The alternative may well have been a separate curriculum for Catholic secondary schools. Once negotiations had been completed, the reforms were to be implemented. Implementation ran parallel with the burgeoning crisis in Catholic education. This crisis began to build in the early 1950s as the social and economic impacts of a post-war society began to take effect.

This chapter will consider the principal issues that affected both the Church and the state in the immediate post war period. While the Catholic Church and the state had a harmonious immediate relationship, financial assistance to private schools was to develop into a point of conflict, especially after Peter Fraser's government gave way to the National Party in 1949. Both major political parties had the free, compulsory and secular component of the Education Act as the basis of their respective education policies. While Fraser had offered some hope that some sort of accommodation might be reached, Sid Holland's administration (1949-1957) was much less open to the approaches of the Catholic authorities. In addition to the tension developing over state aid, the reforms brought about by the Thomas Report of 1944 meant the Catholic Church was now required to meet new pedagogical and achievement standards in the same manner required of state schools. This had entailed considerable negotiation by the Catholic Church over the terms under which Catholic schools would embrace the Thomas Report. A major emphasis on secondary schooling with a teacher force that was sufficiently skilled to ensure that more school leavers left with much higher qualifications than had been the case in the past was the new demand placed upon the Catholic school system.

Agitation for financial assistance for private schools was restricted to the Catholic Church. Although tentative offers were made to the other Churches which had an interest in private schooling to join in common cause, the prevailing attitude had reverted to almost pre-war positions, where Catholic triumphalism mixed with denominational and sectarian

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<sup>2</sup> O'Reilly, Kevin. "Roman Catholic Reactions to the Thomas Committee Report." *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies* 12, no. November (1977): 119-132. p120. The basis of the criticism was that the 'new education' threatened to supersede 'Catholic truth' as the 'only core' of the curriculum.

divisiveness. The absence of any real sort of co-operation was noticed by the Government who were able to use the threat of sectarianism as a reason not to depart from the status quo. The status quo would be tested in 1956 when the state was challenged by a major petition over the exclusion of private schools from the state funding.

### Post war adjustment

For the whole country, readjusting from war conditions to those of peacetime was of overriding concern. Returning service personnel and the general population were each affected, and the churches wanted to play their part in the transition. Returned military chaplains were particularly useful in helping the men adapt to civilian life. But readjustment for the Catholic Church was in coping with a laity whose own war experiences had been difficult. For as one writer in the *Tablet* observed,

It is amazing to look around after one's return and discover how these war-laden years of stress and strain have upset folk who seemed beyond their influence. Overwork, anxiety and the restless temper of the times have accelerated breakdowns in health, domestic frictions and even engendered incompatibility among friends.<sup>3</sup>

This was not a theological or ecclesiastical challenge as its authority was still intact. But the Church needed to ensure its lay population returned to Catholic certainties and disciplines and continued to recognise the authority of the Church as being essential for the living of a good Catholic life.

At the beginning of the war the Catholic Church readily agreed to support the government war effort both at home and abroad. By co-operating with the Protestant Churches and providing their share of resources in support of the armed services, all the churches were willing to subordinate points of denominational discord and put national unity and service to the nation to the fore.

In effect they made national goals a greater priority than their denominational interests. That did not prevent Catholic-Protestant tensions, especially where Catholics were at times perceived as receiving special treatment. But cooperation was imperative. They were defenders of the 'just war' and 'Church people wanted the state to recognise the importance

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<sup>3</sup>"The Problems of Rehabilitation. An open letter from a Returned Serviceman.". *Tablet*, 22 August 1945.

of their support'.<sup>4</sup> That they chose to put national interest ahead of their own interests also reflected the fact that the war brought people together, and there was a keener sense among New Zealanders of national identity. The Churches recognised their need to be part of this nationalism. Part of the cost was much closer co-operation amongst themselves and with the state as well as providing social services, both at home and overseas.<sup>5</sup>

Denominational co-operation had allowed the Government to introduce censorship measures that were considered excessive by some.<sup>6</sup> Reigniting sectarian disputes remained a concern, especially as any divisiveness over religion could detract from the war effort. Peter Fraser, the Prime Minister, banned some anti-Catholic propaganda and, when challenged, said he would not allow attacks on the Catholic Church while Catholics were fighting overseas. Monsignor A.J. McRae wrote to Fraser expressing approval of the Government's actions, telling him that, 'Here in New Zealand, I think it is safe to say that at the present time there is a greater spirit of friendliness and cooperation in the relations of the various churches than at any time in the past.' He suggested to Fraser that the offending document be referred to the Inter-Church Council, whose members McRae considered to be 'even more solicitous of a continuation of Catholic cooperation than some of our own leaders.'<sup>7</sup>

It was not only on the Home Front that the churches used their resources to help the war effort. Military chaplaincy meant supplying clerics for the armed forces, to serve wherever needed. Resources were stretched and all Churches had to make considerable adjustments to meet the demand. It meant the reorganisation of parishes in some cases, reducing the availability of religious services in others and, for the Protestant Churches, caring for the families of the clerics sent overseas.

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<sup>4</sup> Lineham, Peter J. "The Religious Face of Patriotism." In *Kia Kaha. New Zealand in the Second World War*, edited by John Crawford, 199-220. Auckland: Oxford University Press, 2000. pp199-220.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Taylor, Nancy M. *The New Zealand People at War: The Home Front Vol. II, The Official History of New Zealand in the Second World War, 1939-1945*. Wellington: Historical Publications Branch, Wellington, 1986. The *Listener* considered the regulations a curtailment of liberty and other newspapers questioned the degree to which they were applied. Lineham, "The Religious Face of Patriotism." p215. Censorship against sectarianism was also able to be used against any anti-war sentiment.

<sup>7</sup> van der Krogt, Christopher. "More a Part than Apart: the Catholic Community in New Zealand Society 1918-1940." PhD, Massey, 1994. p420. The Inter-Church Council on Public Affairs (ICCPA) was set up in 1941 at the suggestion of the National Council of Churches. Catholic representation occurred at the early stages of its existence. During World War 2 the ICCPA was largely concerned with war business and from the beginning enjoyed contact with Government Ministers and senior public officials. Lineham, Peter. "The Inter-Church Council on Public Affairs; An Exercise in Ecumenical Political Influence." In *Christianity, Modernity and Culture*, edited by John Stenhouse assisted by G A Wood. Adelaide: AFT Press, 2005. pp269-78.



One of the early demands of the Senior Military Command was that denominational differences be put aside in the interests of the campaign.<sup>8</sup> Aside from some concessions to the Catholic chaplains, the military was successful in maintaining a chaplaincy that was much more ecumenical in spirit than that which was usual in New Zealand.<sup>9</sup> The major denominational divide was between Protestant and Catholic and the very real accomplishment was the manner in which all the chaplains worked together, yet remained distinct. This ecumenism was best able to manifest itself in the Protestant denominations where religious services for men of different Protestant faiths were regularly combined. But the spirit of unity was not lost on the Catholic servicemen, and at the front any Protestant-Catholic divide diminished. For many Catholic servicemen, 'their mates became all important while those trappings of civilian life, such as denominational distinction, became less important'.<sup>10</sup> Those shared experiences made for a much more tolerant post war Church, and were a harbinger of the future.

Politically the relationship between the Labour Government and the Catholic Church was also positive. The Church and the Labour Party identified with the same social groups.<sup>11</sup> Importantly Pius XI had made a distinction between Communism and moderate Socialism, declaring that it could not be denied that at times socialist demands 'come very near those that Christian reformers of society justly insist upon'.<sup>12</sup> Solutions to unemployment were clearly linked to key Church values, charity and social justice.<sup>13</sup> There was, however, no official connection between the two. Just as importantly, accusations that the Party was in thrall to the Catholic Church were never substantiated. Early opponents, such as the Protestant Political Association and the Reform Party, tried to portray the Party as Catholic controlled. Although membership reflected an obvious Protestant and anti-religious component, suspicions lingered as to its ties to the Church.<sup>14</sup> Catholics were always able to

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<sup>8</sup> Buckley, Barry. "Bringing Faith to the Front: Catholic Chaplains with the Second New Zealand Expeditionary Force 1939-1945." M. A., Massey, 2007. p 94.

<sup>9</sup> Glen, Frank Grenfell. "New Zealand Army Chaplains at War, 2 NZEF 1939-1945." PhD., Waikato, 1996. p205 as quoted in Buckley, "Bringing Faith to the Front: Catholic Chaplains with the Second New Zealand Expeditionary Force 1939-1945.". p 94. 'The New Zealand Army after 1943 was the most ecumenical body within any part of New Zealand society at home or abroad.'

<sup>10</sup> Buckley, "Bringing Faith to the Front: Catholic Chaplains with the Second New Zealand Expeditionary Force 1939-1945.". p131.

<sup>11</sup> Gustafson, Barry. *Labour's Path to Political Independence: The Origins and Establishment of the New Zealand Labour Party 1900-19*. Auckland: Auckland University Press: Oxford University Press, 1980. p127.

<sup>12</sup> see [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/pius\\_xi/encyclicals](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xi/encyclicals) para. 113

<sup>13</sup> Reid, Nicholas. *James Michael Liston A Life*. Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2006. p220.

<sup>14</sup> Gustafson, *Labour's Path to Political Independence: The Origins and Establishment of the New Zealand Labour Party 1900-19*. p129.

vote for whoever they chose and the New Zealand Church had consistently prohibited clerical involvement in party politics.<sup>15</sup> Priests might encourage participation and occasionally risk an opinion, but there was no 'Catholic Vote'.<sup>16</sup> Despite the perceived potential for such a voting force, the manner in which Catholics were scattered throughout electorates meant they had little electoral muscle. Nationally they constituted around 13% of the population, but on an electorate basis they would require a significant number of non-Catholics to vote with them to achieve any particular victory. That did not prevent the Church from speaking out on moral issues and how those issues should be interpreted, while defending their ecclesiastical interests if threatened.<sup>17</sup>

The hierarchy had a good working relationship with the Fraser Government and the Labour Party generally. Catholic M.P.s provided a channel through which matters could be taken. For example Michael Moohan, a Catholic who was the M.P for Petone, was, during 1949, Fraser's undersecretary. When permits for work on seminary buildings in Christchurch were delayed, Bishop Lyons sought Moohan's help in getting the process moving, stressing the significance of these buildings for the Church. Moohan was apparently successful.<sup>18</sup> In 1948 P.J. O'Kane M.P. for Wairoa and another Catholic also acted as Fraser's undersecretary. The hope that James Liston had expressed about not being forgotten by the Party was realised to a considerable extent.<sup>19</sup> From 1935 Catholics shared in the much needed social reform that Labour had promised and from 1937 concessions were made to Catholic schools. Bus and train travel, free milk and apples, journals and text books, boarding bursaries, access to the school library service and other subsidies were made available.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> van der Krogt. "More a Part than Apart: the Catholic Community in New Zealand Society 1918-1940." p380. The instruction from the Sacred Congregation of the Faith was, argued Bishop Cleary, applicable in New Zealand. Cleary also saw it as a means of checking the extremes of Kelly's pen.

<sup>16</sup> van der Krogt, Christopher "Catholic Religious Identity and Social Integration in Interwar New Zealand." *The Catholic Historical Review* 86, no. 1 (2000): 47-65. pp64-65.

<sup>17</sup> van der Krogt, "More a Part than Apart: the Catholic Community in New Zealand Society 1918-1940". p380.

<sup>18</sup> Lyons, Bishop Patrick. "Letter to Michael Moohan, MP, Undersecretary to the PM re delays in the approval of permits to make additions to the buildings that form the Holy Name Seminary in Christchurch." In *ACDA, Lis 58/2*. Auckland, 1949.

<sup>19</sup> Liston had become involved in trying to unseat the Reform government of William Massey in the 1922 general election and, although Massey was returned by a narrow margin, Liston recognised that the 'Labour people are very grateful for our strong support. They recognised the fact and I only hope they won't forget.' Sweetman, Rory. *Bishop in the Dock. The Sedition Trial of James Liston*. Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1997. p261.

<sup>20</sup> van der Krogt. "More a Part than Apart: the Catholic Community in New Zealand Society 1918-1940." pp456-459.

## State Aid

State aid was the popular term used to describe the goal of the political attempts made to secure state funding for private schools. The 1877 Education Act had made primary schooling secular, with no funding made available for denominational schools that had earlier provided much of the schooling in New Zealand, albeit with assistance from Provincial governments. As a result Catholics began to build and staff a separate system of private schools and also began a long and untiring campaign to obtain funding from the government in support of these schools.

Catholic leaders, particularly Bishop Patrick Moran in Dunedin, castigated the proposed legislation and even before the Bill had become law, a 'Policy for Catholics' was printed in the *Tablet*.<sup>21</sup> This policy, the demand for a 'fair share' of public funds to educate Catholic children in secular subjects, was to effectively set the tone for the campaign for the next eighty or so years. Tony Spencer concluded that Catholic leadership at the time decided on a position far too soon, removing the possibility of accommodation, especially once the impact of the 1877 Act became clear to the interested parties.<sup>22</sup>

From 1877 onwards, successive governments had upheld the principle that state funded education in New Zealand was to be free, compulsory and secular.<sup>23</sup> Despite attempts by Catholics to procure state funding through petitioning parliament and the ritual denunciation of the injustice created by the denial of funding, schools continued to be built and funded by the Catholic laity.

The inter-war years were, in terms of state aid, characterised by some gains and some losses and marked by a revived sectarianism which drew on war time arguments over the conscription of the clergy, Papal neutrality and Irish self-determinism.<sup>24</sup> Massey's Reform Government had no reason to fear accusations of favouring Catholic interests and conceded some benefits, such as access to government scholarships, free inspections and

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<sup>21</sup> "The Policy of Catholics," *New Zealand Tablet*, 16 November 1877.

<sup>22</sup> Spencer, Anthony E.C.W. *The Organisation of Catholic Education in New Zealand, Interim Report*. Taunton, Somerset.: Russell-Spencer Ltd., 2005. p113-114.

<sup>23</sup> The relevant clause, repeated in the 1914 and 1964 Acts reads; 'The school shall be kept open 5 days in each week for at least 4 hours in each day, 2 of which in the forenoon and 2 in the afternoon shall be consecutive and the teaching shall be of a secular character.' McLaren, Ian A. *Education in a Small Democracy*. Edited by Dr Brian Holmes, *World Education*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1974. p49.

<sup>24</sup> Sweetman, Rory. *A Fair and Just Solution? A history of the integration of private schools in New Zealand*. Wellington: Dunmore Press, 2002. p29.

the right to present candidates for examinations conducted by the inspectors.<sup>25</sup> But antagonism towards Catholic schools and their special privileges was exploited by the Protestant Political Association (PPA), while the New Zealand Educational Institute (NZEI) and many school committees argued for the withdrawal of benefits on the grounds that any support undermined the state system. From 1919 until 1926, a number of concessions were lost, the most serious being the ability to have government scholarship winners take up those scholarships in private schools. However the sectarian storm, by and large, lost impetus by the later 1920s and Catholic school authorities sought the type of concessions which would make an immediate difference to the pupils, such as bus travel, school health and copies of the *School Journal*.

One benefit that increased in the late 1920s and 1930s was the informal support given by educational authorities. Sympathetic educationalists provided a range of assistance from architectural advice to the loan of equipment, while unemployed men were used to improve school grounds. Politically, successive governments, whether Reform, United (from November 1928) or Coalition (from September 1931) 'tacitly accepted a responsibility to uphold appropriate standards of education in non-state schools'.<sup>26</sup>

When the Labour Government took office in 1935, it was more generous than its predecessors and employed a tactic of small but important concessions. Catholic schools received concessions that helped make a difference. Free milk and apples, the *School Journal* and primary textbooks, rural school bus travel, boarding bursaries, access to the school library service and subsidies for swimming pools, radio and film equipment were made available.<sup>27</sup> Just as important was the atmosphere of goodwill and access which was to continue until Labour left office in 1949.

Concessions granted to Catholic schools were not state aid. Labour was careful to rationalise this assistance as being offered to the pupils and not the private schools. The free milk scheme set a precedent whereby if additional facilities were provided to state school children, then applying the same facilities to private schools was also sympathetically considered. Labour was not prepared to concede that the state should pay

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<sup>25</sup> van der Krogt. "More a Part than Apart: the Catholic Community in New Zealand Society 1918-1940." pp429-432.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. p445.

<sup>27</sup> Sweetman. *A Fair and Just Solution? A history of the integration of private schools in New Zealand.* p30.

for private education, but it held that the pupils should not be disadvantaged.<sup>28</sup> However the majority of the cost for Catholic schools was in funding the buildings and their on-going maintenance. Catholic education authorities had to continue to scramble for money to keep the system viable.

During the war, problems for Catholic schools and their administrators were the ever present concern over funding and the occasional incident over bus travel for Catholic school children.<sup>29</sup> Payment of school fees was a problem for many parents and to help fund the cost of Catholic education, trusts had been set up in some areas. The Wellington Education Trust began in 1912 and, as a result, had been able to abolish school fees in 1928 for the schools it administered.<sup>30</sup> Parishioners were urged to increase their contributions to the Penny Collection since, 'It is the Pennies that make free for your children our Catholic Schools'.<sup>31</sup> The Dunedin City Catholic Education Trust Board was happy to parade their schools' results in public examinations, demonstrating that the religious and secular did indeed work. 'The sound religious training of the pupils does not interfere in any way with their secular studies as proved by results.'<sup>32</sup> In August 1945 Archbishop O'Shea told the Hibernian Society that their proposed insurance scheme to enable the sons and daughters of members to attend Catholic schools was one of the 'best things you have done'.<sup>33</sup>

## Catholic Education

Catholic education had a specific philosophy. Education's ultimate aim was ensuring mankind's ultimate salvation and everything else must be a means to that end. Catholic educational philosophy recognised lower or immediate aims, but the natural must be always

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<sup>28</sup> van der Krogt, "More a Part than Apart: the Catholic Community in New Zealand Society 1918-1940". pp458-59.

<sup>29</sup> Spencer. *The Organisation of Catholic Education in New Zealand, Interim Report*. p253. Bishop Lyons called the school transport system iniquitous and unjust.

<sup>30</sup> Wellington Catholic Education Trust Board, "*Report for year ended June 1941*," in WAA, Wellington Catholic Education Board, Reports/Correspondence, 1940-63, #338 (Wellington: 1941). Income for the Trust Board came from what was known as the 'Penny Collection', proceeds from social events, interest on investments and legacies and bequests and donations. From this income, salaries were paid to the teaching religious, plus travel costs, interest on loans and miscellaneous costs.

<sup>31</sup> Wellington Catholic Education Trust Board, "*Report and Statement of Accounts 1942-1943*," in WAA, Wellington Catholic Education Board, Reports/Correspondence, 1940-63, #338 (Wellington: 1943); "Dunedin City Catholic Education Trust: Report for 1944-1945." *Tablet*, 5 September 1945.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> "Only Hope For The Future." *Tablet*, 15 August 1945.

subordinate to the supernatural, the temporal inferior to the eternal. Education, therefore, should concern itself with the eternal destiny of the child and that destiny 'must always remain the compass to guide the educational work of the teacher.'<sup>34</sup>

The spiritual essence of Catholic Christianity, that is the interior life of faith and love, is held to be of a much greater importance than the external, judicial structure of the Church. Spiritual gifts from God's grace enrich and give the structure of Christian society life. Spirituality, for the individual member of the Church, was of a greater order of importance than its structure.<sup>35</sup> For the educator, the centrality of religion was the principal concern, and any education that did not give first place to the truth of things was, by definition, un-Catholic. The primary theological imperative was to ensure that the interior life of faith of the Church's members was nurtured, and education, although not an end in itself, of necessity concerned itself with guiding pupils to the highest state of perfection. Individuals must strive for that perfection but the process of salvation is achieved through the corporate nature of the Church. Education therefore should urge individuals, by every means, to strive towards that ultimate perfection.<sup>36</sup> These teachings and the implicit understanding that a Catholic school system was the essential agency for maintaining the faith meant not only a separate system but a rejection of secular schooling as unsatisfactory. A state system could not provide a satisfactory education since it was 'godless'. By contrast a Catholic school was suffused with a Christian atmosphere, had dedicated Catholic teachers and was protected by the teaching authority of the Church.<sup>37</sup>

At the end of the Second World War, education and the financial viability of what was by now an extensive and parallel network of Catholic schools, both primary and secondary, remained an unresolved point of contention. The state relied upon both the spirit and letter of the 1877 Education Act that had, at its core, the availability of free, secular and compulsory education to New Zealand children. From the Catholic point of view the state had consistently refused to acknowledge the injustice of refusing state funding to Catholic

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<sup>34</sup> Redden, John D., Francis A. Ryan. *A Catholic Philosophy of Education*. Revised ed. Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1956. pp129-30.

<sup>35</sup> Graham, Dom Aelred. "Towards a Catholic Concept of Education in a Democracy." *Harvard Educational Review* 31, no. 4 (1961): 399-412. p403. Pius XII in the Encyclical Letter, *Mystici Corporis Christi* of June 1943: 'The structure of the Christian society, proof though it is of the wisdom of the divine Architect, is nevertheless something of a completely lower order in comparison with the spiritual gifts which enrich it and give it life.'

<sup>36</sup> Redden. *A Catholic Philosophy of Education*. p129-30.

<sup>37</sup> Spencer. *The Organisation of Catholic Education in New Zealand, Interim Report*. p134.

schools. Although the issue of state aid was still unresolved, the relationship with the Labour since 1935 gave some hope that progress could be made.

After the Labour success in 1935, one of the early indications that Labour had not forgotten Catholic support was the grant of concessions to Catholic schools. But the Government was tentative as regards these concessions. As Peter Fraser pointed out in a 1937 reply to Brother Tarcisius of Auckland's Sacred Heart College, concessions to pupils attending private schools '...involves a very grave and serious departure from the policy hitherto accepted as the educational policy of the Dominion...' Tarcisius had asked that boarding allowances be extended for pupils of private schools and Fraser's response illustrated that the fear of a 'recrudescence of sectarian bigotry' animated the decision making.<sup>38</sup> But he did indicate that his door was open. Boarding allowances were eventually granted for pupils in non-state schools in 1944.<sup>39</sup> When thanking Fraser for the approval, Liston couldn't resist reminding the Prime Minister that there was still the much bigger issue of financial assistance to private schools which was, in his view, a particular affront to Catholic parents involved in the armed services.<sup>40</sup>

Both the 'grave and serious departure' and the 'recrudescence of sectarian bigotry' were to remain reasons for successive Governments when they had to confront the issue, and remained so until the latter years of the 1950s. Both parties had free, secular and compulsory education as the basis of their respective education policies. The implications of a 'grave and serious departure' were not only a major change in party policy and, if elected, government policy, but other factors about which any government would have been wary. Other factors were a combination of social and moral convictions, religious feelings, and political, administrative and financial considerations. The argument that the giving of financial aid to private schools would deepen existing social divisions remained powerful, while questions about the control of private schools, once a large amount of public money was granted, remained unanswered. As Dr. Clarence Beeby, the Director of Education, noted 'In England...the principle is well established that aid implies control, and that the

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<sup>38</sup> Fraser, Peter. "Letter from Peter Fraser, Minister of Education, replying to a request that boarding allowance can be paid to pupils of registered private schools." In *ACDA, Lis 184*. Auckland, 1937.

<sup>39</sup> "Church Schools: Grant of Bursaries." *NZ Herald*, 20 March 1944.

<sup>40</sup> Liston, Bishop James. "Letter to Peter Fraser concerning the boarding allowance." In *ACDA, Lis 184*. Auckland, 1944.

amount of control should be roughly proportionate to the amount of aid provided'.<sup>41</sup>

Authorities were well aware that any move away from the established policy would involve a major review of the relationship between the public and private systems. Significant state involvement in Catholic schools, other than the very limited assistance already provided, would have been particularly contentious. Control vested in individual diocesan bishops by the Church required them to manage diocesan resources as they saw fit. Diocesan resources included schools and the Catholic educational philosophy of the 1950s would not have allowed them to relinquish any control to a secular authority. Their obligation was to safeguard against social and intellectual influences that were contrary to Catholic teaching.<sup>42</sup> The 'grave and serious departure' would not just be a change of government policy, but force the Church to confront the issue of their control of Catholic schools.

Fraser's 'recrudescence of sectarian bigotry' remained a feature of political thinking during the 1950s. McKeefry, meeting with Holland in 1952 on the issue of 'helping our schools' was particularly disappointed with the Prime Minister telling him that bigotry was a strong factor in the Government choosing not to help. According to McKeefry, Holland said the issue was frequently discussed, 'but we cannot see any way in which this matter can be approached without bigotry being given an opportunity to raise its voice, bringing dissension into the community and possibly destroying whatever goodwill has been built up amongst the non-vociferous section of Protestant opinion.' When challenged as to why the Government would be deterred by the 'clamours of bigots', Holland felt there was a 'latent Protestant prejudice that could be aroused by a campaign of bigotry'.<sup>43</sup> Holland's government had a significant Protestant makeup, so he was likely to have been reflecting a valid viewpoint. It was also a convenient excuse to stall the issue.

While McKeefry wanted to play down the threat of revived sectarianism, Holland's view was to a certain extent vindicated in 1956 when a petition asking for state aid to be examined by a parliamentary commission was presented to the government. Objections to the petition showed that sectarianism had not dissipated, although as Holland pointed out, bigotry was likely to stem from the Orange Lodge and its allies. Holland assured McKeefry that 'he

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<sup>41</sup> Beeby, Dr Clarence. "Report of the Director of Education to the Clerk of the Education Committee re Petition No. 25 of Walter Stewart Otto." In *National Archives, ABEP 7749, Acc W4262, #1887 29/1/9*. Wellington, 1956.

<sup>42</sup> Gascoigne, Rev Dr Noel. "Letter to Liston about favourable regulatory changes for Catholic schools." In *ACDA, Lis 186*. Auckland, 1945.

<sup>43</sup> McKeefry, Archbishop Peter. "Letter to hierarchy re meeting with Sid Holland." In *ACDA Lis 184*. Auckland, 1952.



himself had 'no time for them'.<sup>44</sup> This sense that the more extreme reaction to the Catholic claims was tending towards the periphery rather than the mainstream had become increasingly evident since the end of the Second World War. Servicemen had experienced an environment where denominational differences were relegated to a low priority and in New Zealand the war effort brought about a widespread co-operation between the Churches. When Father Noel Gascoigne, the Catholic bishops' liaison with the Minister of Education and the Education Department, met with a delegation from the newly formed Council of Christian Education in 1950, he noted that the Council had turned down an application from the Orange Lodge for representation on the Council. That had not stopped the Presbyterian and Baptist Assemblies from voting against state aid for private schools, but, according to the Rev L.V. Bibby and Rev. J.D. Grocott, these Assemblies passed the same resolutions years after year, 'almost 'pro-forma', without a full and proper debate'.<sup>45</sup>

Bibby and Grocott met with Gascoigne to discuss whether the Catholic Church would temporarily forego her claims for state aid for private school in order to present a common front to the Government on the teaching of religion in state schools. Gascoigne's response was that the two issues were quite separate, in that the claim made by the Church was on behalf of all parents who choose a private school for their children and therefore religion was not at issue. Bibby and Grocott agreed, but in their view the question of state aid was, in the popular mind, linked with religion and if the Catholic Church pressed its case as the price of supporting the Council's claim, then the prosecution of the one would prejudice the other.<sup>46</sup> It was an exploratory meeting only but was one of number of contacts and meetings about this time that suggested progress could be made. Some years later Gascoigne and Grocott met in a radio debate on the question 'Should our Education be secular?' A Catholic reviewer thought both men were united on many issues although disagreed on others, but a hopeful omen for those opposing secular education.<sup>47</sup>

Gascoigne's liaison role had been confirmed by the Minister of Education in October 1944 and, as the Catholic bishops' representative, he was invited, in November 1947, to address

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Gascoigne, Rev Dr Noel. "Report of Interview with Council of Christian Education." In *ACDA, Lis 58/2*. Auckland, 1950. Rev. Lawrence Bibby was a Presbyterian minister based at a parish in Lower Hutt. Rev. John Grocott was a Methodist minister, a 'genial, deeply convinced supporter of the ecumenical movement' who was concerned about the quality of national education. Breward. *Godless Schools? A Study in Protestant Reactions to the Education Act of 1877*. p91.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> "Secular Education Discussion. Welcome measure of agreement." *Tablet*, 27 July 1955.

the National Party caucus.<sup>48</sup> He received a favourable hearing, and felt that 'the Almighty is disposing all things well for this issue'. Gascoigne's optimism was helped by the fact that the Government was losing popularity and it appeared the Opposition was favourably disposed towards dealing with the state aid issue.<sup>49</sup> In September 1948 Peter Fraser personally invited Gascoigne to address the Labour caucus. Delivering his address in the Labour caucus room was an unprecedented distinction for someone who was not a Member of Parliament. Michael Moohan M.P. (Labour Petone) told Gascoigne that 'never before, in his knowledge, extending over many years, had any citizen ever been allowed to enter the caucus room to address the Labour Party caucus, not even Mr. Roberts, President of the Party, or the president of the Federation of Labour'. Gascoigne considered he was well received, with no interjections from the left wing.<sup>50</sup> P.J. O'Kane (Labour Wairoa), as Fraser's undersecretary, told Gascoigne that the strategy was to put the question of government assistance to Catholic schools into the legislative programme for the following year, forcing the Opposition to take a stand with the possibility of a relatively straightforward passage through the House. Earlier in the year O'Kane had asked, on Fraser's behalf, for data on the costs, staff and pupil numbers of Catholic schools so as to 'help Mr. Fraser in convincing caucus that a grave injustice is being done...' although he 'realised that the Baptists and Orangemen will be very much opposed to it'.<sup>51</sup>

Optimism that a favourable outcome could eventuate was strengthened when, in 1949, the Waikato Synod discussed state aid in very favourable terms.<sup>52</sup> Fraser had told Gascoigne that if the three major denominations could agree in principle on the issue, 'all hesitation of a Government would cease.'<sup>53</sup> The *N.Z. Herald* reported that the General Synod had affirmed the right of Anglicans to educate their children in their own Church schools and, as such, governing bodies should be free to apply to the state for grants towards salaries and

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<sup>48</sup> Mason, Hon Mr H G R "Letter approving Dr Gascoigne's liaison role." In *ACDA, Lis 186*. Auckland, 1944.

<sup>49</sup> Gascoigne, Rev Dr Noel. "Report on meeting with National Party Caucus " In *ACDA, Lis 187*. Auckland, 1947.

<sup>50</sup> ———. "Report to the Hierarchy on an address to the Caucus of the Labour Party on the question of State Aid to the Private Schools." In *WAA Education, History of Education & Private Schools/Spencer Report/School Founding Dates, #294*. Wellington, 1948. Gascoigne reported that Bob Semple told him 'I am with that case all the way, and to the end of the way. As my name is Bob Semple, I shall not rest till that is on the Statute Book of this country, and to hell with the bigots.'

<sup>51</sup> O'Kane, P.J. . "Letter to Director of Catholic Education asking for education data with a view to possible state aid." In *WAA, Education State Aid, Government Grants, 1947-75, #297*. Wellington, 1948.

<sup>52</sup> "Anglican Bishop's Tribute." *Tablet*, 12 July 1949.

<sup>53</sup> Gascoigne, Rev Dr Noel. "Letter to Liston about the Synod decision." In *ACDA, Lis 184*. Auckland, 1949.

running costs.<sup>54</sup> The fact that the Catholics and Anglicans appeared to be in agreement in principle would, it was assumed, put pressure of the Presbyterian General Assembly to take the matter seriously.

This optimism fell away as the new National government clearly indicated that there would be no change to education policy. Ronald Algie, the Minister of Education, declared there was no serious educational crisis to warrant 'violent revolutionary change'. At the same time he lamented the exclusion of the Church from the schools, commenting that if education was the pursuit of truth, 'how is it then that we have an educational system which says it pursues truth, yet excludes the Church...'<sup>55</sup> The irony was not lost, but as the *Tablet* observed just days out from the 1951 election, the issue of state aid was a not major one as far as the political parties were concerned and given the political climate, that was perhaps for the best.<sup>56</sup> Industrial issues were to the fore and the confrontation within the trade union movement and with the Government over the Waterfront Strike brought communism, and its activities in New Zealand, back into sharp relief. In an election advertisement in the *Tablet* the National M.P. Ralph Hanan made it quite clear what the issue was: 'He believes every family should have the right and opportunity of home ownership- one the bulwarks against COMMUNISM.'<sup>57</sup> Religious education per se was not one of the bulwarks, at least not one that was politically expedient to say so publically.

Despite the cordial reception Gascoigne's address had received from the National Party caucus in 1947, and the hope that progress could be made, state aid, as an issue, was to languish throughout the first years of the 1950s under the National government. Catholic school openings allowed the hierarchy to reiterate the claims of injustice and inequity, while at the same time giving invited politicians the opportunity to make platitudinous remarks and vague promises. As neither party had changed its education policy from that of supporting a free, compulsory and secular system, the speechmaking on these occasions was almost entirely aimed at extolling the virtues of the Catholic schooling system, often portrayed as a bulwark against communism, while avoiding the issue of state aid. Occasionally politicians were deliberately not invited. At the opening of major extensions to a Parish School in Karori, the local M.P. Charles Bowden (National Karori) was omitted from the official list.

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<sup>54</sup> "Private School Plight: Need of Assistance from State." *NZ Herald*, 7 July 1949. "Affirming the right of church schools." *Star Sun*, 19 May 1949.

<sup>55</sup>"Major Educational Changes Not Needed." *Auckland Star*, 25 May 1950.

<sup>56</sup> "The State and Catholic Schools." *Tablet*, 5 September 1951.

<sup>57</sup> "Electoral advertisement for National." *Tablet*, 22 August 1951.

The reason given was to spare the Member embarrassment, yet the omission was likely to have had quite the opposite intention. Because M.P.s, on these occasions routinely endorsed the need for a Christian basis to education and bestowed ritual praise on the work of the nuns and brothers, the fact that they did do nothing to ease the financial burden annoyed Catholics. 'As they appeared to be disinterested, there did not seem to be much point in inviting them to such functions.'<sup>58</sup> McKeefry agreed with the decision. It wasn't until late 1954 that the issue again became prominent.

During this post-war period the attitude of the state teacher unions remained one of opposition to state aid. Any grant of state aid would only undermine the state school system. Yet the tenor of opposition from both the NZEI and Post-Primary Teachers' Association (PPTA) tended to be more restrained than would be the case later in the 1950s. Routine endorsement of the status quo was made at annual conferences. At the 1948 NZEI Annual Conference, concern was expressed about Peter Fraser's remarks seeming to give some support to providing limited state aid.<sup>59</sup> The state sector unions were but two of the many opponents of state aid and Catholic concern was more to do with denominational opposition to state aid than that of the unions. Keeping the issue alive was difficult. Prior to the 1951 elections, the *Tablet* conceded state aid was not a priority for either party, and given the political climate over the Waterfront dispute, thought it reasonable.<sup>60</sup> Catholic state aid concerns would subsequently have difficulty in engaging with the National Government during the first years of that decade.

State aid remained the chief preoccupation at school openings and these occasions reinforced to Catholics the justness of the claim and the righteousness of their educational philosophy.<sup>61</sup> But Catholic schooling was not yet at crisis point in the early 1950s. Since the end of the War, Catholic communities had expanded. New parishes were established and new schools built. Religious teachers, both New Zealand born and from overseas, staffed these new schools. Financial costs continued to be borne by the laity. But demand for state aid remained an ideological position for the Church and its prosecution a matter of

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<sup>58</sup> "Additions To The Karori School. The Local M.P. Was Not Invited." *Tablet*, 7 April 1954. Bowden was Minister of Customs and Associate Minister of Finance and had been Minister of Industries and Commerce. Bowden had been a long time ally of Holland, and was close to him. Bowden and his wife holidayed in Australia with Holland prior to the 1949 election. Gustafson, Barry. *The First 50 years. A History of the New Zealand National Party*. Auckland: Reed Methuen Publishers Ltd., 1986. p54,56.

<sup>59</sup> "Matters Educational." *Tablet*, 19 May 1948.

<sup>60</sup> "The State and Catholic Schools."

<sup>61</sup> "Additions to School Opened; Justice of Catholic Claim Stressed." *Tablet*, 2 September 1953. This is just one example of many.

priority. The momentum that would push the Catholic school system to a crisis was still building. Eventually demand would overwhelm the capacity of the system to deliver the education that the Church sought and the parents wanted.

### The Thomas Report

When, in February 1944, the Thomas Report was released for consultation, the reaction from the Catholic Church was initially one of suspicion and mistrust. The Report was to initiate a major change in how post-primary schooling was to function in New Zealand and the scope of the reforms was to have significant implications for the Catholic schooling system.

The background to the Thomas Report lay in the education policy of the 1935 Labour government. Peter Fraser was the first Labour Minister of Education and, in an outline of the Government's education policy, set out his belief in and commitment to a liberal education.

The Government's objective, broadly expressed, is that every person, whatever his level of academic ability, whether he be rich or poor, whether he live in town or country, has a right as a citizen, to a free education of the kind for which he is best fitted, and to the fullest extent of his powers. Full acceptance of the principle will involve the reorientation of the education system.<sup>62</sup>

Fraser's vision was for education to be available to all who wanted it, to the fullest extent the state could provide. Schools that catered for the whole population must offer a more diverse range of subjects, have more equipment, better trained teachers and reach both town and country. Importantly it would be necessary to convert a school system that had been based on selection and privilege to one that abandoned selective entry to secondary education.<sup>63</sup> Up until 1936, admission to secondary education required passing a Proficiency examination.

A government sponsored New Education Fellowship Conference was held in New Zealand in July 1937. The 'New Education Fellowship', an international educational and peace

<sup>62</sup> Alcorn, Noeline. *To The Fullest Extent Of His Powers. C.E. Beeby's Life In Education*. Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1999. p99.

<sup>63</sup> Whitehead, "The Thomas Report. Teachers and Curriculum Reform in New Zealand since 1936." p4-5.

movement, advocated schooling that was liberal, holistic and democratic.<sup>64</sup> Conference speakers challenged formal examinations, promoted newer forms of testing and strongly supported post-primary education for all. Restructuring of rigid academic programmes was urged, allowing for much greater diversity in the curriculum.<sup>65</sup> Ideas from the conference stimulated discussion and innovation amongst educators, but important meetings were held with Fraser and the Department regarding reform and how it might be achieved.

Moves towards secondary schools' curricular reform had begun in the 1920s. Proponents such as Waitaki High School Principal Frank Milner called for a more generous and integrated education. The momentum quickened under the Labour Government whose initiatives included abolishing the proficiency examination in 1936, thereby removing selective entry into secondary school, raising of the school leaving age to fifteen and permitting accrediting for university entrance, the latter to take effect from the beginning of 1944. Writing in 1943, J.H.Murdoch saw education as now being for the people, 'not a training for a select group who can find the leisure for acquiring a specific culture; not for self-advancement at the expense of others; but for John Citizen himself'.<sup>66</sup>

Catholic educators were unimpressed. This progressive education was based on a secular, socialist ideology that gave pupils an 'education without discipline'. Any suggestion that authority, especially parental, be repudiated by having the state take greater responsibility for children's education and supplanting parental rights was totally rejected.<sup>67</sup>

The Thomas Committee, whose members Beeby personally recruited, was formed for the purpose of advising the Government on reorganising the secondary school curriculum around the re-introduced school certificate. Although the Committee's terms of reference were limited to curriculum implications, it produced a document that H. G. R. Mason, Minister of Education in 1944, described as the most important contribution to secondary education in New Zealand. Committee members were, in the main, 'liberal humanists and democrats with a strong sense of responsibility'.<sup>68</sup> However Beeby, in wanting to keep the Committee as small as possible, omitted representation from primary and intermediate

<sup>64</sup> Alcorn. *To The Fullest Extent Of His Powers. C.E. Beeby's Life In Education.* p80.

<sup>65</sup> Collins, Jenny. "For the common good: The Catholic educational mission in transition 1943-1965." PhD, Massey, 2005. p249.

<sup>66</sup> Murdoch, J H. *The High Schools of New Zealand.* 2nd ed, *Educational Research Series.* Christchurch: Whitcombe & Tombs Ltd, 1943. p389.

<sup>67</sup> Collins. pp249-250.

<sup>68</sup> Whitehead, "The Thomas Report. Teachers and Curriculum Reform in New Zealand since 1936." p9.

schools, Catholic schools and Maori interests. This omission led the hierarchy to be particularly suspicious of the Committee's agenda and the exclusion was seen by the bishops as 'cutting across the carefully constructed Labour-Catholic accord'. As Beeby later noted as regards Catholic representation, 'Peter Fraser would never have let that one slip by him'.<sup>69</sup>

By February 1944 the Committee's report had been released. Its underlying assumption was the need for a careful compromise between the rights of the schools and those of the state. This balancing of rights was in itself a subject of criticism.<sup>70</sup> The post-primary system proposed by the Committee would have students studying a core curriculum, including art, music and physical education, for the first two or three years. School Certificate would be a Department-controlled exam, attempted at the end of four years study. Only English was compulsory and students could choose other subjects from a wide range available. As Alcorn notes, 'it is no exaggeration to say that the recommendations continued to inform policy until the 1970s'.<sup>71</sup>

### Reaction to the Thomas Report

At the outset, Catholic authorities accepted the state's right to be involved in the physical environment of teaching, such as buildings, class sizes, class equipment and working conditions. But they were concerned about the 'the revolutionary character' of the proposed reforms and their impact on Catholic educational autonomy and they had doubts about Beeby's role in the whole process.<sup>72</sup> But Catholic opposition was not alone. Teacher opposition considered the Report controversial and expressed concerns about its anti-intellectualism, while the Association of Heads of the Registered Secondary Schools of New Zealand was apprehensive about the limited capacity of some pupils to cope.

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<sup>69</sup> Collins, "For the common good: The Catholic educational mission in transition 1943-1965". p254.

<sup>70</sup> Whitehead, "The Thomas Report. Teachers and Curriculum Reform in New Zealand since 1936." p9. 'Our general view is that the State as trustee for the community has the duty to insist on certain minimum requirements and to encourage progressive developments, but that it exceeds its functions if it tries to impose a cut-and-dried philosophy on the schools or to control the curriculum in any detail.....Hence much of what we say consists of suggestions to teachers...Likewise, where we touch on philosophical issues, we deliberately employ broad and general terms.'

<sup>71</sup> Alcorn. *To The Fullest Extent Of His Powers. C.E. Beeby's Life In Education.* p129.

<sup>72</sup> Collins, "For the common good: The Catholic educational mission in transition 1943-1965". p256.

Academics worried about the possibility of blurring the distinction between secondary and university education and the marginalisation of academic subjects.<sup>73</sup>

However the Catholic reaction was also the result of lengthy consultations among religious teachers and the wider Catholic community. Both the competence and impartiality of the Committee as well as the underlying philosophical views were criticised by Catholic educationalists and teachers. Senior representatives of teaching orders voiced concern about the degree of state control, the absence of religion and the possibility of moves to supplant 'Catholic truth' as the basis of the Catholic curriculum. The Catholic educationalist Rev. Dr. F.H. Terry found that the Report showed 'all the tendencies and trends of present-day naturalism, all the cherished convictions, policies and goals of the New Educational Fellowship, of the Communist, rationalist New Education'. It was, for Terry, 'a threat to our schools from within'.<sup>74</sup> Textbooks for subjects such as Botany, Geography and History needed to reflect the presence of God in the world. A Social Studies textbook, *Man and his World*, by Professor James Mainwaring, was at the centre of some controversy as Bishop Liston condemned its use for there being 'no mention of God in the creation of the world: somehow it just happened'. No mention was made of the Bible, 'the supreme book in the history of man', and use of this book in schools would mean 'our country will pay the penalty'.<sup>75</sup> Alarm regarding text books accompanying the new curriculum was motivated by keeping pupils 'from the insidious influence of text-books which flout Christian standards of thought and conduct'.<sup>76</sup> This rhetoric was influenced by the Church's attacks on Modernism and the denials of immutable truth.<sup>77</sup> At the same time, significant potential benefits were

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<sup>73</sup> O'Reilly, "Roman Catholic Reactions to the Thomas Committee Report." The Auckland Star reported a Professor Cooper criticising the Greek and Latin syllabus, and Professor William Anderson at Auckland claimed a grammar school education, which was previously the right of all, was now only available to students with parents wealthy enough to send them overseas. p120. Dr. Gascoigne refers to some academic disquiet over the proposed syllabus. Gascoigne, Rev Dr Noel. "Letter to Liston re the progress of the draft regulations, the relationship with Dr. Beeby and exceptions made for Catholic schools." In *ACDA, Lis 186*. Auckland, 1945.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid. p124. Terry was the Director of Catholic Education in the Auckland diocese. Naturalism sought to reduce all elements of human experience of nature as interpreted by physical and biological functions and considers preparation for life and adaptation to the environment the ultimate objectives of education. See Redden, *A Catholic Philosophy of Education*. p130.

<sup>75</sup> Collins, "For the common good: The Catholic educational mission in transition 1943-1965". p273. Alcorn. *To The Fullest Extent Of His Powers. C.E. Beeby's Life In Education*. p214.

<sup>76</sup> Gascoigne speaking to Wellington Principals, August 1944. Collins. "For the common good: The Catholic educational mission in transition 1943-1965." p276.

<sup>77</sup> The encyclical against Modernism *Pascendi dominici gregis* held that science and history were atheistic in principle and not merely in practice. 'Yet it is a fixed and established principle among them that both science and history must be atheistic and within their boundaries there is room for nothing but *phenomena*; God and all that is divine are utterly excluded.' s.6 see [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/pius\\_x/encyclicals/documents](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_x/encyclicals/documents).



recognised. The raised leaving age and the freedoms available to schools in subject choice were considered to have real merit.

As the Catholic authorities examined the Report and took issue with state control, the spread of secular values and loss of academic standards, they were also assessing their schools. Catholic post-primary teachers had to face the issue of how they would cater for the needs of a wide range of pupils with varying abilities, in a system that was both distinctively and qualitatively different from the state system.<sup>78</sup> They found that their schools were more similar to state schools than had usually been supposed and that there were few options regarding curriculum alternatives if they were to enhance the future prospects of their pupils.<sup>79</sup> The need to maintain Catholic distinctiveness and a quality education in the new environment was to be a major factor in the education crisis that began to be felt in the latter years of the 1950s.

Consultation within the Catholic community did not lead to an outright conservative reaction. It was more nuanced. Benefits were obvious to many teachers, although acceding to the Report entirely could eliminate any point of difference between Catholic and state schools. But there were genuine differences between those teachers who wanted to maintain high academic standards and continue with a liberal arts curriculum and those who sought a curriculum designed to meet the needs of the non-academic pupil. Those who taught in the less advantaged areas of the towns and cities tended to favour the latter.

A wide consultation process allowed the bishops, by mid-1944, to narrow their criticisms. Although they initially felt there was justification for a separate curriculum because of the fear of 'secular' ideas unacceptable to Catholic teaching, the focus was on ensuring the independence of the Catholic school system from that of the state.<sup>80</sup> Rather than an

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid. p274.

<sup>79</sup> O'Reilly, "Roman Catholic Reactions to the Thomas Committee Report." p121.

<sup>80</sup> The Thomas Report specified a compulsory core of curriculum subjects, involving time allocation for particular subjects and course content managed through prescribed text book and reading material. State introduced secular ideas such as evolution in the sciences, naturalism in biology and social sciences, sex instruction and a history syllabus not taught from a Catholic viewpoint were unacceptable in Catholic schools. In the past teachers at Catholic schools had a guide as to examination prescriptions but were largely free to plan their teaching as they saw fit. Catholic schools, it was argued, must continue to have this right. A decision was made in 1944 to work on a separate syllabus, including text books, for English, Social Studies, Mathematics, Science and Physical Education. Gascoigne received proposed syllabus schemes from various schools reflecting courses directed at what was suitable for boys and what was suitable for girls. Gascoigne. "Letter to Liston about favourable regulatory changes for Catholic schools."

alternative curriculum, they chose to concentrate on ensuring their schools were not controlled by social and intellectual ideas opposed by the Church.<sup>81</sup>

The strength of opposition alarmed the Prime Minister. Fraser requested Gascoigne to call on him to discuss the grounds of the opposition and a meeting with the hierarchy was arranged.<sup>82</sup> This meeting, in September 1944, involved the Prime Minister, the Minister of Education and the hierarchy led by O'Shea. At the request of the bishops, Beeby was excluded.<sup>83</sup> This omission would cause some difficulties later. But Fraser was anxious to make amends for the exclusion of a Catholic representative on the Thomas Committee and acknowledged the omission was a 'blunder'. He agreed to accept Gascoigne as the hierarchy's representative in dealings with the Department. In a 'spirit of constructive friendliness', Fraser expressed his 'full agreement' with the Catholic stand on sex instruction and reassured the bishops that their schools were a valuable part of the country's educational life. The bishops in turn told the Prime Minister that they did not wish to stand isolated and were anxious to work with the Department to ensure that their syllabus was agreed upon and approved and in the end the results carry the same value as other schools. But their schools must not be subjected to social and intellectual influences that were contrary to Catholic teaching, and must allow for a different educational emphasis in those schools without adversely affecting the future prospects of their pupils.<sup>84</sup>

Political intervention enabled the Catholic authorities to be heard at the highest level and their declared commitment to work within the post-Thomas framework rather than go their own way, allowed the Government to reassure the hierarchy that the independence of their school system would be preserved. The Labour Party wanted to maintain the good relationship with the Catholic constituency and signalled that it was prepared to compromise over a range of curriculum matters. To this end the relationship between Drs Beeby and Gascoigne, one a liberal secularist the other a Catholic priest, was to be particularly important as both men worked to produce changes acceptable to both parties. The bishops had been forced to modify the need to 'safeguard' pupils from the influence of current philosophy in favour of promoting the educational advancement of their pupils, so

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<sup>81</sup> Collins, "For the common good: The Catholic educational mission in transition 1943-1965". pp277-78.

<sup>82</sup> Gascoigne, Rev Dr Noel. "Letter re proposed meeting with Prime Minister." In *ACDA, Lis 186*. Auckland, 1944.

<sup>83</sup> This exclusion was at the request of the Catholic bishops, who regarded Beeby as being too wedded to a secular humanist framework. *Ibid*.

<sup>84</sup> O'Reilly, "Roman Catholic Reactions to the Thomas Committee Report." p125.

that they would not 'be penalised in the employment market'.<sup>85</sup> The paramountcy of promoting educational advancement meant the bishops had to recognise the Thomas Report and seek, through negotiation, exemptions that allowed schools to teach in a Catholic way.

A Catholic teachers' conference in January 1945 wanted a number of matters to be negotiated: pre-school education, bus transportation, physical education, Greek, chemistry, Social Studies and School Certificate History. Beeby and Gascoigne first met in May 1945, and Beeby agreed to a number of key Catholic demands. Sex instruction in schools was eliminated, physical education removed from the common core, concerns as regards church music met, languages syllabus altered, English literature revised and concerns about science addressed. The Department showed a definite willingness to accommodate Catholic values which, Gascoigne observed, allowed for 'both an academic and Christian education'.<sup>86</sup>

Gascoigne had, as his key mandate from the hierarchy, the absolute need to preserve the 'liberty' of Catholic schools. It was seen as imperative to have this 'liberty' enshrined in regulations which would give it legal status. Gascoigne was concerned that anything less than legal status would later be subject to change by an unsympathetic Director.<sup>87</sup> But the exclusion of Beeby from the earlier meeting between the hierarchy and the Prime Minister, where the question of 'liberty' had been agreed to, was to rebound on Gascoigne as he negotiated what liberty would mean in terms of Catholic schools. The curriculum issues were negotiated in an atmosphere of considerable friendliness and respect, and Gascoigne clearly felt he had built up a rapport with Beeby. This rapport had not only enabled the meetings between the two men to achieve results, but from Gascoigne's point of view, provided a sympathetic ear at a senior level of the education bureaucracy. Beeby had been perceived as 'rather sinister figure' in terms of Catholic interests, but Gascoigne soon changed his views.<sup>88</sup> So rather than insisting on the earlier Ministerial agreement being

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid. p127.

<sup>86</sup> Gascoigne. "Letter to Liston re the progress of the draft regulations, the relationship with Dr. Beeby and exceptions made for Catholic schools." Catholic concern centered around the loss of religious values and that some textbooks did not reflect the presence of God in the world. But there was a fear that the new curriculum would lower academic standards and interfere with the type of humanities based education provided in Catholic secondary schools which produced intellectual and religious leaders in the Catholic community. Subjects such as Latin and Greek were considered a necessary preparation for those entering the priesthood.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Gascoigne, Rev Dr Noel. "Letter to A.E. C. (Tony) Spencer." In *WAA, Education: History of Education/Private Schools/Spencer Report/ Schools Founding Dates*, #294. Wellington, 1967. According to

observed, Gascoigne was aware of the psychological impact of reaching over Beeby's head and unnecessarily antagonising the Director. He chose to re-negotiate the matter with Beeby diplomatically. The matter was eventually resolved amicably, but ironically Gascoigne had to insist upon regulating the 'liberty'.<sup>89</sup> Beeby argued regulation was limiting the Catholic options and instead 'liberty' be the subject of a prescription accompanying the regulations. Gascoigne made the point that a less friendly Director, at some point in the future, could apply quite a different interpretation to the prescription and allow for an anti-Catholic philosophy to be implemented.<sup>90</sup> Despite Beeby's reluctance to use the legal sanction, he took the matter to the Minister and fought successfully for its regulatory inclusion.<sup>91</sup>

For Gascoigne the result was 'a Catholic syllabus in reality and effect'. As he told the hierarchy, 'it was a freedom the likes of which we have never enjoyed in our school history' and was backed by the force of the law.<sup>92</sup> Both Beeby and Gascoigne needed to traverse a difficult path through sensitivities from both sides and their ability to reach a solution meant the Catholic system did not attempt to go out on its own with an independent syllabus. Gascoigne found Beeby to be a morally courageous Director of Education and they formed a friendship.<sup>93</sup>

All schools were given ample independence to work out their own solutions to the problems of catering for children of all types and abilities within a broadly conceived examination framework. The Thomas Report challenged each school to 're-examine its whole theory and practice, make up its mind about the real needs of its pupils and the means by which they can best be met, and then act courageously in accordance with its findings'.<sup>94</sup> Catholic

Gascoigne, Beeby introduced John Dewey's philosophy of education, called by many the 'play way', into New Zealand '...Dr. Beeby was not in good odour with the Bishops and certainly not with me, for I did not approve of Deweyism.'

<sup>89</sup> The main proposals of the Thomas Report were finally embodied in *The Education (Post-Primary Instruction) Regulations*, published September 1945.

<sup>90</sup> Gascoigne, "Letter to Liston re the progress of the draft regulations, the relationship with Dr. Beeby and exceptions made for Catholic schools."

<sup>91</sup> Gascoigne. "Letter to Liston about favourable regulatory changes for Catholic schools." The Minister H.R.G. Mason, had directed that there be as little regulation as possible in the final document.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Gascoigne, "Letter to A.E. C. (Tony) Spencer." Beeby was appointed Ambassador to France in 1960 and while in Paris was able to continue his UNESCO work. He had been leader of the New Zealand delegation to the first general conference of UNESCO in 1946 and held various senior positions. By 1962 Beeby was receiving tentative approaches about nomination for Director-General. Gascoigne was disappointed to later find out that the Vatican had instructed their delegates not to vote for Beeby with the result 'that an anti-clerical Communist Marxian Mexican gained the majority over the other candidate, Dr. Beeby.'

<sup>94</sup> Whitehead, "The Thomas Report. Teachers and Curriculum Reform in New Zealand since 1936."

education did meet this challenge. Considerable resource and effort was put into re-examining aspects of their 'whole theory', but Catholic authorities challenged the ideological basis upon which the reforms were based and successfully sought and negotiated changes to specific curriculum concerns. They, in turn, had to moderate their sense of independence in order to give the increasing numbers of working-class pupils entering Catholic secondary schools a chance of success.

### Expansion of post-primary schools

School construction continued after the War. Although rationing of building material led to some delays in completion, Church authorities planned for new schools, both primary and post-primary. Secondary schooling had become part of the Catholic education mission since the 1920s, when it was pointed out that the majority of those who passed Standard Six at Catholic primary schools went onto a secondary education at a state school. Why then, the question went, should so much sacrifice be made 'to save the children during their tender years to lose hold of them during the formative period of youth'.<sup>95</sup> To provide a place in a Catholic school for all Catholic children was then extended beyond primary to secondary schooling.<sup>96</sup>

Catholic secondary schools had generally been built in or about the centre of larger towns or cities. St Mary's College for girls in Ponsonby was built in 1861, St Patrick's College for boys in Wellington 1885, St. Bede's Christchurch 1911, Sacred Heart Colleges in Wanganui (1880) and Hamilton (1884) for girls and in Auckland for girls (1909) and boys (1903). St Patrick's Silverstream was developed in the early 1930s, principally to cater for boarders, St Peter's College for boys in Auckland (1939) and St Augustine's in Wanganui in 1944. But the post war demands saw a significant growth in the Catholic post primary sector as new secondary schools were required to meet the growing demands of expanding suburbs. Housing in suburbia was a 'central motif in the post-war social pattern'.<sup>97</sup> The Thomas Report had made it abundantly clear the priority given by the government to post primary schooling. But the Church needed no urging. In the Hutt Valley, St Bernard's College was opened by the Marist Brothers in 1947. At the opening, Archbishop O'Shea called on

<sup>95</sup> Spencer. *The Organisation of Catholic Education in New Zealand, Interim Report*. pp192-93.

<sup>96</sup> Collins, "For the common good: The Catholic educational mission in transition 1943-1965". p150.

<sup>97</sup> Dunstall, Graeme. "The Social Pattern." In *The Oxford History of New Zealand* edited by W.H. Oliver with B.R. Williams. Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1988. p404.

Catholics to continue to make sacrifices for Catholic education as the recent wars had shown that God could not be left out of the classroom.<sup>98</sup> This expansion continued in other dioceses, so in Auckland for example, four new colleges were established during the 1950s.

The re-location of the Marist Brothers' Sacred Heart College from Ponsonby to Glen Innes illustrates not only how the demand for increased capacity was being met, but the extent of government assistance the project received. The Marist Brothers had been given a property in Northcote that was earmarked for another school, but by the end of World War II the site was considered inadequate. The land in question had been used by the military during World War II, so the Brothers sought compensation for the damages that had occurred and at the same time sought to use whatever influence they had with the Labour Party to obtain the best deal in buying a new site. A friend of the Brothers, who had some standing in the Party, was asked to write to Robert Semple with a proposal for a favourable consideration as regards a new site. A suitable site was found in Glen Innes, which formed part of land the government had acquired before the war for state housing. It was hoped that there might have been a straight exchange of properties, Northcote for Glen Innes, but the Government Valuer ruled that the exchange must take place on the basis of their potential value, with the government guaranteed against loss. After working at reducing the differences in values, the Brothers made a claim for losses incurred by the military usage of their Northcote land. In November 1946 Peter Fraser advised the Brothers that the government had agreed to their request. Relinquishing ownership of the Northcote property and paying £3/15/0, the difference between the compensation sought and agreed value, the Brothers acquired the Glen Innes site. A special statute was passed by Parliament in 1947 changing the designated use of the land, and the official transfer took place later in 1947.<sup>99</sup> Plans for the new Sacred Heart made greater provision for boarders and initial plans put the cost at £100,000. Sacred Heart opened in 1955. At the same time the original school in Ponsonby was renamed St Paul's College and continued to service the central suburbs of Auckland. Both schools required extensive funding, but this growing network of Catholic

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<sup>98</sup>"New Marist Brothers School - First In Hutt Valley." *Tablet*, 19 March 1947.

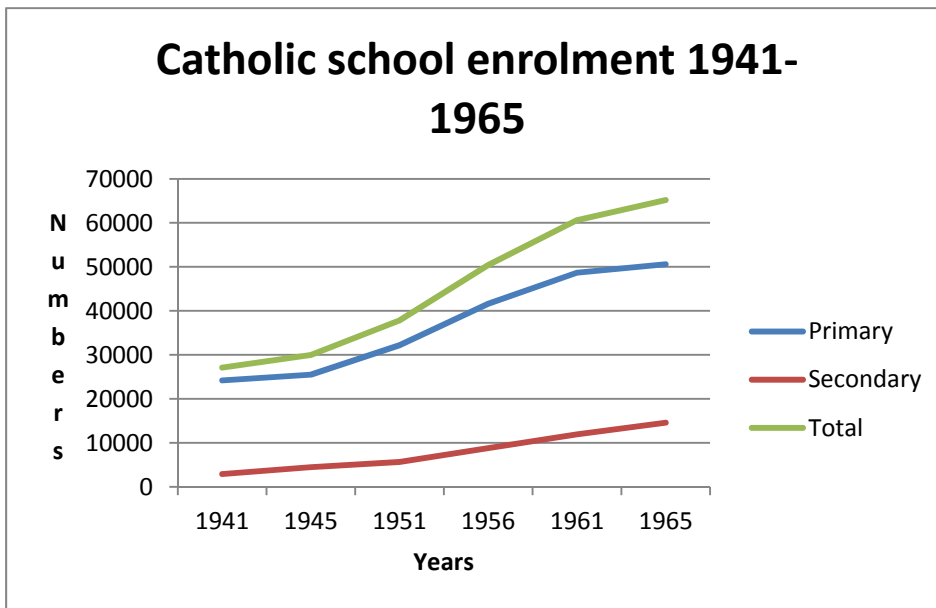
<sup>99</sup> Clisby, Edward. "History of the Marist Brothers in the New Zealand Province." Auckland: Marist Brothers, 2011. Chapter 17. (This manuscript is due to be published as a book in 2014.)

schools, both primary and post-primary, allowed numbers of enrolments to continue rising, a pattern which was maintained until the mid-1960s.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Spencer. *The Organisation of Catholic Education in New Zealand, Interim Report*. p205.

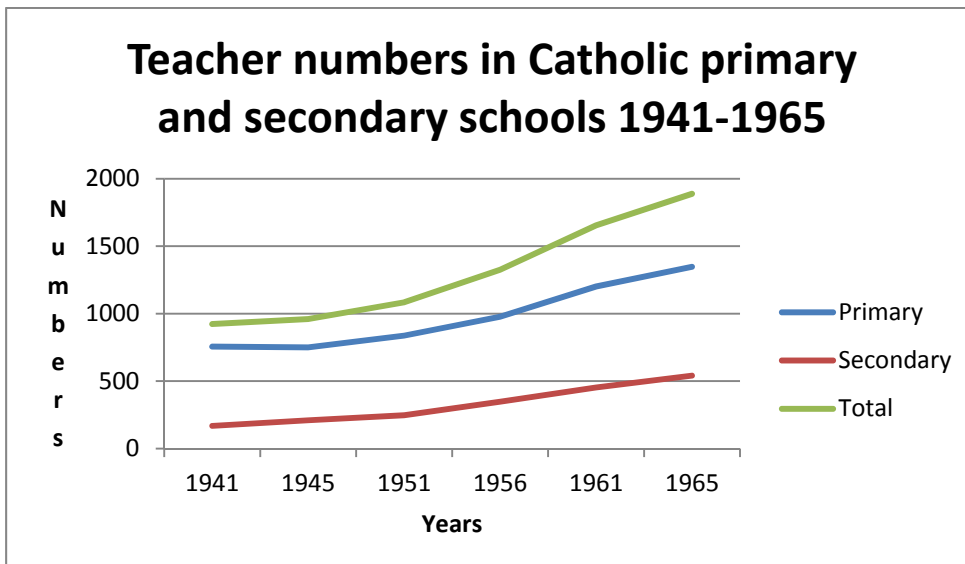
Figure 1



Source: Spencer, The Organisation of Catholic Education in New Zealand, Interim Report, Table B1, p451.

Commentary: 1941 has been taken as a start figure to illustrate that while there was growth in the enrolment numbers, from 1945 onwards numbers began to increase at an accelerated pace. 1945 saw 29,695 enrolments in Catholic schools and by 1956 that figure had risen to 50,392, an increase of 69%. The increase between 1956 and 1965 (65181) was not as great but at 29%, kept stretching resources.

Figure 2



Source: Collins For the common good: The Catholic educational mission in transition 1943-1965, Table 9.1, p301.

Commentary: An increase in teacher numbers did not correspond to the upsurge in enrolments. Between 1945 and 1956 the number of teachers rose from 960 to 1325, an increase of 38%, while the enrolments grew 69%. Over the following 9 years balance was beginning to be restored. Enrolments increased by 29% and, during this period, teacher numbers expanded by 42%.



## School Transport : An ongoing issue

Catholics were faced with a range of costs when their children attended a Catholic school. Aside from direct tuition fees, that is a payment to the school, or indirect where the costs were subsidised through a parish levy and supplemented by active and on-going fundraising, the other major cost was transport. The choice of a Catholic school often meant bypassing one or more state schools and consequently attracting higher transport costs.

With the Government's education reforms offering a wider range of children increased opportunities, the Catholic authorities again sought school transport assistance. Travel assistance had been an issue for many years. Children at private schools had been provided with free rail travel since 1914, but the same concession was not available for road transport. The Labour Government of 1935 began to ease the restrictions and by 1937, children attending denominational schools were permitted to travel on rural school buses. Peter Fraser, as Education Minister, was cautious about extending to road travel the same conditions as applied to rail travel.<sup>101</sup> After the negotiations over the Thomas Report, the Catholic authorities again raised the issue. A persistent political problem with school transport was the inherent inequity over travel arrangements between state school and private school pupils.<sup>102</sup> Transport for children attending a state school was available to the nearest state school but private school pupils would be taken past the nearest school to their destination. Parents of state school children could claim that if the nearest state school was not to their liking, their children should be offered transport assistance to another state school. Yet Catholics could go beyond the nearest school on conscience grounds!<sup>103</sup>

A 1947 proposal for travel assistance for private school pupils was made by the Government, but rejected by the hierarchy as it would have meant undertaking

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<sup>101</sup> van der Krogt, "More a Part than Apart: the Catholic Community in New Zealand Society 1918-1940". pp456-57.

<sup>102</sup> Gascoigne had raised this matter when he addressed the Labour Party in September 1948. With more than a touch of pathos he told the Caucus; 'Only last week my eyes saw this, a by-product of the 1877 Act. I was up-country, and I beheld little New Zealand children walking the roads of this country; I saw State school buses swirl them with dust, aboard those buses other little New Zealand children, and the ones who walked the roads going to a school where they would be taught to love everyone, yes, the ones in the buses that passed them...' Gascoigne, Rev Dr Noel. "An Address delivered by Rev. Dr. N.H. Gascoigne to the Caucus of the Labour Party on the question of State Aid to the Private Schools." In *ATL, JJ Mulheron, MS Papers 5541-001 Documents re the State Aid Conference*. Wellington, 1948.

<sup>103</sup> \_\_\_\_\_. "Letter to Liston re a meeting with Peter Fraser about the school transport problem." In *ACDA, Lis 184*. Auckland, 1947.

responsibilities beyond the Church's resources.<sup>104</sup> Ironically, some parish priests reported that an increase in travel assistance would put a strain on their parish schools, especially in terms of additional classrooms and teachers.<sup>105</sup> By 1950 entitlement for a travel allowance was determined by the distance from the home to the nearest state school with any further cost to be met privately.<sup>106</sup> But Gascoigne found he was dealing with many problems over school bus travel throughout the country, many of them local interpretations of the regulations. Rules had recently been introduced allowing education boards to impose considerable restrictions on non-state school travel. During 1955 the Air Force applied the rules more stringently, causing difficulties for Catholic children attending the nearest Catholic schools to their Base.<sup>107</sup> Gascoigne was increasingly frustrated by the Department as well as the National Government's attitude.<sup>108</sup> He found, to his chagrin, that dealing with the Acting-Director of Education on this matter was difficult and Minister Algie's attitude towards the transport question proved very disappointing. It was, wrote Gascoigne 'the first act of his administration against private schools'.<sup>109</sup>

The school transportation issue remained on-going. But incidents of discrimination tended to decrease over the decade as Catholic schools and parishes put considerable effort into ensuring pupils could attend their local Catholic school. These solutions frequently involved parents paying fares to have buses take their children to school.<sup>110</sup> In 1962 the Currie Commission recommended that regulations governing the transport of private school pupils

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<sup>104</sup> Liston, in rejecting the proposals, cited 'our undertaking responsibilities plainly beyond our resources and capacities, and our attempting what the Department itself with its immense powers and facilities finds it difficult or even impossible to do at the moment.' The concern was that individual parishes would need to be involved in additional expense to meet the proposed requirements. Liston wanted a policy that would have the transport of Catholic pupils 'cared for by the Department and Boards on equal terms' with state school pupils. ———. "Memo to Liston: Conditions for the conveyance of children to private schools." In *ACDA, Lis 184*. Auckland, 1947.

<sup>105</sup> Gascoigne. "Letter to Liston re a meeting with Peter Fraser about the school transport problem."

<sup>106</sup> Fitzgerald, M. "Eligibility for Conveyance Allowance." In *ACDA, Lis 184*. Auckland, 1950.

<sup>107</sup> Kay, Air Commodore C E. "Travel for Catholic school children from Woodbourne RNZAF Base to their school." In *ACDA, Lis 184*. Auckland, 1955, Liston, Archbishop James. "Transport to Catholic schools." In *ACDA, Lis 184*. Auckland, 1955.

<sup>108</sup> Silk, Rev Father D V "Transportation of Catholic school children." In *ACDA, Lis 184*. Auckland, 1952.

During 1952 there were incidents in Dargaville, Rotorua, Helensville, Geraldine, Drury, Waihi and Matamata. Most of these incidents revealed a pettiness by local authorities in interpreting the rules.

<sup>109</sup> Gascoigne, Rev Dr Noel. "Letter to McKeefry re school transport." In *WAA, Education: Bus Transport to Schools, 1948-1965, #293* Wellington, 1950. Gascoigne's attitude to the National administration was initially quite positive. In 1950 Gascoigne went to the USA on a Fulbright scholarship to study educational trends especially the impact of Deweyism, the work of the controversial American educational reformer John Dewey. On his return Algie 'asked me for the sake of the Government to give them the fruit of my findings....(he) was very interested in my work, precisely because he felt educational standards in New Zealand had dropped with the influence of John Dewey.' Gascoigne, "Letter to A.E. C. (Tony) Spencer."

<sup>110</sup> Joyce, Bishop Edward. "Letters to Liston re school problems for 1960 " In *ACDA, Lis 187*. Auckland, 1959.

be amended.<sup>111</sup> Nevertheless ten years later this recommendation had not been acted upon, apart from some exceptional cases, owing mainly to objections raised by the education boards responsible for school transport services.<sup>112</sup>

## Conclusion

In the immediate post-war period, Catholic education was facing the possibility that the Fraser Government might provide some form of resolution to the state aid issue, even on a bi-partisan basis with the National Opposition. They had participated in the educational reforms and been able to obtain concessions allowing them to retain sufficient Catholic character to differentiate their schools from those of the state. There were some signs that Protestant opposition to state aid for private schools might be softening. But this optimism faded as the National Government distanced itself from the issue and the Protestant churches backed away from forming any sort of consensus.

For the Catholic Church, state assistance for its schools remained the ever-present objective. Education was highly significant in the public life of the Catholic Church because its schools were where a new generation of Catholics, both lay and religious, was to come from. Despite the increase in concessions and benefits that had accrued since 1935, the key problem lay in maintaining the infrastructure and building new premises to meet a growing demand. Catholic laity continued to be the principal source of funding while the religious orders provided an inexpensive teaching force.

However by the middle of the 1950s, cracks were appearing in the Catholic school system. The Thomas Report placed significant demands on the religious teachers to gain state credentialed teacher certification, while the policy of having a place in a Catholic school for every Catholic child was creating an unrealistic expectation on both the teaching force and the infrastructure. In reality there had never been a place for every Catholic child, but the growing population and demand driven by both priests and parents kept the expectation alive. This would begin to play itself out in the latter part of the 1950s and lead to questions about the veracity of the Catholic education system.

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<sup>111</sup> Commission on Education, "*Report of the Commission on Education in New Zealand*," (Wellington: Commission on Education in New Zealand, 1962). p717.

<sup>112</sup> Ewing, John L. "The Currie Report: Ten Years Later." *Education* 21, no. 6 (1972).

## Chapter Two: Hear the Case - the challenge to the State

### Raising the Stakes

At the opening of a new convent and school in Paraparaumu on the 14<sup>th</sup> of November 1954, Archbishop McKeefry made an unusual departure from the normal etiquette used on these occasions. During his speech he told the assembled crowd

We are tired of being fobbed off and I say that should another war come, and if it was to be fought overseas, then - my thought at the moment is - I would feel inclined to call on our own men to stay home whilst those who deny us justice can do the fighting overseas.

He claimed 'certain vociferous groups' denied Catholics justice by appealing to the threat of disunity or fragmentation if the secular education model were tampered with. Such opponents were less strident in times of war and he hoped 'the discrimination shown at the moment will be equally evident if bullets begin to fly in time of war'.

McKeefry went on to say, in qualifying his comments, that if the country were attacked then he would expect 'our people' to be ready to fight and die.<sup>1</sup>

The speech was specifically about justice for the Catholic school system. Using such a startling emphasis to convey the message was a major risk. McKeefry had been invested as Metropolitan for New Zealand some four days beforehand, attended by two of the three bishops of New Zealand's Catholic hierarchy. It is likely that he would have spoken to the others, or at least James Liston, since the collegiality of the hierarchy was dependent upon the principle of few or no surprises. McKeefry had been a former student of Liston at the seminary in Mosgiel and became a protégé of his. He had continued to work closely with Liston while Archbishop O'Shea's coadjutor and would continue to do so during his own episcopacy.<sup>2</sup> He was aware that his words would have an impact. And, as the most senior Catholic cleric in New

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<sup>1</sup> "Justice for all children. Archbishop McKeefry states Catholic case." *Zealandia*, 18 November 1954. The reference to opponents being less strident in times of war relates to censorship that was introduced by the Fraser government during WWII, see Taylor, *The New Zealand People at War: The Home Front* vol. II, The Official History of New Zealand in the Second World War, 1939-1945. (Wellington: Historical Publications Branch, Wellington, 1986).

<sup>2</sup> Reid. *James Michael Liston A Life*.

Zealand, was assuming a leadership role.<sup>3</sup> The decision to speak in these belligerent terms would seem to have been his alone.

The rhetoric used by Catholic speakers often alluded to war service and sacrifice. Earlier in the year, Bishop Edward Joyce of Christchurch, when opening new school buildings in Greymouth, linked the Catholic claims to fallen servicemen, 'pupils of State and Catholic schools alike'.<sup>4</sup> Aside from the military analogy, McKeefry hinted at the potential that could be harnessed with the unified Catholic vote. One of the official guests was the Member of Parliament for Otaki, Mr. J. Maher, who had been returned to Parliament in the previous day's election. McKeefry suggested to Maher that any analysis of the National Party's diminished majority should recognise the 'prolonged denial' of Catholic claims as a factor.<sup>5</sup> This remark was clearly a reminder, aimed at both main parties, that the bishops at least believed there was potential for political protest from Catholics over this issue.<sup>6</sup>

The pugnacious tone of the speech not only reflected a sense of frustration about the lack of political progress, but also signalled a change of approach. It had been 77 years since the Bowen Act had created the national system of primary education and the desire to right the injustice had not ceased. The Church though was buoyed by a sense that, ultimately, victory would be theirs.<sup>7</sup>

The strategy of patient and understated advocacy on the issue of state aid was having no discernable results; justice was being denied. 'Freedom' was an appealing and understandable catch cry for the National Party to promote their electoral chances.<sup>8</sup> 'Justice' had a similar pulse for Catholics, who had been confronting the

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<sup>3</sup> McKeefry, Archbishop Peter. "Letter to J.F. Keane of Rotorua." In *WAA Education: State Aid, #298*. Wellington 1954. In replying to a correspondent, McKeefry said he took a 'calculated risk' when making the statement.

<sup>4</sup> "West Coast Schools Building Programme." *Zealandia*, 25 February 1954. Joyce, Bishop Edward. "Statement given to Press Association." In *ACDA, Lis 58/2*. Auckland, 1952. Catholic schools produced good citizens - 'Two world wars had proved beyond doubt the loyalty of King and Country which was taught in Catholic schools. Proof of this was to be seen in Catholic schools rolls of honour from one end of the country to the other.'

<sup>5</sup> "Justice for all children. Archbishop McKeefry states Catholic case."

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> Akenson, Donald H. *Half the world from Home: Perspectives on the Irish in New Zealand 1860-1950*. Wellington (N.Z.): Victoria University Press, 1990. p176. Akenson makes the point that the Church's 'collective history' gave the prelates the sense that they would win eventually. He cites examples from Ireland, Northern Ireland and Canada where government systems of non-denominational schooling were modified to meet Catholic demands.

<sup>8</sup> Returned servicemen knew that the war had been about freedom and understood the National Party's argument for 'freedom', especially the removal of controls and 'inquisitive State pimps'. Mein Smith, Phillipa. *A Concise History of New Zealand*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004. p177. Gustafson. *The First 50 years. A History of the New Zealand National Party*. p54.

issue, one way or another, since 1877. McKeefry was prepared to use the strong language of his statement knowing the possible risks, but confident of raising the issue to a point where the Government could not ignore it. According to Tony Spencer, this 'showed yet again how strong was the long tradition of Catholic hostility to the Government' established by Bishop Moran after 1877.<sup>9</sup>

Other factors contributed to this change in attitude. Catholic Action, especially in its post war context, encouraged the laity to become more involved with their community, applying Christian values to the everyday actions of a Catholic living in the world. Clerical oversight was still a key ingredient, but the laity, or at least those who were actively involved, were being asked to participate in the apostolate of challenging secularism and reconnecting religion with everyday life.<sup>10</sup> Catholic Action was not going to provide any sort of vanguard of Catholic militancy, but the bishops were confident of strong lay support for the renewal of their campaign for 'justice'.<sup>11</sup>

Reaction was swift and tinged with shock at the directness of the language.

McKeefry was a quiet, albeit directly spoken but retiring man who did not find working in the public glare comfortable.<sup>12</sup> As reports of the speech were printed, editorials and letters to the editor showed that public opinion was not only roused by the statement itself, but elicited strong views on the issue of state aid. Editorials were almost uniformly critical. The *Daily Telegraph* in Napier wrote that the issue of state aid had 'been given a new disturbing quality' by McKeefry;<sup>13</sup> Wellington's *Dominion* was of the view that many Catholics would have been shocked by the threat of direct action in the event of another war and the public be less inclined to forgive the 'implied challenge to the State';<sup>14</sup> the Christchurch *Press* saw the Archbishop's remarks as likely to incite 'sectarian controversy' and the issue of state aid did not equate with "the great and vital issues that have persuaded New Zealanders to go to

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<sup>9</sup> Spencer. *The Organisation of Catholic Education in New Zealand, Interim Report*. p205. In 1966 Tony Spencer was invited by the Catholic bishops to undertake a study of the organisation of Catholic education in New Zealand. He arrived in 1967 to undertake the fieldwork; unstructured interviews with the bishops, political leaders, teachers' union leaders, the heads of religious orders and other key participants and opinion leaders in the Catholic and State education systems. He visited 26 Catholic schools and 20 matched State schools. He produced his interim report initially in 1972.

<sup>10</sup> "The New Zealand Catholic Youth Movement." *The Catholic Action Chaplain. A Quarterly for Priests* 1, no. 1 (1955).

<sup>11</sup> Sweetman. *A Fair and Just Solution? A history of the integration of private schools in New Zealand*. p31.

<sup>12</sup> van der Krogt, Christopher. "'McKeefry, Peter Thomas Bertram 1899 - 1973'." In *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*. Wellington: Ministry for Culture and Heritage, Wellington., 2000; updated 2007.

<sup>13</sup> "Archbishop McKeefry's Resort to Pressure." *Daily Telegraph*, 14 November 1954.

<sup>14</sup> "Archbishop McKeefry's Speech." *Dominion*, 17 November 1954.

war';<sup>15</sup> the *Otago Daily Times* considered the remarks deplorable, that a 'sense of bitterness has been engendered' and that relations between Catholics and the rest of the community would suffer.<sup>16</sup> For the *Evening Post*, the threat of war 'could only come from one quarter,' i.e. Communist Asia, and, in those circumstances, it was inconceivable that Catholics would not go to war.<sup>17</sup>

An exception was the *Southland Daily News*. McKeefry's remarks, the article stated, should have been accepted as a means of drawing attention to the strength of Catholic feeling on the subject. There was an obligation on the state to face up to the problem, given that the assistance already provided meant the state has already accepted some responsibility, 'especially when it involves a substantial and permanent minority in the community.'<sup>18</sup> The same paper had written one year earlier that it did not foresee any danger to the state education system in the provision of financial assistance to private schools.<sup>19</sup>

Letters to the editor had a much broader scope. Many were condemnatory while others supported the Archbishop. There were, though, a number of letters that were more moderate, which while not necessarily supporting the Archbishop, put milder interpretation on the remarks. Catholics wrote in to the newspapers agreeing with the Archbishop and arguing that justice was denied.<sup>20</sup> As with any controversy of substance, letter writing debates kept the issue alive for many days.<sup>21</sup> Letters from those signing as returned service personnel, including those identifying as Catholic, seemed to be particularly upset at the military connotations and notions of loyalty, while other correspondence ranged from education and religion in Spain, voting patterns of Catholics to the defence of the secular education system.

McKeefry received support. It was mainly from Catholic individuals and organisations, although one correspondent said while he had no religious affiliation,

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<sup>15</sup> "Religion and the Schools." *The Press*, 18 November 1954.

<sup>16</sup> "An Archbishop's Lapse." *Otago Daily Times*, 17 November 1954.

<sup>17</sup> "Regrettable Resort to Wrong Methods." *Evening Post*, 16 November 1954.

<sup>18</sup> "Church Schools and State Aid (reprint from the *Southland Daily News* of November 16, 1954)." *Tablet*, 24 November 1954. The editor of the *Southland Daily News* was Mr. R.M. Hutton-Potts who was also the managing director. The paper was regarded as liberal as opposed to the other Invercargill daily, the *Southland Times* which represented more conservative opinions.

<sup>19</sup> "State Schools not endangered; Southland paper appeals for justice." *Tablet*, 18 March 1953.

<sup>20</sup> "Letters to the Editor." *Daily Telegraph*, November 1954. "Letters to the Editor." *Waikato Times*, November 1954. "Letters to the Editor." *Evening Star* November 1954. "Letters to the Editor." *Dominion*, November 1954.

<sup>21</sup> "State Aid for Catholic Schools." *Evening Star*., 29 November 1954. The Editor then closed correspondence on this issue.

he admired free speech and thought McKeefry was 'very considerate and gentlemanly not to make a political issue of this before the election, had you done so it would have had a very telling effect.'<sup>22</sup> The fact that McKeefry had chosen to wait until the 1954 General Election polling day was over before making his remarks was largely overlooked by the newspaper articles. His timing was deliberate in that he chose not to have the matter become a party political issue.<sup>23</sup> The Parish Priest from Papanui congratulated him on his 'magnificent call to arms' and observed that the articles in the *Press* were reminiscent of Howard Elliott.<sup>24</sup> On the other hand Bishop Joyce wrote to McKeefry that he thought the leading articles in the local papers had been restrained.<sup>25</sup>

Catholic papers strongly defended the Archbishop. *Zealandia* attacked the *Herald* of the 16 November for articles headed 'Stay at Home Call to Catholics in Event of War' and 'An Archbishop bargains with Loyalty'. These, *Zealandia* claimed provided an incomplete précis of the Paraparaumu speech. Any perception that Catholics' loyalty was in question clearly was of particular concern, and *Zealandia* argued that such emphasis was 'dangerously like an attempt to deprive Catholics of their right to speak their minds on this matter through fear of 'disloyalty' accusations'.<sup>26</sup> The paper exhorted Catholics to guard against the grounds of the state aid debate shifting from 'justice' to 'loyalty'.<sup>27</sup>

'Catholics freely and sincerely accept the laws of the Church and the principles upon which they are based', wrote the *Tablet* in challenging the opinion of the Federation of School Committees Associations. Parental rights were ignored by the Federation, especially when it came to choice, and the way the Federation spoke of 'State aid to private schools' was tantamount to equating it to state charity that could be given or withheld at the whim of the government. For the *Tablet*, 'the Federation does not speak the same language as we do.'<sup>28</sup>

The extent of the protest did not seem to unduly faze the hierarchy, which rather suggests they had some knowledge of the tone of the speech. In fact McKeefry's

<sup>22</sup> "Letters to McKeefry." In *WAA Education: State Aid 1958-1960 #298*. Wellington, 1954.

<sup>23</sup> "Regrettable Resort to Wrong Methods." McKeefry's speech was made on the Sunday after the election held the previous day. Provisional results showed the National Government returned to office.

<sup>24</sup> "Letters to McKeefry."

<sup>25</sup> Joyce, Bishop Edward. "Letter to Liston." In *ACDA Lis 187*. Auckland, 1954.

<sup>26</sup> "Justice and Loyalty." *Zealandia*, 18 November 1954.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> "Some Adroit Side-Stepping." *Tablet*, 24 November 1954.



rhetoric had been growing more direct. At the opening of a school in Titahi Bay on 24 October 1954, he spoke of the 'dead hand of 1870' on education, arguing that the system which still regulates education in 1954 and is imposed on two million people was brought in on the votes of only 27,000 electors.<sup>29</sup> This speech was much more candid than, for example, the cautious approach of Liston when opening a school in Owairaka in April of 1954.<sup>30</sup> Certainly the upcoming election prompted the bishops to issue a statement on the occasion of the opening of the Mary Potter Hospice in Christchurch by the Governor General on the 7<sup>th</sup> November. The statement reiterated the Catholic position and claim. Copies were sent, as a matter of courtesy, to the Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition. The main points were- a) that the right to choose the kind of education is recognised by the Declaration of Human Rights; b) all parents are free to exercise this right; c) Catholic parents have a duty of conscience to give their children an education that is not divorced from their religion; d) parents who send their children to private schools receive no educational benefit from the taxes they pay; e) Catholics are not claiming assistance for the teaching of religion in schools, rather for the teaching that would be given in state schools at the state's expense. The statement asked the incoming government to set up, at an early date, a 'Committee of Members' to deal with the matter.<sup>31</sup>

This statement from the hierarchy did not attempt to imply, either directly or indirectly, that Catholic voting might be influenced. But the Catholic newspapers were less restrained. An editorial in *Zealandia*, entitled 'Election Forethoughts', while not endorsing any political party, appealed to the 'Catholic duty' of helping to form 'healthy public opinion'.<sup>32</sup> It advocated the direct questioning of candidates on their attitudes to religion in public life and particularly their ideas about 'educational justice.' Such an emphasis, it argued, would make incoming parliamentarians more

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<sup>29</sup> "'Dead hand of 1870' on Education." *Zealandia*, 4 November 1954. Official guests were Walter Nash and the Catholic M.P. Henry May. The Prime Minister and the Minister of Education sent apologies. The Parish Priest raised the issue of State aid, but neither politician spoke of it. Nash rather spoke of the Church's opposition to Communism. McKeefry also praised State school teachers as doing fine work in a system of 'many and grave shortcomings'.

<sup>30</sup> "Owairaka School Opening." *Zealandia*, 22 April 1954. The builders and volunteers were thanked, especially for completing the project at less than half the estimated contract price. M. P. John Rae spoke of the 'evil and powerful philosophies afoot' and praised the Church's stand on Communism. Liston reminded the audience that the first schools were religious schools, the devotion of religious teachers and lay people who had ensured a sound Christian system in the Catholic schools.

<sup>31</sup> "Bishops' Statement." *Zealandia*, 18 November 1954.

<sup>32</sup> "Election Forethoughts (Editorial)." *Zealandia*, 28 October 1954.

attuned to the 'injustice which we bear.'<sup>33</sup> Because neither main party had a policy that favoured the Catholic position, Catholics were asked to quiz their local candidates and vote accordingly.

Catholics might be aggrieved but, for the moment, their political redress lay in convincing a sufficient number of politicians of the overwhelming merits of their case. The 1954 election campaign had been relatively tame, with none of the inflammatory issues of 1951. Housing and the cost of living dominated and the meetings of both leaders, at least initially, attracted little interest. Labour and National had drawn closer together politically and for the electorate distinguishing between them was difficult.<sup>34</sup> State aid and the Catholic case was not an issue that troubled the wider electorate and the Catholic hierarchy and press were not prepared to allow it to become a party political issue.<sup>35</sup>

McKeefry's Paraparaumu statement brought the issue of state aid to the wider public in a dramatic way that invigorated the issue.<sup>36</sup> But the campaign was at the point of stalling because it needed more than just the pressure from the bishops. Speeches at school openings had little national or, more importantly, political impact. The agenda on these occasions was predictable and almost routine. Local Members of Parliament were, if they spoke of the matter at all, able to make vague promises that hinted at some sort of progress on the issues of state aid. Occasionally new education policy or subsidies could be announced. Displays of good will were *de rigueur* together with the at times patronising reassurance that the Catholic community were good citizens.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid. Neutrality for Church newspapers was a thing of the past by the 1970s as the Integration debate was in full flight. Rory Sweetman notes that the *Tablet* openly backed National in 1975 and was credited with giving Muldoon a narrow electoral victory in 1981. Sweetman. *A Fair and Just Solution? A history of the integration of private schools in New Zealand*. p206.

<sup>34</sup> Keith Sinclair, *Walter Nash*, Paperback ed. (Auckland: Auckland University Press. Oxford University Press, 1976). p294. Gustafson. *The First 50 years. A History of the New Zealand National Party*. p66.

<sup>35</sup> "Regrettable Resort to Wrong Methods."

<sup>36</sup> McKeefry, Archbishop Peter. "Letter to C. M. Graham." In *WAA, Education State Aid 1958-6,0 #298*. Wellington, 1954. McKeefry's letter acknowledged the reaction '...At the present moment the whole matter of our schools is causing a lot of discussion, and I trust that it will produce some results...'

<sup>37</sup> "Private School Issue at Te Rapa Ceremony." *Zealandia*, 24 February 1955..At the opening of a new school at Te Rapa, Hallyburton Johnstone, the local M.P., 'offered his felicitations and said he would not then refer to the question of private schools except to point out that there was a pleasure in giving for what was worthwhile, and that parents would be happy in the thought that through the school they were making good citizens...'. A report in the *Timaru Herald* describes Johnstone as hinting at the possibility of the Government considering the matter in the future. School openings were reasonably frequent during this period and were reported on in the Catholic newspapers, infrequently in the secular newspapers.

Amongst the letters McKeefry and the other bishops received following the Paraparaumu speech were some advocating a more pointed political approach. The Holy Name Society could be used to manage a campaign which would take a petition to Parliament.<sup>38</sup> One correspondent saw that the debate in Christchurch, over the Paraparaumu remarks and state aid, had a distinctly political tone. In his view, the Editor of the *Press*, the Executive of the Committee for State Education, the Baptist Union and the Presbyterian Church all used political rather than sectarian themes in their arguments.<sup>39</sup> They were, he believed, replacing 'Bigotry, Fear and Prejudice' with something more sinister, namely the advocacy of a unified national system of education to the exclusion of all others. In his view it was important for the Church to act quickly and to place its demands before Parliament. His plan was to petition the Government, using the Holy Name Society to gather 20,000 or 30,000 signatures. Two demands should be made, namely a salary for all qualified teachers in Catholic schools equivalent to that received by state school teachers of the same grading together with a yearly rent for the schools. The petition must be a request for financial aid, not assistance, as assistance runs the risk of relinquishing control, even to a small degree, of the schools. An important part of his plan was to have the petition drawn up by a competent lawyer.<sup>40</sup>

### Preparing the Case

The Holy Name Society was a Catholic parish based sodality for laymen which, after its founding in 1926, became 'the only true national Catholic organisation'.<sup>41</sup> Its main role was to provide public support to the Church in keeping the Catholic character visible.<sup>42</sup> Each diocese had a Diocesan Union, which was autonomous. It pledged

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<sup>38</sup> Graham, C.M. "Letter to McKeefry." In *WAA Education: State Aid 1958-1960 #298*. Wellington, 1954, O'Regan, Jim. "Letter to Edward Joyce, Bishop of Christchurch re the strategy the Church should adopt concerning State Aid." In *ACDA, Lis 187*. Auckland, 1954.

<sup>39</sup> O'Regan. "Letter to Edward Joyce, Bishop of Christchurch re the strategy the Church should adopt concerning State Aid." O'Regan reported that the Anglicans sat on the fence and that was a good omen.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid. O'Regan was of the view that both major Parties assumed that each can be certain of 40% of the votes in each electorate on average. The remaining 20% vacillates and needs to be canvassed for. The names of 20,000 Catholic voters on the petition would be no small portion of that 20%.

<sup>41</sup> King, Michael. *God's Farthest Outpost. A History of Catholics in New Zealand*. Auckland: Penguin Books (NZ) Ltd, 1997. p146.

<sup>42</sup> The Holy Name Society, along with other lay sodalities, was a key aspect of Catholic life. Being identified as a Catholic required the public act of undertaking religious duty and for the Society this

its loyalty to the bishop and oversaw the parish based branches. The Union was effectively the governing body for all the Society's parish branches in each diocese. Because of the close relationship between the Society and the hierarchy, the offer to assume responsibility would have come as no surprise. Clearly some in the Society had been talking about how they could become more active in prosecuting the issue. One of McKeefry's correspondents suggested 'that the time has arisen for others to take this matter of Catholic rights off your shoulders' and the Holy Name Society to take it up.<sup>43</sup>

The Auckland Diocesan Union took upon itself responsibility for managing this campaign. On the 16<sup>th</sup> of November 1954, two days after the Paraparaumu speech, the Auckland Diocesan Union sent a telegram to the Prime Minister, pledging full support to the Catholic hierarchy for 'just settlement claim for disbursement from general tax proceeds to cover the cost secular education children attending private schools including those whose fathers made supreme sacrifice in New Zealand Forces'.<sup>44</sup> A letter that followed the telegram made the point that the voting trend in the previous Saturday's poll was influenced by the 'diverse attitudes of individual National candidates', contrasting with both Labour and Social Credit who had made specific promises.<sup>45</sup>

Certainly the bishops were not relinquishing their authority, but they recognised the effectiveness of having the campaign 'owned' by a lay group, whose name would have some public recognition.<sup>46</sup> Such a campaign would have greater credibility if run by those upon whom the outcome would have the greatest impact, namely families with children at Catholic schools. Importantly, the Holy Name Society had considerable status with the hierarchy. Senior office holders were trusted men, who could be counted on to be loyal to the bishop and the Church, which was considered

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required its members to not only attend Sunday mass each week, but to be prepared to attend special devotional liturgies including public processions. The procession was an ostentatious display of Catholic spirituality, when the laity would accompany a sacred artefact or consecrated host over a set route. Processions took place at both parish and diocesan level and could mean simply processing in and around the parish church or be an occasion involving many thousands of the faithful at a public park or domain. These occasions were a public witness of faith and commitment which helped reinforce the differences between Catholics and the Protestant majority. Buckley, Barry. "The Holy Name Society. A Short History of the Society in Auckland." Auckland: Massey University, 2001. p24.

<sup>43</sup> Graham, "Letter to McKeefry."

<sup>44</sup> Drube, C. "Letter to P.M. re Disbursement from General Tax Provisions to cover cost of Secular Education in Private Schools." In *ACDA Lis 187*. Auckland, 1954.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> As Rory Sweetman observed, 'Realising that further episcopal fulminations would be counterproductive...'

to be one and the same thing.<sup>47</sup> While the bishops gave the campaign authority and legitimacy, the management was given to the Society and in particular Walter Otto, who became the face of the campaign as both the petitioner and the main spokesman.

Walter Otto had been re-elected president of the Auckland Diocesan Union in March 1955. He was an accountant and senior executive who worked closely with Henry Kelliher at Dominion Breweries. His organisational skills were invaluable in collating and presenting the petition. Otto had, in fact, been collecting education related data from Catholic education authorities and individual parishes since 1952. A degree of secrecy was associated with his work, which was aimed at arriving at some 'machinery which is available to us to handle the disbursements of state grants in the most equitable and efficient manner.'<sup>48</sup>

During the twenty one months between the Paraparaumu speech and the presentation of the Petition, details of exactly how it was going to proceed were worked through and the submissions formatted and publicised. The Hierarchy had, in the interests of national co-ordination and unity, established a National Council of the Society made up of representatives from each Diocesan Union.<sup>49</sup> Initial ideas put to the bishops in the wake of the Paraparaumu speech involved a petition signed by thousands of Catholics. Congregations would be inveigled to sign and support the petition. However this mass signature petition was discarded in favour of a single petitioner, who had the endorsement of Catholic parents and organisations.<sup>50</sup> The change in style came about as the Auckland Union grappled with the logistics and complexity of the petition.

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<sup>47</sup> O'Meehan, Michael, S.M. *Steadfast in hope. The Story of the Catholic Archdiocese of Wellington 1850-2000*. Palmerston North: Dunmore Press Ltd., 2003. pp215-6. There were obvious links between the Holy Name Society and the secretive Knights of the Southern Cross. The Knights were 'a select group of dedicated Catholic men who demonstrated their loyalty to their Church by making their talents available to the Bishop, individually and collectively, for any tasks in which he needed help.' Many Knights were members of the Holy Name Society.

<sup>48</sup> Otto, Walter. "Letter to McKeefry re the gathering of information in connection with the Wellington Catholic Education Board." In *WAA, Wellington Catholic Education Board, Reports/Correspondence, 1940-1963, #338*. Wellington, 1952. Otto needed McKeefry to persuade a parish priest to part with some data. He refers to the 'strict confidentiality' of the enquiries and that the material gathered was for discussion purposes amongst the hierarchy.

<sup>49</sup> Holy Name Society. "Brochure (General Information for Parish Priests and all others who will be helping in the Campaign)." In *WAA Education: State Aid 1958-60 # 298*. Wellington, 1956.

<sup>50</sup>"Holy Name Petition." *Zealandia*, 12 January 1956. An early intention had been to have every adult Catholic sign the petition and have that person obtain at least one, and preferably more, non-Catholic signatures.

The objective of the campaign, the establishment of a Parliamentary Commission to examine the Catholic claims, had been well publicised. In its letter of 16 November 1954 to the Prime Minister, the Auckland Union made it clear that the issue of a disbursement from general tax proceeds to cover the costs of secular education at private schools was the fundamental plank in their argument.<sup>51</sup>

During 1955, the Society wrote at least three times to the Prime Minister and Minister of Education asking for a decision regarding the setting up of a Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry. Replies remained evasive, but counselled patience.<sup>52</sup> In November 1955 the Auckland Diocesan Union decided to petition Parliament for a 'just disbursement' of tax proceeds to cover the cost of secular education in Catholic and all other private schools.<sup>53</sup> The Society wanted to make it clear though that it avoided raising the issue prior to the 1954 election, being wary of accusations of opportunism.<sup>54</sup>

But the hierarchy remained in control.<sup>55</sup> The Holy Name Society was merely carrying out their wishes. Any debate or argument about the issue in the press or elsewhere was not part of the Society's mandate.<sup>56</sup> This relationship was well understood. John Kavanagh, Bishop of Dunedin, who had a double doctorate in law, was advisor to the Society.<sup>57</sup> In addition each bishop could utilise his individual network of trusted laymen and women to help provide assistance and advice.<sup>58</sup> Just as important was the co-operation of parish priests. The bishop's directives were essential to ensure

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<sup>51</sup> Drube, "Letter to P.M. re Disbursement from General Tax Provisions to cover cost of Secular Education in Private Schools."

<sup>52</sup> "Holy Name Men State Their Case." *Zealandia*, 1 December 1955. "Catholic Petition For Aid From Taxes For Schools." *Auckland Star*, 22 November 1955. The frustration of the Society was evident in a letter to the Prime Minister that 'such replies as have been vouchsafed have bordered very closely on the evasive' and the *Zealandia* thought the comment 'no whit too strong to describe the case.'

<sup>53</sup> "Catholic Petition For Aid From Taxes For Schools."; Otto, Walter. "Submissions to a Committee of the House of Representatives by Walter Stewart Otto in support of the Petition of the National Council of the Catholic Holy Name Society of New Zealand on behalf Catholic Parents who send their children to Private Schools." In *ATL, MS Papers 1624.96, Folder 3. Holland S.G.* Wellington, 1956.

<sup>54</sup> Otto, "Submissions to a Committee of the House of Representatives.."

<sup>55</sup> Otto, Walter. "Letter to McKeefry re the Petition to Parliament." In *WAA Education: State Aid 1958-60 #298*. Wellington, 1956.

<sup>56</sup> Holy Name Society. "Brochure (General Information for Parish Priests and all others who will be helping in the Campaign)."

<sup>57</sup> Mulrennan, Frances. "Kavanagh, John Patrick, 1913-1985." In *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*. Wellington: Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2007.

<sup>58</sup> Otto, Walter. "Letter to T.P.McCarthy re Education Petition to Parliament." In *WAA Education: State Aid 1958-60 #298*. Wellington, 1956.

their support.<sup>59</sup> In the end though, the decision on the shape and content was that of the bishops.

The key feature of the campaign was to get support from the Catholic population.

It is obvious that if this Petition is to succeed, and succeed it must, every branch of the Holy Name Society and of the Catholic Women's League, every Religious Society, every approved Catholic group and, indeed, every Catholic in New Zealand, must give it whole hearted support.<sup>60</sup>

To that end, all parishes in the country were charged with mobilising support, under the personal supervision of the parish priest and assisted by the local branch of the Holy Name Society. The Petition was to be based upon resolutions passed by each of the Catholic organisations within the parish, these resolutions having been pre-approved by the hierarchy. Each parish was to form a special committee to oversee the plan, arrange meetings according to a timetable and arrange for the resolutions from each parish organisation to be sent to National Council of the Society.<sup>61</sup>

Early in the petition drafting process, Otto made it quite clear that the claim was one of distributive justice embracing the rights of all private schools to share in education taxes.<sup>62</sup> Four depositions were embodied in the Petition. Each one of those depositions referred to private schools to which Catholics sent their children, emphasising the 'private school' aspect of the petition, rather than Catholic schools on their own.<sup>63</sup> During 1954 the hierarchy had sought to make common cause with private schools. In a statement on education, they declared that choices by parents, be they Catholic or non-Catholic, for a private school education, should be financially assisted in the same way as parents who choose a state school.<sup>64</sup> This was more of

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<sup>59</sup> Otto. "Letter to McKeefry re the Petition to Parliament." Reference is made to issuing the 'Episcopal Mandamus' to Parish Priests. A 'Mandamus' is an order directing the performance of particular duties.

<sup>60</sup> Holy Name Society. "Brochure (General Information for Parish Priests and all others who will be helping in the Campaign)." "Great Interest of Catholics - Public has accepted our right to be heard." *Zealandia*, 14 June 1956. This article noted that there were 27 different organisations in the Wanganui Parish, each of which made resolutions in support of the Petition.

<sup>61</sup> Holy Name Society. "Brochure (General Information for Parish Priests and all others who will be helping in the Campaign)." "If there was no Holy Name Society in the Parish, the Catholic Women's League and other Sodalities were asked to assist.

<sup>62</sup> Otto, Walter. "Statement on Private Schools Petition to Parliament." In *WAA, Education: State Aid, #298*. Wellington, 1956.

<sup>63</sup> Otto. "Submissions to a Committee of the House of Representatives by Walter Stewart Otto in support of the Petition of the National Council of the Catholic Holy Name Society of New Zealand on behalf Catholic Parents who send their children to Private Schools."

<sup>64</sup> "Bishops' Statement."

a philosophical decision rather than a concerted attempt to establish an alliance with the wider private schools sector. But the petition stressed the need for a just and equitable disbursement of public revenue for all private schools.<sup>65</sup>

Educating 'our own people' was particularly important. Catholics should be in a position to answer queries and, as the campaign documentation would put it, 'be able to give the correct answers to questions which are certain to be asked by our Non-Catholic neighbours.' Aside from articles in the Catholic press, printed material was sent each parish and distributed. Over a period of six weeks during April, May and June of 1956, parish organisations met, parishioners were given briefings from the pulpit, and prayers for the Petition's success were offered. These briefings were key points identified by Otto, and priests were asked to talk to them at Sunday mass. In addition an 'Information Brochure' was given to each parishioner together with a 'Question and Answer' sheet.<sup>66</sup> This educative process was to be completed before the publicity campaign began.

Publicity for the Petition was centred around a two week campaign involving advertisements in the 'Secular Press', special articles in both *Zealandia* and *Tablet*, 'screen slides' for use in picture theatres and perforated 'sticker stamps' to attach to envelopes and parcels. All the publicity was tied to the slogan 'Hear the Case', which the organisers saw as 'signifying the just and correct constitutional procedure'.<sup>67</sup> Advertisements in the daily press set out a summary of reasons why Parliament was being petitioned to 'Hear the Case' and how a solution 'will be found by men of goodwill'. Each advertisement had a dozen small panels with headings such as 'The Right to Petition Parliament', 'Justice or Charity,' 'The Importance of Religious Education', emphasising the inherent fairness in the Petition.<sup>68</sup> Theatre operators were to be approached by the parish to try and get the best deal they could, presumably both in terms of money and placement for showing the 'screen slides'. The sticker stamps, showing a cross and a schoolboy and schoolgirl and the 'Hear the Case' slogan were to be used by Catholics, during that fortnight, when sending

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<sup>65</sup> Otto, Walter. "The petition of Walter Stewart Otto." In *Archives N.Z. ABEP 7749 Acc W4262 Box 1887 record 29/1/9 part 1*. Wellington, 1956.

<sup>66</sup> Holy Name Society. "Brochure (General Information for Parish Priests and all others who will be helping in the Campaign)."

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Holy Name Society. "Advertisement 'Hear the Case'." In *ACDA, Lis 191*. Auckland, 1956. 'The whole cost of this public information campaign is being paid for by the Catholic community of New Zealand' appeared at the foot of the advertisement



any postal items.<sup>69</sup> An advertising agency, Charles Haines Advertising Agency Ltd., was engaged to assist with the campaign and the cost met by Catholic parishioners.<sup>70</sup>

All parishes were asked to follow a programme of meetings. Initially a preliminary meeting of key personnel representing various parish groups; then a General Meeting of all parishioners to discuss the material, which priests at all masses had spoken to, and released to the people for study; and finally the mass meetings of the whole of the Catholic community. It was at this 'monster Parish Meeting,' that the resolutions were passed.<sup>71</sup> These large meetings were considered essential in demonstrating the widespread interest in and of the Catholic community. The resolutions represented every type of occupation, a 'general pattern of New Zealand's economic and social life'.<sup>72</sup> It was important to show that the connotations of 'private schools' did not correlate with privilege or elite status.

Initial reaction to the November 1955 announcement of the petition was relatively muted. As *Zealandia* noted, there had been no great opposition to date from the general public, 'who, on previous occasions when this question was raised have succumbed to sectarian prejudice'.<sup>73</sup> However Presbyterians, Methodists, and Seventh Day Adventists, denominations which ran private schools, dissociated themselves from the move to petition Parliament and made it clear that the Catholics were speaking for themselves.<sup>74</sup> The School Committees Federation opposed state aid and supported an extension of the Nelson system.<sup>75</sup> The most belligerent reaction was an advertisement from the Orange Lodge ridiculing the claims in the petition.(see Appendix 1) Delegates at a Grand Orange Lodge conference in April 1956 were firmly opposed to the grant of any form of state aid or tax apportionment. Delegates also wanted the Government to control more closely the issue of lottery

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<sup>69</sup> \_\_\_\_\_. "Brochure (General Information for Parish Priests and all others who will be helping in the Campaign)."

<sup>70</sup> McCarthy, F.A. "Press Advertising Campaign for Education Petition by the Charles Haines Advertising Agency Ltd." In *WAA, Education State Aid (Holy Name Society and Otto Petition) 1958-60. #298*. Wellington, 1956.; McKeefry, Archbishop Peter. "Circular Letter." In *WAA, Circulars of Archbishops 1949-1979, #445.1*. Wellington, 1956.

<sup>71</sup> Holy Name Society. "Brochure (General Information for Parish Priests and all others who will be helping in the Campaign)."

<sup>72</sup> Otto. "Submissions to a Committee of the House of Representatives by Walter Stewart Otto in support of the Petition of the National Council of the Catholic Holy Name Society of New Zealand on behalf Catholic Parents who send their children to Private Schools."

<sup>73</sup> "Great Interest of Catholics - Public has accepted our right to be heard."

<sup>74</sup> "Protestants Opposed To State Aid For Schools." *Auckland Star*, 24 November 1955.

<sup>75</sup> "Religion in Schools: Support for Nelson System." *Press*, 7 March 1956.

permits. This resolution was aimed at stifling weekly raffles conducted by many Catholic parishes to support their education costs.<sup>76</sup> The advertisement made it clear that any increase in state assistance to Catholic schools was a case of granting further special privileges to a vocal minority. Quoting sections of Canon Law and Papal Encyclicals, highlighting restrictions on Protestant Schools in 'Roman Catholic countries' and pointing out the extent of aid already given to Catholic schools, the advertisement asked if it was fair and democratic that Catholic schools should be state endowed.<sup>77</sup>

This advertisement was the most sectarian attack to date and brought a swift response from *Zealandia*, which accused the Lodge of gross inaccuracies and bigotry.<sup>78</sup> However following on from the publicity campaign, the extent of opposition became more obvious. The Anglican Bishop of Waikato, Rt. Rev. J.T. Holland, rejected the claim as embracing all private schools. He objected "strongly to being bundled, without even my knowledge, onto someone else's bandwagon."<sup>79</sup> Other Anglican bishops disapproved of the claim speaking for all private schools, while the Auckland Baptist Auxiliary disagreed with any move to support sectarian schools. Auckland Methodist ministers were worried that capital grants to private schools would weaken the state education system.<sup>80</sup>

Work continued on preparing the Petition. Advice and assistance was both sought and received. Lawyers were consulted about the language of the submission.<sup>81</sup> This careful preparation was later favourably commented upon by some objectors and by the Parliamentary Committee when presenting their findings.<sup>82</sup> Catholic newspapers provided updates and the issue continued to attract comment, by way of articles and letters, in the secular press.

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<sup>76</sup> "State Help For Denominational Schools Opposed." *Dominion*, 6 April 1956. The attempt to stifle the weekly raffles run by Catholic organisations to help fund education costs was unsuccessful and this level of pettiness was not widespread.

<sup>77</sup> Orange Lodge. "Advertisement." In *WAA, Education State Aid, #298*. Wellington, 1956.

<sup>78</sup> "Orange Aid." *Zealandia*, 9 August 1956.

<sup>79</sup> "Anglican Bishop Finds R.C. Tactics Unfair." *Auckland Star*, 12 June 1956.

<sup>80</sup> "'Hear the Case' draws fire from some." *Zealandia*, 21 June 1956.

<sup>81</sup> Otto, "Letter to T.P.McCarthy re Education Petition to Parliament." Hobbs, Leslie. "Memorandum on Parliamentary Petition on Catholic Schools." In *WAA, Education: State Aid 1958-1960, #298*. Wellington, 1956.

<sup>82</sup> Hansard, "Financial Assistance to Private Schools. New Zealand Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 310, September 13-October 1956, pp2721-2746," in *New Zealand Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 310, September 13-October 1956* (Wellington: 1956), 2721-2746.

## The Hearing

The Labour Member for Grey Lynn and Otto's local Member of Parliament, Frederick Hackett, presented the petition in the House of Representatives on 24 August 1956. It was referred to the Select Education Committee for consideration.<sup>83</sup> That committee was made up of six National and four Labour Members. The Chair was Duncan Rae, a former principal of Auckland Teachers College, a fact that had not escaped the notice of the petition organisers or the Catholic hierarchy. Other National members were Ronald Algie, the Minister of Education, Arthur Kinsella, Thomas Murray and Alfred Davey. Labour was represented by the Rev. Clyde Carr, Ethel McMillan, Warren Freer, and Philip Skoglund. (The grounds for the Petition are shown in Appendix 2)

The hearing began on the 18<sup>th</sup> September 1956 in a room that could accommodate no more than a dozen members of the public. At the request of the counsel for the Orange Lodge, and with the agreement of Otto, the hearing was made open to the public.<sup>84</sup> Normal procedure when dealing with the longer submissions was for them to be read, with members of the Committee afterwards asking any questions they wished.<sup>85</sup> Otto had T.P. Cleary as his counsel.

Otto's submission was extensive and detailed, focusing particularly upon the justice of the case.<sup>86</sup> The arguments presented were familiar to Catholics, having been frequently reiterated by their clergy from the pulpit, and reported in the Catholic and secular newspapers.<sup>87</sup> Claiming a fair share of state expenditure on education, the submission made a strong plea for the natural right of parents. 'The right of the parent to educate the child is founded in the very nature of the parent-child relationship. It is not created by the state; it cannot be impeded or set aside by the state.'<sup>88</sup> Parents have the right to choose the kind of education their children receive, a right endorsed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Accordingly the state has a duty to ensure that those parental rights are fully exercised.

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<sup>83</sup> "The Petition Is Presented." *Zealandia*, 30 August 1956.

<sup>84</sup> Flanagan, Rev Dr J J "Parliament Hears Catholic Case. Committee opens Inquiry." *Zealandia*, 27 September 1956.

<sup>85</sup> "30 submissions on State aid petition." *Evening Post*, 18 September 1956.

<sup>86</sup> See Appendix 2 for a précis of the 32 page submission and the appendices.

<sup>87</sup> "Opening of a new brick school building at St. Mary's Catholic School, Avondale." *Auckland Star*, 21 August 1950. "Bishops' Statement."

<sup>88</sup> Otto. "Submissions to a Committee of the House of Representatives by Walter Stewart Otto in support of the Petition of the National Council of the Catholic Holy Name Society of New Zealand on behalf Catholic Parents who send their children to Private Schools."

Catholic parents have a solemn duty of conscience to ensure that their children receive an education where religious belief was sympathetically shared between the teacher, parent and child. This was a matter of deep conviction.<sup>89</sup>

The submission argued that education for those who attend private schools is not 'free' despite the 'free, secular and compulsory' clause in the 1877 Education Act and since all citizens contribute to taxation and Catholics contribute towards the wider cost of state education, the refusal of financial assistance for private schools created both a hardship and injustice. Any claim that the assistance currently available was in any way generous was completely rejected.<sup>90</sup>

The Catholic claim for payment for secular education sought equity with state school children, in terms of services and grants for, inter alia, bus and train travel, text books, manual training, and boarding allowances. The claim also wanted full salaries paid and professional status given for lay teachers in Catholic schools; an annual capitation grant of 40% of the cost of secular education as ascertained for the state schools; and that the Education Department pay half the capital cost of all new primary and secondary schools.<sup>91</sup>

Part of the submission asked that the Committee should consider how private schools were dealt with in other Commonwealth countries and in Ireland. The solutions in each of the countries were, it was conceded, subject to special characteristics which were not applicable to New Zealand, but they were reasonable and fair. The submission urged the Committee to consider the principles upon which they were based, such as Britain's obligations under the Convention of Human Rights adopted by the Council of Europe.<sup>92</sup>

Scotland was one of the countries identified by the submission as having an education system that was reasonable and workable. The Scottish situation had

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid. The Private Schools Conditional Integration Act 1975 made private schools, which freely chose to integrate, part of the State system of education in New Zealand. Integrated schools were able to retain their special character and proprietors who owned the schools. A unique feature of the Act bound the Crown and the school's proprietors in an agreement to work through the specific issues facing that school, many of which involved capital works and maintenance. The government also provided assistance as regards the debt crisis which rapidly accrued after 1960. When measured against the demands of the 1956 Petition, the 1975 Act arguably delivered more than the HNS could have ever hoped for.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

featured in the press and Archbishop Liston praised the 1918 Education Act for its fair treatment of minority Scottish Catholics. Liston emphasised that the legislative proposal had come from education authorities rather than Scottish Catholics and stressed that Catholics would never have achieved the changes without 'the goodwill of their Presbyterian fellow-countrymen'.<sup>93</sup> However the *Herald* reported that the Church of Scotland Assembly had a somewhat different view. Public funds were now supporting a sectarian education system, desired only by a small minority, and the Assembly had been repeatedly seeking alteration to what they saw as an 'unjust and expensive system'.<sup>94</sup>

Hearing the submissions in opposition began on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of October 1956 at the third sitting of the Committee. Forty eight individuals and organisations provided formal submissions. Again the greatest number came from education related bodies, while church or church organisations were well represented. Twelve individuals made submissions, while both the Education Department and Inland Revenue gave evidence.<sup>95</sup>

Some 59 letters had been received from individuals and organisations in opposition to the petition. These were not read to the Committee as submissions, but were available for inspection. Just over 37% (22/59) of these letters came from Christchurch, with the rest coming from all over New Zealand.<sup>96</sup> Other than Christchurch, there were few letters of protest from Auckland, Wellington or Dunedin. Most of the letters from associations were from school committees or parent-teacher organisations (60%), while churches provided the rest. Although the Orange Lodge was making a national submission, the Ashburton branch of the Lodge chose to send a letter of protest.

The first to give evidence was Professor C.L. Bailey of the Education Faculty at Victoria University College, who claimed 'Our State schools are the glory of our

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<sup>93</sup> "Church Schools: Roman Catholic View of Scottish Act." *NZ Herald*, 26 November 1948.

<sup>94</sup> "Upkeep of Private Schools: Presbyterians do not seek Aid." *NZ Herald*, 8 July 1949.

<sup>95</sup> Parliamentary Education Committee. "Submissions to the Parliamentary Education Committee." In *ACDA, Lis 191*. Auckland, 1956. Five Education Boards, the New Zealand Education Institute (N.Z.E.I.), the Post Primary Teachers Association (P.P.T.A.), the national bodies for the School Committees Association and Home and School Association and plus four individual schools provided evidence. The major Protestant churches were represented, as were the Council for Christian Education, Teachers' Christian Fellowship and the N.Z. Christian Endeavour Union.

<sup>96</sup> \_\_\_\_\_. "Summary of correspondence from individuals and organisations opposing state aid to private schools." In *ACDA, Lis 191*. Auckland, 1956. Otorohonga provided four letters, Rangiora and Invercargill two each.

country'. He was of the view that the 'long and well laid tradition of separation should continue, and that the State in consequence should abstain both from teaching religion and from financially aiding the teaching of religion'. Bailey's opposition was not unexpected, when, as chair of the Consultative Committee on Pre- School Educational Services in 1947, he claimed New Zealanders preferred public to private schools.<sup>97</sup> Much of Otto's submission was challenged by Bailey who was particularly concerned about the potential divisiveness that the granting of state aid would bring about, politically, educationally and socially.<sup>98</sup>

Other opposition submissions came from old foes. The Orange Lodge, through its counsel, made a lengthy submission, rebutting the key points of the petition.<sup>99</sup> It argued that the real meaning of 'free' education in the 1877 Act was understood by all and that the petition meaning was merely a play on words; that the Catholic objection to state education was an obligation created by Canon Law in 1374 and as such not a matter of conscience; that the petition's claim to be on behalf of all private schools was 'specious' and contrary to the principle that no one has the right to teach or propagate what the Catholic Church regards as error.<sup>100</sup>

The Dominion Federation of School Committee Associations of New Zealand was represented at the hearing by W.J. Wilson, who, in 1949, as spokesperson for the Wellington School Committees and Educational Associations rejected any state aid to schools outside the state education system.<sup>101</sup> The Federation's submission represented some 860 committees and 6000 members. Like other objectors it

<sup>97</sup> Gascoigne, Rev Dr Noel. "Response to Report by the Consultative Committee on Pre-School Educational Services." In *ACDA, Lis 186*. Auckland, 1947.

<sup>98</sup> Bailey, Professor C L. "Submission to the Education Committee of the House of Representatives on the matter of State Aid to Non-State schools." In *Archives N.Z. ABEP 7749, Acc W4262, box 1887, record 29/1/9, part 1*. Wellington, 1956. Bailey's submission rejected as invalid the argument that overseas practice in England, Scotland, Ireland, etc., showed that state-aid works satisfactorily. He claimed that Church-State relations are determined by the special, peculiar and indigenous conditions of individual countries. He considered the Catholic citizen has no claim for exemption from taxation if they choose not to make use of the schooling provided out of public funds. Another issue was the evidence that Church schools were a barrier to educational reform, and quoted the English legacy of sub-standard schools bequeathed to the national system. He was concerned about the effect of State Aid in the recruitment of teachers (nothing more calculated to diminish the stream of young people into the teaching profession...than the development of church schools financed from public funds); who would control the schools if public aid was given; the difficulties of limiting aid and warned of the long term aim of the Catholic hierarchy, one hundred per cent state aid.

<sup>99</sup> Orange Lodge. "Submission of the Loyal Orange Institution of New Zealand (Incorporated)." In *Archives N.Z., ABEP 7749, Acc W4262, box 1887, record 29/1/9 Part 1*. Wellington, 1956.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> "Extension of Aid to Church Schools Opposed." *Dominion*, 5 July 1949. The objection by the Wellington School Committees and Educational Associations related to a resolution adopted by the General Synod of the Church of England in May 1949 for grants towards salaries and other running costs of church schools.

supported the free, compulsory and secular system and considered any state aid would promote segregation of children into different schools according to the beliefs of their parents, which is not in the country's best interests. They took sharp exception to the notion that Catholic parents were denied choice, and felt that if the Catholic church imposed such severe penalties on parents for failing to send their children to a Catholic school, then it would be improper to allocate public funds to grant further state aid.<sup>102</sup>

Ngati-Toa Home and School Association from Wellington presented an impassioned submission opposing any inquiry into state aid, urging that the door against the Catholic claim be kept bolted and barred.<sup>103</sup> Five Education Boards made formal submissions. The Nelson Board did not favour aid, believing instead in the present system of free, compulsory and secular education.<sup>104</sup> South Auckland Education Board was 'very strongly against such further aid, particularly assistance of a direct financial nature to private schools or Church schools of any denomination'.<sup>105</sup> For the Southland Education Board, any change to the existing system would lead to the 'introduction of "isms" which would change the whole way of life in New Zealand'.<sup>106</sup>

Submissions from the two main teacher bodies argued that the Holy Name arguments should be refuted. The NZEI maintained that the secular system was based on justice, toleration and peace and these would be 'flagrantly violated' by using public monies for the teaching of Church doctrines. Educational unity would be affected by allowing financial assistance to private schools, as denominationalism would be divisive and place education in the hands of indoctrinators rather than teachers.<sup>107</sup> For the PPTA, pride in the sound system of state post-primary schools

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<sup>102</sup> Dominion Federation of School Committee Associations. "Submission to the Education Committee" In *Archives N.Z. ABEP 7749, Acc W4262, box 1887, record 29/1/9, Part 1*. Wellington, 1956.

<sup>103</sup> Ngati-Toa Home and School Association. "On the Question of State Aid for Private Schools." In *ACDA, Lis 191*. Auckland, 1956. The submission quotes A.G. Butchers 'The Education System' and how the need to maintain a National education system against State aided denominationalism, keeps the door, respectfully, but firmly, bolted and barred against the Catholic claim.

<sup>104</sup> Nelson Education Board. "Submission to Education Committee." In *National Archives, ABEP 7749, Acc W4262, Box 1887, Parliamentary Petitions*. Wellington, 1956.

<sup>105</sup> South Auckland Education Board. "Submission to Education Committee." In *National Archives, ABEP 7749, Acc W4262, Box 1997, Parliamentary Petitions*. Wellington, 1956. The Board's attitude may well have been tempered by a controversy some three years earlier, when the Secretary-Manager has taken a particularly strict view on allowing the local parish priest to address Catholic pupils at an Area school. The matter reached the Director of Education, who intervened. The Secretary-Manager had been a private secretary to the Minister of Education, R. M. Algie, and may well have believed this would have afforded him some licence.

<sup>106</sup> Rev Dr J J Flanagan, "Opponents State Case, Hearing Continues," *Zealandia*, 11 October 1956.

<sup>107</sup> NZEI. "Draft submission to Parliamentary Committee." In *ACDA, Lis 191*. Auckland, 1956.

that they had helped to establish was grounds for opposition to the disbursement of educational funds to private schools. A poll of their members showed overwhelming opposition to the proposal for aid, reflecting, it was argued, the view that the great majority in the wider community seemed satisfied with the present position.<sup>108</sup> Both the NZEI and the PPTA had been and were to remain significant and increasingly active opponents to state aid to private schools proposals for many years, drawing on the basic themes used before the Parliamentary Committee.

Opposition from religious organisations, groups and individuals ranged from support for the 'uniform and non-sectarian' education system to conspiracy theories about Rome wanting to take over the government.<sup>109</sup> The position of the main Protestant churches had been signalled in the press shortly after the petition process had been announced, so there were no real surprises in the opposition expressed in the submissions, although the Anglican view seemed to be less outright in its opposition and more non-committal. A submission from the Anglican Archbishop of Wellington was read to the Committee, claiming that the majority of Anglicans did not want help from the Government for their schools.<sup>110</sup> Both the Presbyterian and Methodist views were somewhat more to the point. One of the Presbyterian reasons for opposing state aid was that it believed the community, not the Church, should conduct education. For the Methodists, opposition was based on sound education, equal justice, public interest and national unity.<sup>111</sup> The Baptist Union believed the use of public money for the propagation of sectarian views was wrong and that it would be impossible to distinguish between secular education and religious education where both were delivered in a denominational school.<sup>112</sup>

Sectarianism and social divisiveness were common themes in many of the submissions. Most of these submissions spoke in general terms about the potential for such consequences. The Dominion Federation of School Committees

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<sup>108</sup> "More Opponents Heard." *Zealandia*, 18 October 1956.

<sup>109</sup> New Zealand Baptist Union. "Submission to the Parliamentary Committee." Knight, C.E. "Submission re State Aid for Roman Catholic Schools." In *ACDA, Lis 191*. Auckland, 1956, New Zealand Baptist Union. "Submission to the Parliamentary Committee." Knight, signed himself as 'Evangelist, N.Z. Bible Testimony, Palmerston North'. His strongest objection was that 'This petition to Parliament is just the thin edge of the wedge to enable the Roman Catholic Hierarchy to get complete control, not only of Education but of the whole Government administration....' Knight was not questioned by the Committee when he made his submission.

<sup>110</sup> Flanagan, "Opponents State Case, Hearing Continues."

<sup>111</sup> "Catholics 'Seek A Nation In A Nation.'"

<sup>112</sup> New Zealand Baptist Union. "Submission to the Parliamentary Committee."



Associations believed state aid would encourage 'greater religious differences',<sup>113</sup> potential discord was implied by the NZEI submission<sup>114</sup> and the Southland Education Board considered that state aid would lead to sectarian strife.<sup>115</sup> The Public Questions Committee of the Presbyterian Church was concerned that the long term aim of the Roman Catholic Church was to build a nation within a nation and ultimately achieve its own ends.<sup>116</sup> A Methodist minister from Hamilton, Rev. William Francis, was unequivocal in his allegation that Catholic teaching was 'exclusive in intent and divisive in effect', and should not be encouraged by state aid.<sup>117</sup> Questioned by the Committee, the PPTA witnesses argued that social differences would be exacerbated and communities be divided by the growth of denominational schools.<sup>118</sup> Professor Bailey was of the view that state aid, 'the public financing of denominationalism', would remove the religious harmony that existed. His submission claimed there are 'some grounds for thinking that there is at the present time some disturbance of that harmony'.<sup>119</sup>

The Committee did hear four submissions that were not in opposition, but sought concessions on social security, income tax and scholarships. The New Zealand Council for Christian Education told the Committee that it felt improvements could be made to the Nelson system of religious teaching in state schools. Any meaningful support for the petition was guarded or non-existent.<sup>120</sup>

Clarence Beeby, as Director of Education, prepared a report for the Committee. It provided the Members with a brief history of established policy, and the attempts made to alter it, as well as details of assistance currently given to private schools. Beeby also drew attention to some of the possible implications of any wide departure from established policy and asked questions about what increased state aid might

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<sup>113</sup> Dominion Federation of School Committee Associations. "Submission to the Education Committee".

<sup>114</sup> NZEI, "Draft submission to Parliamentary Committee."

<sup>115</sup> Flanagan, "Opponents State Case, Hearing Continues."

<sup>116</sup> "Catholics 'Seek A Nation In A Nation.'"

<sup>117</sup> Francis, Rev. William. "Submission re the petition of the Holy Name Society." In *ACDA, Lis 191*. Auckland, 1956. Francis maintained that evidence of the Catholic divisiveness was the manner in which, during WWII, any gifts they made to the national Patriotic Fund were reserved for Catholic use only. When W. Otto was given the opportunity, by the Education Committee, to respond to the submissions, this particular charge was forcefully answered.

<sup>118</sup> "More Opponents Heard."

<sup>119</sup> Bailey. "Submission to the Education Committee of the House of Representatives on the matter of State Aid to Non-State schools." Other submissions in this vein were the Public Questions Committee of the Associated Churches of Christ, the Ngati-Toa Home & School Association, the Baptist Union, the Inter-Varsity Fellowship.

<sup>120</sup> "Catholics 'Seek A Nation In A Nation.'"

mean. The lack of a detailed proposal in the petition did not allow for any sort of discussion about the implications of such issues as income tax rebates, funding for teachers' salaries or school equipment. What would be the relationship with Education Boards and the Department, how would teacher appointments be made, would parents be free to send children to any school of their choice, denominational or otherwise? Beeby recognized that many of these questions might suggest a level of control that the Catholic authorities might find unacceptable, but such questions would be asked if private schools were to be put on the same footing as state schools. In his view, the whole range of relationships between public and private school systems would need to be re-thought and re-shaped if there was any considerable move away from established policy.<sup>121</sup>

Evidence before the Parliamentary Committee was overwhelmingly opposed to the Petition. Walter Otto asked for, and was given, an opportunity to reply to this evidence.<sup>122</sup> He tabled a 26 page reply. It identified the common points made by the opponents, which were that-

- Catholics were not free to choose;
- religious education cannot be separated from secular;
- the Catholic community was largely responsible for the difficulties and errors of the colonial education system;
- the national education system would be fragmented;
- existing social divisions would deepen and new ones be created by the extension of state aid;
- parallels with the private hospital system and the state assistance they receive is not comparable with education;
- evidence of how other countries have dealt with the Catholic schooling system is irrelevant;
- any move to increase assistance would involve a complete re-think of the relationships between the public and private school systems.

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<sup>121</sup> Beeby. "Report of the Director of Education to the Clerk of the Education Committee re Petition No. 25 of Walter Stewart Otto."

<sup>122</sup> Orange Lodge. "Objection to the Holy Name Society having the right of reply to the Education Committee." In *ACDA, Lis 191*. Auckland, 1956. The Lodge objected to Otto having the right of reply on the grounds that it was unfair to other interested parties. They make the point that the petitioner only asked to 'hear the case', but that the right of reply has allowed the petitioner to have it effectively reheard. The Lodge were granted an opportunity of replying.

Otto's rebuttal, which was in effect a re-hearing of the petitioner's case, was very detailed and gave a robust defence to the Catholic case.<sup>123</sup> He claimed most of the opposing submissions contained opinions, generalizations and prophecies, for which no evidence was produced. He vigorously denied the repeated allegation that state aid would deepen existing social divisions and create new ones. Other than Dr. Beeby, no other submission made any reference to the claim for 50 per cent of operating and capital costs, an issue the petitioner considered a significant feature of the petition.<sup>124</sup>

On the 24 October 1956, Duncan Rae, Chairman of the Education Committee, reported back to the House that the Committee had no recommendation to make.<sup>125</sup> This was a unanimous decision, although a rear-guard motion by Cyril Harker (National Hawkes Bay)<sup>126</sup> tried to have the petition referred back to the committee for further consideration. There was no seconder and the motion lapsed.<sup>127</sup> Whether anything would have been achieved by this motion is doubtful, but there was some muted criticism in the Catholic press of other Catholic members of the House for not providing support. But, as *Zealandia* put it, 'the petition failed.'<sup>128</sup>

The campaign did successfully provide a national focus for the problems of Catholic schools. Catholics all over New Zealand had been encouraged to publicly support it and become sufficiently au fait with the dynamics of the issue so that they could successfully promote the cause with non-Catholics. A laity well versed in the issues was essential if the campaign was to be sustained. However an underlying

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<sup>123</sup> Otto, Walter. "Reply to Submissions by other parties (September/October 1956)." In *ACDA, Lis 191*. Auckland, 1956.

<sup>124</sup>"'Errors Destroy Objections,' says Mr Otto." *Auckland Star*, 17 October 1956. Otto. "Reply to Submissions by other parties (September/October 1956)."

<sup>125</sup> Hansard. "Financial Assistance to Private Schools. New Zealand Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 310, September 13-October 1956, pp2721-2746." In *New Zealand Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 310, September 13-October 1956*, 2721-2746. Wellington, 1956.

<sup>126</sup> Cyril Harker was a Catholic National M.P. and had represented Waipawa and Hawkes Bay since 1940. In a letter to the *Zealandia* explaining the situation, he said that he was going to arrange for Dame Hilda Ross to second his amendment, but that she was absent from the House. He had been busy on the Committee and didn't have time to arrange a replacement seconder. Harker M.P., C.G.E. "Letter to Editor 'Zealandia' explaining why no seconder was available to refer the decision of the Education Committee back for further consideration." In *ACDA, Lis 191*. Auckland, 1956.

<sup>127</sup> Hansard. "Financial Assistance to Private Schools. New Zealand Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 310, September 13-October 1956, pp2721-2746."

<sup>128</sup> "Catholics' Pleas for State Aid Fails. No vote on Issue." *Auckland Star*, 25 October 1956. "Our Petition Is Rejected. Committee's Unanimous Decision." *Zealandia*, 1 November 1956. Keating, Ted, M.P. "Letter explaining his position over the fate of the HNS petition to the House." In *ACDA, Lis 192*. Auckland, 1956. The Catholic M.P., Ted Keating writes to an unknown priest about his stance over the lack of a seconder for Harker's motion to refer the matter back to the Committee. He makes no apology for his not doing so.(see footnote 145, p116.)

assumption was that once Parliament heard the petition, the justice of the Catholic cause would become apparent. The Holy Name brochure 'Hear the Case' was optimistic that the act of presenting the petition and having the issue heard would provide a favourable outcome.<sup>129</sup>

It was not as though Otto was unaware of the potential opposition and he was well prepared when both presenting and defending the petition. This was attested to in the House by members of the Committee.<sup>130</sup> But the petition itself lacked a political dimension. The premise that a just cause was grounds enough to achieve what would always have to be a political solution was a real misreading of the situation. Given that the education policies for both National and Labour endorsed the free, secular and compulsory basis of New Zealand's state education system, any serious amendment to the existing system would require both Parties to amend those policies. Beeby's submission pointed out there was nothing of substance put forward by the Holy Name Society around which administrative implications could be discussed.<sup>131</sup> From a bureaucratic perspective, the lack of detail meant the Department was hampered in terms of the advice it could offer.

The political dimension was in part articulated by the Minister of Education when addressing the House on the outcome of the petition. Algie raised the very real dilemma that a government would have to face in making fair decisions when two systems sought resources. Practical administrative concerns such as the appointment of state funded teachers to a private school and to what extent would the state exercise oversight concerned the Minister. But, as Ethel McMillan (North Dunedin) explained, there was no national advantage to be gained from the proposal. 'The committee did not feel, on the evidence submitted, that the change as proposed by the petitioner would, from either the educational or from the social angle, be advantageous to the children of New Zealand or to the nation as a whole.'<sup>132</sup>

Yet another significant factor that clearly carried weight with committee members was the extent of the opposition, not only the amount of evidence but 'its cogency'.

Based on the number of submissions for and against, one of the committee members

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<sup>129</sup> Holy Name Society. "Hear The Case (Brochure)." In *ACDA, Lis 191* Auckland, 1956.

<sup>130</sup> Hansard. "Financial Assistance to Private Schools. New Zealand Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 310, September 13-October 1956, pp2721-2746."

<sup>131</sup> Beeby. "Report of the Director of Education to the Clerk of the Education Committee re Petition No. 25 of Walter Stewart Otto."

<sup>132</sup> Hansard. "Financial Assistance to Private Schools. New Zealand Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 310, September 13-October 1956, pp2721-2746."

reckoned that 86 per cent of the people were satisfied with the state system and 14 per cent were not, i.e. approximately the ratio of Catholics to the general population. But the committee was also impressed by the other arguments put forward by the opponents. Members spoke of concern expressed over the separation of Church and state, the impact upon the state school system, social divisions bought about through an enlarged private school system and a possibility on the rise of sectarianism. However, as Walter Nash reminded the House, the decision of the committee does not mean the problem has been solved. 'This problem cannot be solved for all time by any decision we make here tonight.'<sup>133</sup>

The Holy Name Society was, in effect, acting as a political pressure group. This was not a role that a devotional group was intrinsically comfortable with. Certainly the aim of the petition was broadly understood by most members. Its leadership was not chosen by way of ballot, rather by obedience to episcopal wishes, itself not unusual in an authoritarian organisation such as the Catholic Church. Walter Otto was the public face of the campaign and contributed a great deal of drive and energy. His commitment to the cause of Catholic education was not questioned. The drafting of the petition and its arguments were the result of much consultation and support from a network of lawyers and other professionals together with guidance from the hierarchy.

Although Otto and other Auckland based officers of the Society travelled throughout the country supporting the petition, there is likely to have been a degree of alienation, especially in those regions well away from Auckland.<sup>134</sup> Parish priests were an important link and were supplied with regular information bulletins to disseminate to parishioners. But some commentators thought that the strong clerical presence in the lives of Catholics made them lazy, and unwilling to become engaged in Church related issues.<sup>135</sup> For others the political nature of the petition caused unease.<sup>136</sup>

As a pressure group, the Holy Name Society had no real ability to negotiate with the Government or even the Department of Education. Their brief was to organize and present the petition, not to argue its merits or otherwise. So even if the Government

<sup>133</sup> Ibid, "Catholics' Pleas for State Aid Fails. No vote on Issue."

<sup>134</sup> Cleveland, Les. *The Anatomy of Influence. Pressure Groups and Politics in New Zealand*. Wellington: Hicks Smith and Sons Limited, 1972. p53.

<sup>135</sup> "Colossal Ignorance of Religion - Rev. Dr. Rumble addresses men." *Tablet*, 31 January 1951, "Let's Face It! The Ghetto Mentality." *Zealandia*, 6 December 1956.

<sup>136</sup> Hayward-Ryan, Betty. "Letter to Prime Minister re State Aid." In *ATL, MS Papers 1624, 96, Folder 4, Holland S.G.* Wellington, 1957.

had seen fit to enter into some sort of negotiations, the Holy Name Society would not have had the mandate. Even though it was engaged in a political process, there was no ability by the Society to offer the Government anything in return for possible concessions or any mechanism to cultivate and sustain useful contacts within government bureaucracy.<sup>137</sup> As a pressure group, the Society failed to recognize that the process was much more than making demands; it also meant having something to give.

### **‘No surrender on education’**

Nationally, news of the petition’s fate attracted relatively little attention. International events of such magnitude as the Soviet invasion of Hungary and the Suez crisis were always bound to overpower the newsworthiness of the petition. Educating the wider non-Catholic public of the merits of the campaign had been a key strategy and repeated exposure in the secular press was part of that. Press releases were regularly issued during the campaign. But much of what was issued was simply a restatement of the same themes of injustice. There was little by way of newsworthiness. Once the hearings started, there were regular and often detailed reports. For example an exchange between Otto and the Committee was reported in depth.<sup>138</sup> But sympathy from the general public was not forthcoming and the Committee knew this.<sup>139</sup> Neither did the non-Catholic private schools provide support as Otto had hoped. Despite not attempting any formal alliance with those schools, he had anticipated, somewhat naively, that they would have seen the petition as being in their best interests and made common cause with the Catholic schools. That the non-Catholic private schools choose not to support the petition was commented on by the Committee as another indicator as to why the petition lacked broad support. Overall the publicity sought was not achieved and while the Church and state issue remained alive, neither the campaign nor the Committee hearings failed to ignite any sort of national debate about the merits of the Catholic case.

Reaction in the Catholic media was more forthright. The *Tablet*, while condemning the grounds for the rejection of the petition, recognized that the petition process had

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<sup>137</sup> Cleveland. *The Anatomy of Influence. Pressure Groups and Politics in New Zealand.*

<sup>138</sup> "Questions Put To Mr Otto on his Reply." *Auckland Star*, 18 October 1956.

<sup>139</sup> Hansard. "Financial Assistance to Private Schools. New Zealand Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 310, September 13-October 1956, pp2721-2746."

advanced the Catholic claim. By being put to a Select Committee of the House and subjecting it to an inquiry, the claim had gained validity, and that in itself was an accomplishment. The tacit admission that there was substance to the claim meant a victory had been won. No more the pleas of a minority, but now an established just claim. As the *Tablet* would have it, the claim was rejected because legislation to right the admitted injustice 'would involve difficulties'.<sup>140</sup>

An editorial in *Zealandia* was not so optimistic. The fact that the House left alone the principle upon which the petition was made, namely the parental right to choose and the justice of receiving a proper share of the tax revenue, was seen as a gain rather than a victory. It contended that Catholics were disappointed in their members of Parliament and committee members, aside from Cyril Harker, had little concern for the justice of a claim put forward by a minority, instead looking to the voting power of the majority.<sup>141</sup>

Both editorials had a distinctly partisan tone, as to be expected, and voiced the disappointment felt by many Catholics who would have been hoping for some financial relief. Yet the rejection itself quickly faded as a prime topic for the *Tablet* and *Zealandia* once the Church leaders made their protest and gave clear signs that the 'burden will be borne'.<sup>142</sup> Certainly the rejection itself was a motif used by Catholic commentators for some time afterwards to maintain focus on the education campaign and exploit the sense of continuing injustice. Interspersed with this was the criticism of Members of Parliament. Initially the reaction was that the MPs in Parliament were insufficiently capable of making a fair decision, and special criticism was reserved for Catholic members who failed to support Cyril Harker's motion to have the petition referred back to the Education Committee.

But suggestions began to appear that the petition had been 'killed' by a unanimous bi-partisan decision.<sup>143</sup> In early November 1956, Ted Keating, M.P. for Hastings and a practising Catholic, wrote to a priest friend to explain why he did not provide a second for Harker's motion. In his letter he wrote that 'The only point at issue in relation to the seconding of Mr. Harker's motion is whether it was discernible (sic) to force a vote. It was known in the House weeks before the Committee reported that

<sup>140</sup> "Case Stands: Parliament Fails." *Tablet*, 31 October 1956.

<sup>141</sup> "Our Petition Is Rejected. Committee's Unanimous Decision."

<sup>142</sup> "No Surrender On Education: Catholic Struggle Will Be Continued." *Zealandia*, 13 December 1956.

<sup>143</sup> Unknown. "Notes for Top Meeting." In *ACDA, Lis 191*. Auckland, 1957.

the decision would be “no recommendation”.’ It was also known that the Government wanted this decision reported back to the House before the end of the Session. To refer the report back to the Committee in these circumstances was completely futile and every member of the House, including Harker, knew it. But apparently he wanted to make a gesture.<sup>144</sup> Keating realized the public would, due to a lack of understanding of parliamentary procedure, draw the wrong conclusions about Harker’s attempted amendment and how some gestures could be misinterpreted.<sup>145</sup>

Aside from his view that the ‘committee was a phony from start to finish’, Keating did identify a positive outcome. He knew he would be criticized for not supporting the Harker motion, but saw that the rejection as being merely a beginning.

This was the first occasion that a clear and comprehensive statement of Catholic claims had been put before the nation; and besides educating Catholics (including myself) on many matters which were previously obscure, the petition had a mental and moral impact on the whole country.

Old bitterness, Keating wrote, has died and opposition strength was not as great as it had been.

He did offer some sound political advice. A good cause was not simply enough. Timing was crucial together with having the right people who knew how to work with the system. Patience was still essential, as success would not be achieved by one big decision of the House. ‘It may be that several decisions over a period of years, quietly consolidated and accepted by the general public, would be more effective in securing long-term gains.’<sup>146</sup>

Keating’s observation as to the eventual outcome of the Catholic cause was prescient. But despite his warnings about the nature of politics and the workings of Parliament, the sense of outrage about a pre-determined outcome for the petition remained. In a speech, Liston made reference to the House being ‘doubtless under

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<sup>144</sup> Keating. "Letter explaining his position over the fate of the HNS petition to the House."

<sup>145</sup> Ibid. Keating recognised that Harker had not made adequate plans for a seconder (Hilda Ross who had apparently agreed to support the motion was absent from the House) and quickly realised that Harker’s motion would be voted out by an overwhelming majority. Such a vote would force into the lobbies a number of members who were not hostile to State Aid but against sending the petition back to the Committee. He observes that ‘However well disposed individual members may be they can do nothing unless they have a majority in support, or can operate from a controlling position and thus command a vote’.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.



orders' to throw the petition out.<sup>147</sup> Otto, in April 1957, challenged Prime Minister Holland about the 'no recommendation' decision, which he alleged, was made well before all the evidence had been heard. Such an action was, he contended, a subversion of the normal course of a petition to the Sovereign and, without that interference, might have led to a different outcome. But Otto also made an allegation that the composition of the Education Committee meant an impartial outcome was not possible. Because at least four members had strong associations with the state teaching sector, there was 'a strong probability that the Education Committee would be biased against the private school sector in general and the Catholic case in particular', given that no Catholic Member of Parliament was on the committee.<sup>148</sup>

Holland reacted by declaring the allegations and imputations improper and offensive and that he was unwilling to have the honour of the Members and Parliament itself impugned. He told Otto that he had asked his advisers if such remarks raised questions of breach of privilege, and invited Otto to withdraw the correspondence. In the meantime he would not receive any further correspondence from Otto.<sup>149</sup> Jack Marshall was given the task and reported back to Holland that he considered there were a number of breaches of privileged matters. But as the letters from Otto had not been made public, Marshall's advice was to let Archbishop McKeefry see the letter and get it withdrawn.<sup>150</sup>

Holland's action was directed only at Otto, whose letters in the immediate period after the petition rejection were laced with a sense of outrage at what he saw was political chicanery around the issue.<sup>151</sup> Although Otto was surprised at Holland's reaction,<sup>152</sup> and felt there was nothing to apologise for, in July 1957 he wrote to Holland saying

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<sup>147</sup> "For Religious Education." *Zealandia*, 21 March 1957.

<sup>148</sup> Otto, Walter. "Letter to Prime Minister concerning the 1956 HNS Petition to Parliament " In *ACDA, Lis 191*. Auckland, 1957.

<sup>149</sup> Holland, S.G. "Letter to Otto " In *ATL, MS Papers 1624.96, Folder 5, Holland S.G.* Wellington, 1957. ———. "Letter to Walter Otto withdrawing from further correspondence." In *ACDA, Lis 191*. Auckland, 1957. McDonald, Minister of External Affairs was asked to comment on another issue Otto raised regarding the obligations to the United Nations Charter that was raised in the petition. He subsequently replied that Otto's arguments could not be accepted as sound; see MacDonald, T. "Advice to Prime Minister re Declaration of Human Rights and how it relates to the HNS Petition." In *ATL, MS Papers 1624.96, Folder 5, Holland S.G.* . Wellington, 1957.

<sup>150</sup> Holland, S.G. "Letter to John Marshall about allegations from Otto." In *ATL, MS Papers 1624.96, Folder 5, Holland S.G.* Wellington, 1957.

<sup>151</sup> Otto. "Letter to Prime Minister concerning the 1956 HNS Petition to Parliament ". Otto, Walter. "Letter to Prime Minister Holland about Government policy as regards assistance to private schools." In *ACDA, Liston #191*. Auckland, 1957, ———. "Letter to Prime Minister replying to accusations of improper and offensive allegations." In *ACDA, Lis 191*. Auckland, 1957.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.* Otto felt that if Holland found the language improper and offensive then 'we plead extreme anxiety and frustration as far as justice for our schools is concerned'.

he regretted the correspondence and asking for the offending letters to be withdrawn. This was accepted and the letters were returned.<sup>153</sup>

The skirmish between Holland and Otto was resolved. But at the time, Holland was showing signs of strain and it is quite likely that his reaction was due to the pressure of office.<sup>154</sup> He was to retire from Parliament in September 1957. If, as was likely, McKeefry intervened, it signalled to the Government that the hierarchy was not prepared to give the Government any reason to disengage from the on-going campaign. Catholic education was fully engaged with the recommendations of the Thomas Report of 1944, with its religious teaching force having to cope with the raising of standards expected in all Catholic schools. Raising standards involved increasing interaction with the Education Department, as Catholic teachers were being given access to their resources and courses. This was imperative if Catholic education was to meet the expectation of parents that their children would be able to effectively participate in the workplace. So the petition campaign had provided 'a clear and comprehensive statement of Catholic claims' which in Ted Keating's view, had had a mental and moral impact on the whole country and its failure could not be allowed to derail the wider Catholic education mission.<sup>155</sup>

## Conclusion

Writing in 1963, J.J. Small commented

The fate of the petition by the Holy Name Society in 1956 could have been predicted before-hand, but it was probably a necessary first step, if only to show more clearly that a different sort of approach had to be made. A real obstacle to government assistance – perhaps the main one, and one moreover that is rarely mentioned – may well be the fear of Catholicism. It is more than a possibility that, except for those holding extreme positions, most objections to State financial assistance

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<sup>153</sup> Otto, Walter. "Letter to P.M. withdrawing letters that may have constituted a breach of privilege." In *ATL, MS Papers, 1624, 96, Folder 5, Holland S.G.* Wellington, 1957.

<sup>154</sup> Marshall, John. *Memoirs Volume One: 1912 to 1960*. Auckland: William Collins Publishers Ltd, 1983. p252.

<sup>155</sup> Keating. "Letter explaining his position over the fate of the HNS petition to the House."

are founded upon an unwillingness to see public money disbursed to the clergy or to religious orders.<sup>156</sup>

A 'necessary first step' was particularly important for those in authority in the Catholic Church. Although it forced a reassessment of the approach needed to secure state assistance, the rejection of the Petition also challenged Church authorities to confront a crisis within the Catholic education system that had been building for some time. The education crisis and the campaign for state aid would, over the coming years, give the Catholic laity a significant part to play in the dynamics of education reform in New Zealand.

'Hear the Case' was the direct outcome of Archbishop McKeefry's Paraparaumu speech of November 1954. That speech was to lead to the most vigorous challenge the Catholic Church had mounted against the state in its on-going campaign for increased aid to its schools. Politically, neither National nor Labour had moved beyond their support for the educational status quo. In the past, agitation for state aid had been relatively low key, allowing politicians, both national and local, to wax lyrical yet deliver nothing. But the petition did mean that the relationship with Government, previously based upon low key but persistent advocacy by Catholic authorities, had moved into a new phase, where the issues would begin to have a distinct political edge to them, and as such potentially become an election issue. Although the first Labour Government had made a number of educational concessions to Catholic schools, and there had been additions to the schedule over time, the petition made it quite clear that these concessions were now completely insufficient.<sup>157</sup>

Of real significance was the involvement of the Holy Name Society. That move allowed the hierarchy to maintain control of events from behind the scene, while the Society's leader, W.S. Otto, its national President, took the political 'heat' so to speak. Although the bishops would not have known it at the time, increased lay involvement, on behalf of the Church, in the state aid issue was to become more crucial, especially as the political stakes increased and a solution had to be found.

Another important consequence was the cohesion of the Catholic community. This was evident not only in the support given the campaign, but in maintaining the

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<sup>156</sup> Spencer. *The Organisation of Catholic Education in New Zealand, Interim Report*. p260.

<sup>157</sup> van der Krogt. "More a Part than Apart: the Catholic Community in New Zealand Society 1918-1940." Education concessions made by the Labour Government are documented in pps 456-462.

authority of the hierarchy and clergy in general. This was a period of the 'more traditional Catholic triumphalism,' when census data showed modest growth for the Church, while mainstream Protestant churches were experiencing relative declines.<sup>158</sup> Clerical authority would begin to be seriously challenged by the twin forces of societal change and Vatican II, another decade away. In 1956 though, there were no concerted cries from within the Catholic community to either abandon or modify the campaign. The campaign wanted its demands met, without any change in the ownership of schools or how they were managed, and Catholic parishes unanimously supported those demands.<sup>159</sup> Leaving an injustice, whether perceived or real, unresolved was always risky politics, especially if the Catholic vote might be somehow rallied over this issue, and combine with other grievances to oust a government.<sup>160</sup>

'Hear the Case' was designed to bring about a political change by demonstrating the inherent unfairness in the free, compulsory and secular design of New Zealand's state education policy. The campaign attempted to engage the non-Catholic public and persuade them that the Catholic position presented no harm to the existing state system, and that its demands were reasonable and fair. Fairness and the lack of it was the campaign's principal argument. From the start, the thrust of the campaign emphasised the unfairness by the state in denying parents the right to follow their religious convictions as far as their children's education was concerned, and the unfairness in not having a more equitable share of the taxation they paid for their children's education.

Organisers were convinced that there was a considerable groundswell of public support for religion being taught in schools, and that this would help convince the parliamentarians of the merits of the Catholic case. Organisers had hoped for support from non-Catholic private schools, as the petition was framed in terms of all

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<sup>158</sup> Reid. *James Michael Liston A Life*. p256.

<sup>159</sup> Holy Name Society, Gisborne. "Letter to Auckland Diocesan Union expressing reservations at the proposed programme for 1957, together with a memo detailing their concerns " In *ACDA, Lis 217*. Auckland, 1957. The letter notes the immediate and enthusiastic response to the Petition in the Parish. There were strong reservations, however, about the subsequent moves by the HNS to continue the campaign.

<sup>160</sup> Murray, T.T. "Letter to E.H. Halstead (Secretary of the Caucus)." In *ATL, MS Papers 1624.96, Folder 4, Holland S.G.* Wellington, 1957. Murray (M.P. Taranaki) reported that at a local wedding (in Stratford) the 'R.C. priest solemnly advised his Catholic hearers that there was only one party to vote for and that was S.C.' His informant saw local National supporters had been discussing politics and Social Credit in particular. Murray was of the view that this would not have been an isolated case and 'they would vote for any party that will give them financial aid for their schools'.

private education rights, not just Catholic schools. Attempts to foster a common cause had been attempted in the immediate post-war years, but the 1950s were, for the Catholic Church, 'still a time of more traditional triumphalism'.<sup>161</sup> In reality both the Catholic and non-Catholic private schools knew little about each other in terms of education philosophy, system processes and the problems they were each coping with. Another obstacle to co-operation was the potential negative reaction of some congregations who would have been uncomfortable with the prospect of co-operation and pressured their church to modify or withdraw support. As it was, Protestant Churches were lined up in solid opposition and the inability to attract the support of the wider private school sector did influence the Education Committee, who felt that without any reasonable degree of unity, a favourable recommendation would be rushing ahead of public opinion.

Overall, the weight of evidence against the petition was decisive. But strategically, it was a mistake to present the issue of state aid as a relatively simple matter that could be resolved by a well prepared campaign. The campaign did not take into account how important politics would be in the most political environment of all, Parliament. Certainly senior Churchmen were tired of patient advocacy behind the scenes. The need to inject real urgency into a state aid campaign was becoming more necessary given the rapid expansion and rising costs within the Catholic education sector. However the petition ended up becoming an ultimatum! Either the Parliament granted the prayers in the petition or they didn't. The Holy Name Society was given no latitude by the hierarchy to deviate from the terms of the petition. There was no engagement with politicians as to what might be a workable compromise, nor did the petition give any suggestion of a political solution. The petition prayers were quite unambiguous and did not recognise that a matter of such major importance would involve a great deal of political resource and goodwill. So the political consequence was that the outcome was determined before the hearings began, which was in itself a mark of political reality and a measure of the naiveté of the petition's sponsors.<sup>162</sup>

Yet the hierarchy had had recent experience with state's educational reform. Implementation of the Mason Report from 1944 had involved the Church seeking a number of concessions, which, through patient advocacy, had been successful. The

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<sup>161</sup> Reid. *James Michael Liston A Life*. p256.

<sup>162</sup> Keating. "Letter explaining his position over the fate of the HNS petition to the House."

issues around state aid were much more complex, but the success of the Catholic position on the Thomas Report was due to politicking and preparedness to compromise.

Nevertheless, the timing of the petition had the effect of bringing out into the open the last real vestiges of sectarianism, albeit, for the most part, couched in benign terms. From 1957 onwards the extent of opposition to state aid from the Protestant Churches diminished in tone and in some cases moved to cautious support. The momentum for opposition began to move towards the two main state teacher organisations and issues dealing with the realities of educational politics.

Despite the best efforts of Walter Otto and Holy Name Society, the 'fear of Catholicism' may well have been too great a hurdle to negotiate in 1956.<sup>163</sup> While the reforms of Vatican II were still a decade away, the Catholic world was still shrouded in mystery for most non-Catholics. Public monies could be given to charitable welfare organisations run by Catholic religious without any real demur, but Catholic education, run by Catholic religious, was still treated with suspicion.

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<sup>163</sup> Spencer. *The Organisation of Catholic Education in New Zealand, Interim Report*. p260.

## Chapter Three: Cross Currents

### Introduction

In the aftermath of the 1956 petition hearings, the Church endeavoured to maintain attention on the campaign for state assistance. Walter Otto outlined a programme that was designed to put pressure on politicians to support the campaign and convince the government that it had the support that the petition hearings showed was lacking. Yet the 1956 campaign lacked the necessary political subtlety to achieve the breakthrough needed and Otto's 1957 programme was more of the same. Its momentum fell away and this chapter considers the issues that overtook Catholic education in the years 1957 through to 1960.

Politically this period was a time of little real engagement with the main political parties. They continued to endorse the principle of free, compulsory and secular education in their education policies and publicly supported a proposed governmental inquiry into education as providing a solution to the issue of state aid. A 1958 conference on religious instruction in state schools, sponsored by the Minister of Education, did reveal a sea change occurring in terms of the willingness of both Protestant and Catholic authorities to engage with common education issues.

The most serious consequence for Catholic education authorities at this time was the realisation that their education system was in crisis. Although the lack of financial assistance to their schools was a significant component of the problem, there were other critical issues which the Church authorities failed to recognise. Data gathering and analysis, which would have warned them much earlier of a looming crisis, was inadequate. What became obvious was that the traditional means of coping with change did not function in a climate of increased demand for Catholic schooling coupled with rising expectations of educational achievement within the Catholic system. The Church in New Zealand had to deal with the realities of the modern, democratic state, where change was occurring at a rapid pace. Its anti-modernist dogma was not conducive to looking at possible solutions that could be useful politically.

A large and sustained increase in pupil numbers precipitated the crisis. Class sizes grew as the religious teaching staff struggled to cope. A major feature of the crisis

was the state of the teaching religious. Recruitment to the religious orders had remained steady, yet more men and women were needed. But it was not only the numbers, but the conditions under which these Sisters and Brothers worked. Catholic school class numbers were much greater than those in state schools and questions were being asked about the quality of the education. Lay teachers now had to be employed. Costs escalated and as a remedy, school fees for primary schools were introduced.

During this time there arose some unease about the adequacy of the hierarchy's response to the growing crisis. Their leadership as churchmen remained intact, but their inability to find solutions did lead to a disgruntled laity assuming a more prominent place in the governance of the school system that they owned.

This chapter considers how the Holy Name Society, as the agent for the Church when presenting the 1956 petition to Parliament, continued to press for its original demands while the climate was beginning to change as the government sought more co-operation from the churches. This change was beginning to be shown at the 1958 Conference on Religious Instruction in state schools where both Protestant and Catholic delegates engaged with common issues.

The majority of the chapter is concerned with the growing Catholic education crisis, as criticism began to emerge questioning aspects of the education mission. The situation for the teaching orders and the overall teaching environment is highlighted as are difficulties in communication and teacher supply. A solution to the latter problem lay in employing lay teachers, whose costs had to be met from an already stretched budget. Shortages in classroom space meant more Catholic children were forced to attend state schools and in response to this the Confraternity of the Christian Doctrine (CCD) was developed. CCD emphasised greater parental involvement in the religious education of their children. During this period the Catholic Church had to find answers to contentious issues within its education system while unable to break with the traditional teachings which underpinned its education system.

### **Post-petition reaction**

Catholic educational claims were given a set-back by the petition's rejection. But as early as December 1956, public statements were being made about Catholics'



determination to press on with the claim for a just share of their taxes for their own schools.<sup>1</sup> When the plan for the 1957 campaign emerged, the emphasis was upon maintaining pressure on politicians for their support for financial assistance as well as a continuing effort to increase the understanding of Catholic and non-Catholic alike about the issues at stake.<sup>2</sup> Catholic organisations and groups were given a detailed set of objectives to be met. The aim was to have members of the Holy Name Society, Catholic Women's League and other Catholic groups become much more active in challenging their local members of Parliament and senior figures in the government. At the same time they were urged (under the guidance of the parish priest) to make contact with Protestant clergy and their congregations, to try and achieve a 'sympathetic understanding'. This campaign asked for a lot of time and commitment from Catholics.

Not everyone was happy with the direction the campaign was taking.<sup>3</sup> Concerns were raised about the absence of consultation as regards the 1957 campaign, especially the political directives. Critics saw the proposal to question members of Parliament as to their personal attitudes as fraught with danger. Such a direct line of questioning did not take account of party policies and political realities and could alienate existing support. Party members had an obligation to support party policies and both political parties shared the same view on a free, secular and compulsory education system. The campaign approach would invite hostility rather than understanding. As well, this type of campaign could, it was argued, rouse the type of sectarian bitterness that became apparent during the petition hearings. Just as damaging was the real chance that Catholic influence in the Labour Party and trade unions could be marginalised. A group of Catholic men who held senior positions in those organisations might well be sidelined. The character of the 1957 campaign

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<sup>1</sup> "No Surrender On Education: Catholic Struggle Will Be Continued."

<sup>2</sup> Holy Name Society. "The Catholic Campaign for Extension of Financial Assistance to Private Schools; Policy for 1957." In *WAA, Catholic Education Office, Archbishops File 1947-70 (1) #330*. Wellington, 1957.

<sup>3</sup> ———. "Letter to Auckland Diocesan Union expressing reservations at the proposed programme for 1957, together with a memo detailing their concerns ". In 1958 the Franklin Branch of the HNS considered that the state aid campaign should be managed by an organisation of school committees, while the Cambridge Branch declared they were not in favour of the Society being used as a political pressure group. Buckley. "The Holy Name Society. A Short History of the Society in Auckland." p33.

would, it was felt, be a matter of debate in every Labour Representation Council throughout the country.<sup>4</sup>

The Gisborne Holy Name Society raised the question of a spiritual society becoming a political pressure group. For them, the tenor of the 1957 campaign was outside the function of the Holy Name Society. Instead, such a campaign should be headed by a lay organisation especially set up to run it.<sup>5</sup> Otto's 1957 campaign proposed a direct political approach which ignored the subtleties Ted Keating M.P. had advocated, relying instead on brow-beating politicians into submission.<sup>6</sup>

Engaging in overt political action as a spiritual organisation was a step too far for some Catholics. The merging of religion and politics was becoming too uncomfortable. Since the late 1940s, papal pronouncements had made it quite clear that Catholic Action was an apostolate of the laity under the direction of the bishop. It was an umbrella organisation under which a range of Catholic groups, such as the Holy Name Society, exercised their obligation to live and promote the observance of Christian principles. Obedience to the bishop, and by extension, the Church, was paramount. But the popes made it quite clear that Catholic Action must remain clear of party politics. This did not in any way exclude Catholics, who belonged to a Catholic Action group, from belonging to a political organisation, but the emphasis was to ensure the two were separated.<sup>7</sup>

Not that Otto had lost any enthusiasm. Together with senior members of the Holy Name Society, he led a deputation to meet with the Deputy Prime Minister, Jack Marshall, in October 1957. Otto reiterated the Catholic case, asking that National favourably consider granting taxation relief if returned in the November elections. Marshall promised nothing, but did ask about such issues as school fees and lay teachers.<sup>8</sup> Otto did try for some leverage by referring to the Social Credit promise to

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<sup>4</sup> Holy Name Society. "Letter to Auckland Diocesan Union expressing reservations at the proposed programme for 1957, together with a memo detailing their concerns".

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ted Keating was the M.P. for Hastings and a practising Catholic. After the furore over the HNS petition had begun to subside, Keating wrote to a priest friend advising that the approach to the issue needed a different approach where timing, patience and the right people were essential as achieving the desired result would be a long process. Keating. "Letter explaining his position over the fate of the HNS petition to the House."

<sup>7</sup> "The Pope and Catholic Action." *Tablet*, 23 May 1951. Rumble, Rev Dr L. "Catholic Action." *Tablet*, 15 April 1953. "The Holy Father and Lay Action." *Tablet*, 16 October 1957.

<sup>8</sup> Prime Minister's Office. "Deputation to the Hon. J.W. Marshall (Deputy Prime Minister) on Wednesday, 16 October 1957." In *ATL, MS Papers, 1624, 96, Folder 3, Holland S.G.* Wellington, 1957.

make taxation concessions and another member of the delegation claimed how a 'fair and reasonable statement' on aid to private schools would influence the Catholic swinging vote. Although McKeefry had had occasional meetings with National Government ministers in the past, this was the first significant meeting between the Government and the Church on education since the early 1950s.<sup>9</sup> The Holy Name Society was still the 'face' of Catholic educational protest and, despite the animosity between Otto and Holland in the aftermath of the 1956 petition, the Government opted to meet with them, recognising that for many Catholic National voters, this sort of gesture would be useful.

In November 1957, shortly before the election, Otto attacked politicians for trading on Catholic conscience, 'knowing that in no circumstances will we cease to operate our present schools, in no circumstances will we fail to provide in the future for as many of our children as our resources will permit.'<sup>10</sup> Both political parties had reaffirmed their respective education policies as being based upon the 'free, secular and compulsory' clause of the Education Act. This, Otto claimed, went against the wishes of 80 per cent of New Zealanders who supported the New Zealand Council of Christian Education in its efforts to have the Nelson system extended. Here was the evidence, he claimed, that showed how the fears of sectarianism, which were a factor in rejecting the petition, were totally unfounded. He vigorously challenged the Prime Minister's assertion that private schools received a great deal of assistance, pointing out that assistance was not available for the major costs of running a school such as building and grounds maintenance and teachers' salaries.<sup>11</sup>

It had always been evident that Catholic schools were at the core of the campaign for state aid. Although the hierarchy had, in 1954, adopted a more inclusive argument for state aid, i.e. from solely that of Catholic schools to justice for all parents who chose a private school for their children, the vast majority of schools affected were

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<sup>9</sup> McKeefry had a low opinion of the Minister of Education, Ronald Algie. In a letter to the Rector of St. Bedes College he referred to Algie as '...a characterless, spineless individual with an ability more readily associated with a glib, clever leader of a school debating team.' McKeefry, Archbishop Peter. "Letter to Fr. J. Mannix of St. Bede's College." In *WAA; Education, Interdenom. Committee and Association of Independent Schools, #290*. Wellington, 1953. He seemed to prefer to work through Father Gascoigne and his relationship with Clarence Beeby to resolve issues such as access to state schools and school transport concerns.

<sup>10</sup> "Politicians Have Traded On Catholic Conscience, Says Mr. Otto." *Tablet*, 13 November 1957. Otto addressed a gathering of Holy Name men in Remuera about justice for private schools. During his speech he accused the Minister, Mr Algie, who was the M.P. for Remuera, for doing nothing other than promising to call the interested parties together at some time.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

Catholic.<sup>12</sup> Catholics were now being urged to see the issue not simply in Catholic terms, but as having wider Christian implications. 'It is not as Catholics that we fight, and not because of our needs, but as Christians - and as men seeking justice.'<sup>13</sup> The *Tablet* made the point that the terms 'subsidy' and 'state aid' suggest a kind of privileged grant from public funds, when Catholics were only asking for what was rightfully their share of tax revenue.<sup>14</sup> Since the majority of private schools were Catholic, the broad issue of state aid was perceived by the wider public as principally affecting Catholic schools.<sup>15</sup> In his evidence to the Education Committee in 1956, the former Secretary of the Bible in Schools League, Rev. E. O. Blamires, did not consider that the religious and secular elements of the Catholic claim could be separated. 'To give aid to one is necessarily to give aid to the other.'<sup>16</sup> Most Catholics, however, understood it to be about their schools and the financial cost they bore. As the Chair of the Taita Catholic Home and School Association put it at the opening of school extensions, '...the overall cost of this school, £35,000, is the responsibility of, at the most, 300 wage earners, who have also to contribute their full share in taxation to the cost of the state system of education.'<sup>17</sup> Even though non-Catholic support for the petition at the Select Committee hearings had been almost non-existent, the mood was changing. Just as significant was the gradual change to how the state aid question was to be addressed by the Church. While the Holy Name Society, through its President, continued to challenge the status quo, the Government was signalling co-operation amongst the churches was likely to achieve results.

Religious instruction in state schools had long been contentious. Between 1877 and 1935 some forty-two bills were put before parliament attempting to modify the secular clause regarding primary school education.<sup>18</sup> Although the Bible in Schools League had continued to oppose the Nelson system until the mid-1930s, the election of the

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<sup>12</sup> "Bishops' Statement."

<sup>13</sup> Veritas. "Spotlight on New Zealand: Post-Primary Teachers Afraid." *Tablet*, 28 May 1958.

<sup>14</sup> "Do Catholics Ask For A Special Subsidy?". *Tablet*, 19 February 1958.

<sup>15</sup> Gascoigne. "Report of Interview with Council of Christian Education." Gascoigne had a meeting with Revs Bibby and Grocott of the Council. He was making the point that religion did not enter into the question of State aid for Catholic schools, in that the claim was for payment from the State for the teaching of secular subjects and was a separate issue from the teaching of religion. The reply was that 'in the mind of the average person, religion seems inextricably to be bound up with the question of State Aid in private schools,' and further the 'impression is widespread that the Catholic Church in fighting its claims is fighting for Catholic schools'.

<sup>16</sup> Blamires, Rev E O. "Evidence to the Education Committee." In *ACDA, Lis 191*. Auckland, 1956.

<sup>17</sup> Veritas. "Spotlight on New Zealand: Post-Primary Teachers Afraid."

<sup>18</sup> Beward. *Godless Schools? A Study in Protestant Reactions to the Education Act of 1877*. p86.

Labour government in 1935 prompted a fresh look by the League at the possibilities the Nelson system offered. Their renewed efforts continued with the League's successor, the New Zealand Council for Christian Education. Catholics remained interested in the Nelson system as it was the one means of accessing Catholic children who attended state schools.<sup>19</sup> An estimate by the Commission on Education, which sat from 1960-1962, put the number of children of Catholic parents who were enrolled in state schools at one quarter, thought to number between 15,000 to 20,000 primary and secondary school pupils.<sup>20</sup> Reaching these children, many of whom would have been excluded by there being no Catholic school available or the lack of available classroom space in existing schools, was particularly important given the papal warnings about the public school and 'occasions for moral and religious shipwreck for incautious youth'.<sup>21</sup>

### **The Conference on Religious Instruction in State Schools**

On 18 June 1958 a Labour Government sponsored conference on religious instruction in state schools began in Wellington. The Minister of Education, Phil Skoglund, was concerned that practices regarding the delivery of religious education to those schools were either illegal or bordering on it. It was a preliminary conference, whose principal objective was to examine the present day practices in state schools, but not to make any decisions or resolutions.<sup>22</sup> Some forty submissions were made which ranged from those who would only be satisfied with full religious education to those who wished to retain the Nelson system in its strict form. There was a considerable body of opinion which favoured an extension of religious training that could be given at any time of the day. The Catholic submission was to welcome the introduction of religious instruction as a forward step in state

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<sup>19</sup> van der Krogt. "More a Part than Apart: the Catholic Community in New Zealand Society 1918-1940." pp481,487,522. In opposing the Bible in Schools League's legislative quest in the 1920s, 'Catholics shared in the widespread approval of the Nelson System'. During the 1930s as the political support in Parliament for the Bible in Schools League became less favourable, critics of the League, including the Catholic Church, 'maintained their support for the Nelson System'.

Collins. "For the common good: The Catholic educational mission in transition 1943-1965." p225. 'The Nelson system became an important mechanism for transmitting the Catholic faith to the significant numbers of Catholic pupils who did not attend Catholic schools.'

<sup>20</sup> Commission on Education. "Report of the Commission on Education in New Zealand." Wellington: Commission on Education in New Zealand, 1962. p715.

<sup>21</sup> "The Pope on Education." *Tablet*, 22 August 1951.

<sup>22</sup> "Religious Training Situation Confused; Questions on Religion in Schools." *Evening Post*, 18 June 1958.

education, provided legislation safeguarding varying conscientious convictions of parents, teachers and children.<sup>23</sup> Other leading Churches supported, in general, the views of the Council for Christian Education for the retention of the Nelson system, but wanted removed the anomalies that made its use confusing.<sup>24</sup>

Dr. Clarence Beeby, Director General of Education, speaking to the conference, dismissed any easy, simple solution. If the Nelson system was to be abandoned, then there were a number of legal and administrative questions to be addressed, as doing away with it involved 'a much bigger break with the past than may be generally realised'.<sup>25</sup> The NZEI opposed any extension of the Nelson system which would require teachers to teach religious knowledge, while the Dominion Federation of School Committees supported moves to legalise it, but opposed any attempt to interfere with the secular clause of the Education Act. The Minister, however, declared he was delighted with the progress, especially how controversial matters could be discussed in a somewhat more dispassionate way.<sup>26</sup>

For Catholics, segregation had been an essential feature of the Nelson system. Catholic children were separated from other non-Catholic children for instruction by a Catholic priest.<sup>27</sup> An Agreed Syllabus allowed Protestant ministers and volunteer teachers to run non-denominational classes.<sup>28</sup> But there were occasions of legislative interpretation that frustrated the conventions that had developed around the Nelson system. Because of its questionable legality and the legal powers invested in the school committees, Education Boards and their predecessors, Education Commissions, segregation could be stopped.<sup>29</sup> This was totally unacceptable to the Catholic Church, as the 'well-nigh universal' permission for

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<sup>23</sup> "Conference in Wellington on Religion in the State Schools." *Tablet*, 25 June 1958.

<sup>24</sup> "Religious Teaching In Schools. Views on Secular Clause Clarified. Religion and Promotion of Teachers." *Evening Post*, 19 June 1958.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, "Religious Training Situation Confused; Questions on Religion in Schools."

<sup>26</sup> "Religious Teaching In Schools. Views on Secular Clause Clarified. Religion and Promotion of Teachers."

<sup>27</sup> Gascoigne, Rev Dr Noel "Letter to McKeefry re the access to State schools by Catholic priests." In *ACDA, Lis 187*. Auckland, 1953. There was nothing in the statutes of the Education Act 1914 governing the Nelson system, which directly barred denominational instruction.

<sup>28</sup> Beward. *Godless Schools? A Study in Protestant Reactions to the Education Act of 1877*. p92. The Agreed Syllabus was part of the improvement made to the Nelson system in the early 1950s through the New Zealand Council for Christian Education. Other innovations were the expanded use of teaching aids, workbooks for the children and upskilling volunteer teachers.

<sup>29</sup> Cockerill, K.C. "Letter to Fr Jillings in Coromandel refusing to allow him to address Catholic pupils." In *ACDA, Lis 187*. Auckland, 1953.

Catholic priests to segregate Catholic children had been in place for many years.<sup>30</sup> Occasional high handedness by education officials or protests by Protestant clergy about the non-segregation of a particular denomination did happen, but, despite the questions over legality, the system worked.<sup>31</sup> As one experienced rural parish priest noted, 'One cannot be grateful enough for the fact that we are allowed into the State schools and left to teach the Catechism to our children.'<sup>32</sup>

The equanimity shown at the conference was significant, for despite denominational opposition over the 1956 petition, there was an obvious willingness to co-operate to reach a degree of consensus. This was not ecumenism, but a willingness by both Protestant and Catholic to engage with common issues. The Catholic position of segregation of its pupils was not challenged and their submission supporting the Nelson system, while keeping safeguards in place, was not controversial. The voice of secularism was present, through the NZEI, and, it too, was modified. Some articles in the Catholic press asked why Protestant bodies promoting religious teaching in schools, such as the Council for Christian Education and the New Zealand Christian Endeavour Union, had not supported the Holy Name petition at the time and its call for the removal of the word 'secular' from the Education Act.<sup>33</sup> Criticism was also directed at the NZEI for advocating that schools foster moral, ethical and spiritual values. How could these values be taught when religion was precluded?<sup>34</sup> Politically, what was a divided house was becoming somewhat more ordered.

### Emerging criticism of Catholic Schools

Another new eddy in the wide stream of Catholic education was the emergent questioning of the effectiveness of a separate Catholic education. In his submissions

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<sup>30</sup> Gascoigne, Rev Dr Noel. "Letter to McKeefry about meeting with Dr. Beeby re the situation with the South Auckland Education Board (Cockerill)." In *ACDA, Lis 187*. Auckland, 1954.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid. Pierce, Rev Father J.C. "Survey response for the Catholic Education Office in Auckland " In *ACDA, Lis 192*. Auckland, 1967. Father J. C. Pierce, who as a WWII chaplain, took services only for Catholic troops, recalled how in 1955 a Vicar in Browns Bay complained in his Parish newspaper that he was not permitted to take only C. of E. children at the local school, while the R.C. priest was allowed. The School Committee complained to the Auckland Education Board, which upheld the segregation principle. The Vicar was given the option to take a whole class under the 'Approved Syllabus' or be refused admission to the school.

<sup>32</sup> Pierce. "Survey response for the Catholic Education Office in Auckland ".

<sup>33</sup> Veritas. "The Bible In Schools." *Tablet*, 16 October 1957. ———. "Cross Currents in Education." *Tablet*, 17 July 1957.

<sup>34</sup> "High-Sounding But Meaningless Words." *Tablet*, 21 May 1958.

to the Education Committee in 1956, Otto made the point about religious education, that religion was the corner-stone to all education, the ideal.

Religion is not just a subject like the other subjects which a child must be taught; it is also a vitalising force permeating and giving meaning to every branch of knowledge. Secular branches which are taught without reference to God will lack proper orientation and expansion. Fundamentally all truth is one. Hence to divorce secular branches from the study from religion is to remove from them their unifying centre.....Religion must be recognised not merely as a part or accessory of education, but as the very corner-stone. This is the Catholic principle – that the Catholic child from the Catholic home should continue his education at the hands of Catholic teachers in a Catholic school.<sup>35</sup>

This view puts religion at the centre of education, an argument that undermines the claim that Catholics sought reimbursement only for the secular aspects of education they provided. Their critics were right to see this as a dubious distinction.

But the constant pressure on the Catholic system did, by 1959, lead to questions being asked publicly about the worth of the system. This was not questioning the intrinsic, fundamental merit of the system as set out in Otto's submission, but rather asking if the effort was worth it if young Catholics, products of the schools, were not practising their faith.

In an address to the Wellington Home and School Association Council, McKeefry spoke of his concerns about the system and the influences on parents in society.

Character training was, of course, attempted by many excellent teachers but the State system prevented them from going deeply into such work. The Catholic school did attempt to accomplish this vital training. Throughout the centuries the Church has insisted upon emphasis being placed upon spiritual and moral training as the basis of education.

Let us look around at the results – can we be altogether proud of these? We have only to think of the Mass count that is made in our parish churches every October and to compare the figures with the number of Catholics in

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<sup>35</sup> Grey, Allen. "The State Aid To Private Schools Issue In New Zealand Education - A History From 1877 to 1956." M. A., Victoria, 1957. p98.



the diocese as set down by the Government census. It would seem that almost half of our census Catholics rarely enters (sic) the Church door.

Given the length of life of our schools in New Zealand, we have every reason to feel that while the school as such has made its contribution to the moral and spiritual training of our people, there has been a failure on the part of many to make use of the education they have received.

McKeefry went on to talk of the influence of the 'environment' and how too many Catholic parents choose to send their young children to kindergartens, day nurseries and similar places 'the desire would seem to be to get rid of them at all costs. The children become exiles from home.' He then equated this 'expulsion' with the loss of any home influence on them in their 'formative, emotional years.'<sup>36</sup>

So his criticism was aimed at young Catholics being indifferent to their faith, and parents who were somehow guilty of not maintaining an ideal of family life. This in no way suggests that he had any intention of starting a debate about the value or role of the Catholic education system. Indeed his concern for the work of Catholic education, and the influence it could exert, was a priority, as was the need to ensure the 'protection' of vocations to both the priesthood and the brotherhood.<sup>37</sup> Rather his comments, which would have been unimaginable some twenty years earlier and coming from the most senior cleric in the country to boot, were from someone who, closely informed about the increasingly precarious position of Catholic education, was questioning the fruits of those schools.

But the fact that he was questioning the system at all was significant. Mild criticism of Catholic education was made in the *Tablet* about the resistance, in Catholic secondary schools, to 'educational theories', which might have stifled creative activity.<sup>38</sup> But, according to Tony Spencer, the obvious failings of the Catholic education system had, since the end of WWII, brought into question 'its ideological foundations, its goals, its values, its methods and its organisation'. Just as importantly, those who were doing the questioning were committed Catholics, not

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<sup>36</sup> Spencer. *The Organisation of Catholic Education in New Zealand, Interim Report*. p209.

<sup>37</sup> O'Meeghan. *Steadfast in hope. The Story of the Catholic Archdiocese of Wellington 1850-2000*. p261.

<sup>38</sup> Veritas. "Educational Conference." *Tablet*, 30 April 1958. Veritas believed that Catholic education has 'wisely stuck firmly to the idea that education's main purpose is to train the man, whole and entire. But perhaps it may be suggested that this resistance had been a little too firm....'

'stubborn, disobedient parents shortly to be ejected from the fold.'<sup>39</sup> This ideological questioning was about the educational mission of Catholic schools and the tension between Catholic pupils successfully integrating into New Zealand society and the need to maintain Catholic values in a state authorised curriculum.<sup>40</sup>

### **The Catholic education mission**

By the late 1950s, financial assistance for Catholic schools was becoming more urgent. Catholic parents expected that their children's education in Catholic schools would make them competitive in the workforce by delivering the benefits of the Thomas Report. The cost of building, maintaining and staffing schools continued to grow but the pressure was also in the secondary area where prospects for work were now aligned to a degree of academic success. Catholic secondary schools, like their state counterparts, were experiencing expanding rolls. Many of those pupils were classified as non-academic but would be expected to at least sit the School Certificate examination before entering the labour force.<sup>41</sup> School Certificate dominated the curriculum and became the 'examination of choice' in Catholic schools.<sup>42</sup>

This dominance of School Certificate meant that it marked the widely accepted completion of post-primary education for those not aiming for a university education. Although the Thomas Committee had originally envisaged School Certificate as an examination to be sat after four years, it soon became generally accepted that the curriculum would aim at a three year timetable.<sup>43</sup> Although the dominance of school certificate meant virtually all secondary schools taught to the examination syllabus, it served the demand for specialised skills in both the public and private sectors for professional and technical workers in bureaucracies. More and more of those who entered the work force had received a secondary education. In the decade from

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<sup>39</sup> Spencer. *The Organisation of Catholic Education in New Zealand, Interim Report*. p209.

<sup>40</sup> Collins. "For the common good: The Catholic educational mission in transition 1943-1965." p383.

<sup>41</sup> School Certificate was introduced in 1946. In 1934 the Proficiency Examination, which had been introduced at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, had been the means of getting into a secondary school. It was abolished in 1936 and the Education Department introduced the School Certificate. It was not favourably received at that time, but revived by the Thomas Committee to cater for pupils of widely differing abilities and interests. Whitehead, C. "The Thomas Report. Teachers and Curriculum Reform in New Zealand since 1936." Dunedin, 1972.

<sup>42</sup> Collins. "For the common good: The Catholic educational mission in transition 1943-1965." p315.

<sup>43</sup> Whitehead. "The Thomas Report. Teachers and Curriculum Reform in New Zealand since 1936." p15.

1956 the greatest expansion in the male white-collar work force was amongst salaried workers, such as teachers, draughtsmen and technicians.<sup>44</sup> Young women did not necessarily share in the increased educational opportunity. While the level of attainment did increase, women continued to be employed mainly in short-term, semi-skilled jobs and low status professions.<sup>45</sup>

At the same time that parental expectations were being increased by the post-war educational reforms, the teacher work-force was put under severe pressure to deliver on the Thomas Report. This change of emphasis was felt acutely in Catholic schools. Post-war shortages meant many schools struggled through a very demanding staffing emergency. In its submissions to the Currie Commission of 1960-2, the Education Department commented on the strong resistance to changes in teaching methods amongst teachers in the state sector.<sup>46</sup> Catholic schools and their teaching religious faced some similar problems as their state counterparts, such as poor working conditions and coping with rapidly rising rolls.<sup>47</sup> During the period 1945 to 1966, the overall state school enrolment more than doubled, from 302, 274 in 1945 to 666,789 in 1966. The secondary school increase was even sharper, from a 1945 figure of 47872 to 154086 in 1966. For the Catholic system, the pressure was compounded by the climbing pupil teacher ratio. In state secondary schools the ratio remained at a steady 20.1 pupils per teacher during the period 1945 to 1961, while in Catholic secondary schools it increased from 21.3 to 26.3. Figures for the primary schools were much more serious, with the ratio reaching 40.5 by 1961.<sup>48</sup>

The system was under pressure from sources other than financial. Parental expectation was of great significance. Generations of parents had been warned of the evils of the state system and, after years of striving, some seven out of ten Catholic children were enrolled in Catholic schools.<sup>49</sup> Rising rolls and increased expectations were also driven by the reshaping of the education mission.

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<sup>44</sup> Dunstall. "The Social Pattern." p412-3.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid. p415.

<sup>46</sup> Whitehead. "The Thomas Report. Teachers and Curriculum Reform in New Zealand since 1936." p18.

<sup>47</sup> Although state teachers pay was a matter of contention for the teachers unions, it could not be compared to the mere pittance given to teaching religious, especially nuns who received even less than the brothers. Pay rates to teaching religious were increased in 1959 by 100% so that nuns received £100 per annum and brothers £300 per annum see "Catholic Education". *Zealandia*, 17 December 1959.

<sup>48</sup> Collins. "For the common good: The Catholic educational mission in transition 1943-1965." p298-9.

<sup>49</sup> Spencer. *The Organisation of Catholic Education in New Zealand, Interim Report*. p217.

One of the major consequences for the Catholic school system that arose from the Thomas Committee was the increased emphasis on secondary schooling. Catholic opposition to educational reform had been based on a long held aversion to the state gaining control over educational policymaking, with secular values becoming embedded into the curriculum, and allowing any sort of state surveillance and control over Catholic schooling.<sup>50</sup> Yet the reality was Catholic schools relied upon state affirmation of their efforts through school inspections and public examinations. The Catholic hierarchy recognised that their education mission, underpinned by Catholic values but at the loss of some independence, must allow for an increasing number of Catholic working-class pupils to go on to secondary school and participate successfully in the country's changing economic life.

Central to the education mission was the willingness of Catholic laity to shoulder the costs for building the school infrastructure. If the bishops were to provide these schools, the laity needed to co-operate. Of course all Catholic parents were forbidden to send their children to any but Catholic schools, unless for some just and serious reason. The Code of Canon Law allowed the Church, as a God-given right, to erect her own schools as being amongst the most powerful means of carrying out God's commission to instruct and sanctify souls. It was the bishop's right to see that there was nothing harmful to religion and morals taught or done at the schools. The state is the inferior society, when compared with the Church, and the inferior should always show deference to and assist the higher in its functions.<sup>51</sup> By extension, this led to the notion that state education could not be satisfactory. In 1923, Father Thomas Gilbert S.M., Rector of St. Patrick's College, Wellington, in pointing out that more Catholics were going to state secondary schools while relatively few were going on to a Catholic secondary schools, refuted the notion of the alleged superiority of the non-Catholic school. 'The superiority alleged has not been proven and does not exist,' a message the bishops had been making for a number of years.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Collins. "For the common good: The Catholic educational mission in transition 1943-1965." p293.

<sup>51</sup>"The Church and Education; The Provisions of Canon Law and their local application." *Tablet*, 17 August 1949. This was the text of an address by the Rector of Holy Cross College, Mosgiel, Rev. Dr. B Courtenay. Using the Canon Law of Education and referencing both the Public and Private Law of the Church, Courtenay identified the rights of Catholics to own their own schools and the limits of state intervention in education. (Public Law would correspond to the Constitutional Law in the civil sphere, while Private Law is the particular laws the Church makes to secure her desired aims.)

<sup>52</sup> Spencer. *The Organisation of Catholic Education in New Zealand, Interim Report*. pp193-4. Spencer makes the point that even though 'many fine Catholics' had been educated in State schools, this did not prove their superiority. 'Objectively, State education could be superior, equal or inferior in

This message of the superior purpose of the Catholic school was invoked frequently. At a school opening in August 1953, one of the speakers, a layman, claimed secular education lacked a purpose and 'emphasised that Catholic schools came closer to the ideal education than the state school because they concerned themselves with the full development of the child – spiritually, mentally, physically and socially'.<sup>53</sup> Simply, education without religion was inadequate. This constant repetition of the Catholic education message was a significant driver for the increased parental demand for Catholic schooling.

### Catholic school structure

The Catholic school structure had two broad categories: schools that were owned and managed by the diocese and those who were owned and managed by a religious teaching order. Pontifical orders, as they were known, operated almost exclusively under the governing authority of their own superiors, with minimal reference to the diocesan bishop, at least in theory. Governance was usually through a superior-general at international level and a provincial superior in the region or province. All of the male religious orders, and, most of the female orders in New Zealand operated under this pontifical model.

For religious orders that came under the diocesan model, the superior came under the direct authority of the diocesan bishop. When a female order established its first convent in a diocese, it became known as the 'mother house'. This, in turn, led to branch houses being formed and sometimes these branch houses themselves became independent houses in their own right. Justification for the diocesan model was that it gave greater flexibility in responding to diocesan needs, whereas the response to proposals or plans involving a pontifical order would need to go through a hierarchical bureaucratic framework for decisions to be made.<sup>54</sup>

The structure of Catholic education in New Zealand was originally based on the parish. Each diocese was divided into parishes, run by a priest whose main task was to preach, catechize and administer the sacraments. Parish priests also had the duty

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quality to Catholic, and whatever the objective reality it might be unproven. Gilbert could invoke logic and still insist that the superiority of State education was both unproven and non-existent.'

<sup>53</sup> "Additions to School Opened; Justice of Catholic Claim Stressed."

<sup>54</sup> O'Donoghue, Thomas A. *Upholding The Faith. The Process of Education in Catholic Schools in Australia, 1922-1965*. Edited by Alan Sadovnik and Susan F. Semel. Vol. 24, *History of Schools & Schooling*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 2001. pp30-31.

to establish, wherever possible, a local primary school and then, through the bishop, arrange for a religious order to staff the school. These religious orders ran two types of school, the parochial or parish-owned and the order-owned school.<sup>55</sup> Religious orders owned their own secondary schools, while primary schools were generally parish or diocesan owned. A set of explicit or implicit understandings operated between the parish and the religious order as regards the primary schools. The parish would:

- build and maintain the school and provide for its operating costs;
- ensure that the community of religious received a tolerable income in cash, goods and services; and
- ensure a reasonable enrolment of pupils.

The religious order would make certain that the school:

- was permanently staffed
- ran along pedagogic lines; and
- provided a satisfactory Christian education.

The bishop would, in the last resort:

- settle disputes and ensure that these understandings were honoured.<sup>56</sup>

Church protocol required episcopal permission to set up in a diocese. A religious order would be invited by the local bishop to found a school, but once established some orders went on to establish their own order-owned schools.<sup>57</sup> In New Zealand both the Marist Brothers and Dominican Sisters went on to set up their own order-owned schools.<sup>58</sup> However the distinctive way in which different orders were governed often meant the interests of the order and the diocese differed.

Independence from the diocesan bishop was occasionally a source of friction, but

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid.p27-28. Not every parish would have a primary school, but where one was considered necessary, the parish priest would lead the local organisation to have any school built. He would liaise with the bishop in promoting the school's cause, especially as regards funding. Before diocesan education offices were established, the bishop would need to be fully acquainted with all the building in his diocese.

<sup>56</sup> Collins. "For the common good: The Catholic educational mission in transition 1943-1965." p116.

<sup>57</sup> O'Donoghue. *Upholding The Faith. The Process of Education in Catholic Schools in Australia, 1922-1965.* p28.

<sup>58</sup> Adrian, Brother. "Letter to McKeefry about the position of the Marist Brothers." In *WAA Catholic Education Office, Archbishop's File 1947-70 (1) #330.* Wellington, 1958. Collins. "For the common good: The Catholic educational mission in transition 1943-1965." p115.

seldom to the point of dysfunction.<sup>59</sup> A Provincial would argue the best interests of the order, and any serious dispute could be sent to Rome for adjudication, but, by and large, Church discipline ensured that they worked in accord.

### Schools in Crisis

For parents, there were increasingly obvious signs of the system having to cope with pressure. Financial needs were ever present, and the class sizes were always large. Catholic teachers generally lacked the ancillary staff provided in state schools. But the teachers somehow coped, because of the dedication, self-denial and generosity of the Religious and the support of parents. Increasing class sizes was the only option to at least keep open access to Catholic education. By 1956, in the Auckland Diocese, 67% of primary school classes had over 40 pupils and 16% had over 60, while the teacher strength of the Diocese was at 74% of state primary staffing standards.<sup>60</sup>

There was a certain inability to see the crisis for what it was. Catholic authorities were part of a Church whose traditional structures were not suited for coping with what was rapid change. McKeefry's remarks concerning the number of former Catholic pupils not practising their faith was a matter of great concern to him, but he also recognised that there were going to be real problems catering for the increase of school-age Catholics.<sup>61</sup> He was personally interested in using statistical data for planning and control purposes and had his Chancery produce regular and reasonably up to date statistics. But the basic goals of Catholic education remained the same, with the Church having 'no alternative but to push ahead with the task of providing catholic education' for Catholic children 'as speedily as our resources permit.'<sup>62</sup> In a pulpit announcement on schooling, the Chancellor of the Wellington Archdiocese, Monsignor A.J. McRae, couched the problem, not as an approaching dilemma whose complexities were not yet fully known, but rather as a new chapter in

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<sup>59</sup> Adrian. "Letter to McKeefry about the position of the Marist Brothers.", Reid. *James Michael Liston A Life.*, Clisby. "History of the Marist Brothers in the New Zealand Province." These provide examples of disagreements between Orders and Diocesan bishops. Such disagreements were invariably resolved without any long term damage.

<sup>60</sup> Spencer. *The Organisation of Catholic Education in New Zealand, Interim Report.* p206.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid. p212. McKeefry arranged a meeting of all his parish priests in 1954 where they were shown that, even with the data available, coping with the expected demand was going to be impossible.

<sup>62</sup> McRae, Monsignor A.J. "Pulpit Announcement on the future of Catholic schooling." In *WAA, Catholic Education Office, Archbishop's File 1947-70 (1), #330.* Wellington, 1957.

the fight for justice. His view was that opponents of Catholic schooling had hoped the pressure on the teaching religious would lead to its collapse. Couched in the language of injustice and struggle, this was a challenge for Catholics to overcome.<sup>63</sup>

Tony Spencer was of the view that the lack of a 'well-institutionalised Catholic statistics system' made the Church insensitive to change. Key data regarding demographics, religious practice and statistics on religious personnel were wholly inadequate. The Church was wholly reliant on the quinquennial Census of Population and Dwellings and Department of Education statistics. No-one was tasked with estimating the age distribution of the Catholic population nor to carry out any demographic analysis. Simple baptismal counts should have at least alerted the Church authorities to the baby boom and possible implications for their schools and upon teaching religious. The *Religious Professions* volume of the 1945 Census was not published until May 1952. It wasn't until the release, in 1958, of the *Religious Professions* volume of the 1956 census that the magnitude of the coming crisis was calculable from official statistical sources. Spencer considered that a clear warning of the trouble ahead should have been evident as early as 1945.<sup>64</sup> McKeefry certainly had a sense of the impending dilemma but chose to recognise 'pressure being exerted on Parish clergy by Catholic parents', the result of years of clerical insistence upon parental obligations towards Catholic schools and that education in a state school was in no way superior to that of a Catholic school.<sup>65</sup>

But the crisis had a particularly marked effect on the teaching religious. They simultaneously had to cope with a changing teaching environment brought about by the Thomas Report and the drive to significantly expand the Catholic secondary school roll. Many religious teachers needed to up-skill to meet that demand and that necessitated the re-introduction of lay teachers into the Catholic teaching workforce.

### **The teaching environment: Marist Brothers**

A telling illustration of the complexity of the broad problem was the dilemma facing the Marist Brothers. The Marist Brothers, together with the Christian Brothers, De La Salle Brothers and Marist Fathers, made up the male religious teaching orders in

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Spencer. *The Organisation of Catholic Education in New Zealand, Interim Report*. p201.

<sup>65</sup> McRae. "Pulpit Announcement on the future of Catholic schooling."



New Zealand. They taught at both primary and secondary level and were caught in the strain of coping with a changing environment where schools had to remain functioning while the teachers had to adjust to new curriculum and qualification demands. Their dilemma was typical of other religious orders which staffed Catholic schools. Teaching orders wanted to ensure that the professional qualifications of their teachers were equivalent to those of the state system.<sup>66</sup>

In a letter to McKeefry in August 1958, Brother Adrian, the Marist Provincial, set out the problems his Order faced.<sup>67</sup> A fast growing school population had meant that vocations to the Order had not kept up with the demand. As Adrian pointed out, it was not as though the number entering the Order had fallen away, as the vocations had remained fairly constant, but rather the 'spectacular growth in the number of school children.' The inevitable result was fewer teachers, over-sized classes, over-worked teachers and the keeping on of brothers who should have been retired. Health problems arose and some had breakdowns. Young, inexperienced brothers were introduced into schools which resulted in problems with discipline and control.<sup>68</sup> On top of this was the obligation for young brothers with large classes to attend university and sit exams. The time needed for all of this had a direct impact on the fulfilment of their religious exercises, a key aspect of their religious life. While these conditions were not present in every school, it was serious in post-primary schools and acute in boarding colleges. In the boarding situation, the regime was daunting. 'There was a non-stop teaching programme plus other tasks such as boarding master of the *babies* in Standards 3 and 4, sports coaching, study at university, tuck shop supervisor – all day every day, seven days a week.'<sup>69</sup> A 1957 survey of Marist Brothers revealed 65% of full time teaching brothers were studying for either degree units or teacher's certificate.<sup>70</sup> Adrian's view, not surprisingly, was that the 'pernicious effects of such conditions' seriously affected morale.

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<sup>66</sup> Collins. "For the common good: The Catholic educational mission in transition 1943-1965." p348.

<sup>67</sup> Adrian. "Letter to McKeefry about the position of the Marist Brothers." Adrian had been asked by McKeefry to make a submission on the issue of vocations that was to be discussed by the Diocesan Education Commission and clergy. The letter was a realistic summary of what the Marist Brothers, as a teaching body, were facing in 1958.

<sup>68</sup> Adrian makes the point that young Brothers were being sent into the classroom prematurely and without supervision from an older, experienced mentor.

<sup>69</sup> Garrett, Fergus, ed. *Marist Brothers in Fiji - The First 100 Years. 1888-1988*. Suva: Marist Brothers Publications, 2006. p182.

<sup>70</sup> Clisby. "History of the Marist Brothers in the New Zealand Province." Chapter 16.

Other issues arose. Their standard of living was becoming more demanding. Rationing was introduced and Brothers had to be satisfied with less at table; from their weekly income of less than £3 per week, Brothers had to meet a range of costs that led, in Adrian's view, to a tenuous means of subsistence.<sup>71</sup>

### **The Teaching environment-Convent schools**

Monsignor A.J. McRae made it quite clear the welfare of the religious was very important. They were, after all, the workforce of Catholic education. He gave the example of

a nun recognized far and wide as a particularly competent infant teacher, after some months of struggling with a class of some 60 pupils, found herself reduced to a state of physical and nervous collapse! And even had she not broken under the strain, is it sane economy to employ so highly qualified a teacher in a class so large that the most any one could hope to do would be to function as a traffic officer, maintaining a bare minimum of order?<sup>72</sup>

To get a well-trained competent teacher to struggle with a large number of infants was obviously an unreasonable use of scarce skilled resources. At St. Therese's Convent School in the Three Kings Parish, Auckland, the class sizes were enormous. One nun had 71 in her mixed class (Primers 3 & 4, part Standard1), another nun and a trainee 83 (Standard 4, Forms 1&2), the Infant Mistress 55, and three other classes with 54 or more.<sup>73</sup> It was in situations such as this that Ernest Simmons' observation about the workload of the teaching Sisters was vividly illustrated,

It was taken for granted that these dedicated women would work long hours at all sorts of tasks, from the most menial to the most sublime and at the same time live in such poverty that the fees of the music teacher

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<sup>71</sup> Brothers had to provide for their own personal expenses, including their own soutannes/clothing, travel and any tuition/exam fees for University, between 10-20% of the stipend for the housekeeper, to save for travel costs to an annual retreat, save for a holiday and contribute to the Houses of Formation.

<sup>72</sup> McRae, Monsignor A.J. "Memo to Clergy re Pulpit Announcement." In *WAA, Catholic Education Office, Archbishop's File 1947-70 (1)*, #330. Wellington, 1957.

<sup>73</sup> Three Kings Parish. "Report of meeting between Faulkner M.P. and members of the Three Kings Parish (Auckland) regarding assistance to Catholic schools." In *WAA, Education State Aid, Government Grants 1947-75*, #297. Wellington, 1958. These figures were prepared for Arthur Faulkner in 1958 who had given the group advice as regards securing assistance for their school.

were often the only means of keeping the convent going...they were building a Church on the bent backs of the Nuns.<sup>74</sup>

Even though the teaching religious shared large workloads and crowded classrooms, there was a distinct gap in the allowances they were paid. Nuns were given between £60 and £80 per year, while the Brothers received approximately £150 annually. The reason given for the difference was that the nuns cooked for themselves!<sup>75</sup>

But there was no real plan to deal with the stark facts that the rate of admissions to Catholic schools was far in excess of the rate of vocations. Vocations to the religious life were the lifeblood of the Catholic system. In Wellington the solution was to employ more lay teachers and establish of a special diocesan education committee 'to investigate all aspects of the problem'. Monsignor McRae made it clear that staffing of Catholic schools was the priority.

It follows then that the only remedy in sight, whether we regard the problem from the point of view of New Zealand as a whole or merely from our own, is for us to plan ways and means of adequately staffing our own schools. Planning there must be, whether or not we are ever to receive the State subsidy to which we are entitled. With State subsidy the task admittedly would be easier, but until we make the effort, who is to say that without State subsidy it is impossible?<sup>76</sup>

Yet this announcement did not address a growing concern amongst both amongst parents and the state that the quality of Catholic schooling was falling. McRae's comments were symptomatic of the reflex reaction to a crisis that had not been foreseen and where the traditional mechanisms for coping with change were entirely inadequate. New Zealand's post-war societal transformation posed problems which the Church had not previously experienced. During the early 1950s, the Church had to react to the growing housing boom by building new schools and extending established ones. Comment in the *Tablet* viewed large classes and lack of material

<sup>74</sup> Simmons, E. R. . *A Brief History of the Catholic Church in New Zealand*. Auckland: Catholic Publications Centre, 1978. p107.

<sup>75</sup> Prime Minister's Office. "Deputation to the Hon. J.W. Marshall (Deputy Prime Minister) on Wednesday, 16 October 1957."The comment about the allowances was made in answer to a query from the Deputy Prime Minister. At the time state salaries were-a beginning teacher started at £415, and if a male over 21 started at £535. At Grade 1 the minimum was £570, increasing over 10 years to a maximum of £960. Women, however, had a maximum of only £870. A head teacher on Grade 7 could receive £1427. In addition marriage allowances were paid throughout the grades."Teachers and Parents Bear Enormous Burden." *Zealandia*, 1 August 1957.

<sup>76</sup> McRae. "Memo to Clergy re Pulpit Announcement."

aids as being 'superficial matters', but did suggest that Catholic education's aims and purposes should be seriously and imaginatively studied.<sup>77</sup>

But the reality, not sufficiently understood, was that the number of teaching religious was not maintaining pace with the demand from new schools. As Brother Adrian described it, '....a fast increasing school population has outgrown the supply of Brothers.'<sup>78</sup> Falling standards were becoming inevitable.<sup>79</sup>

### Communication problems

Adrian highlighted another key problem, namely the inadequate communication amongst parties in the Catholic education field. There was no formal mechanism for an Order, such as the Marist Brothers, to talk through and share issues with the Diocesan authorities or other Teaching Orders.<sup>80</sup> McKeefry and the other bishops met with the head of the orders on a regular basis, but as Adrian pointed out, those meetings were usually reserved for matters that were pressing or urgent. At a meeting in Wellington between the Archdiocesan Education Commission and the superiors of the Society of Mary (Marist Fathers) in September 1957, the first question was 'What has been the relationship between the Society of Mary and the Diocese concerning St. Patrick's College and what agreements were entered into?' The aim of the meeting was to better understand each other's educational difficulties and problems, so that they could help each other and work more efficiently together in the common cause of Catholic education in the Archdiocese. It emerged that there was no agreement and 'things seemed to have just happened'. The minutes of the meeting showed that neither side knew a great deal of the other's situation, especially on financial matters. There was no sense of co-ordination at all, and, at the end of the meeting, the local Superior was going to consult with his Superior in Rome over points raised at the meeting.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Veritas. "A Look At Catholic Education." *Tablet*, 18 March 1959.

<sup>78</sup> Adrian. "Letter to McKeefry about the position of the Marist Brothers."

<sup>79</sup> Spencer. *The Organisation of Catholic Education in New Zealand, Interim Report*. pp200-202.

<sup>80</sup> Spencer records an extract from an interview he conducted with a lay Director of Primary Schools (an ex-Inspector with the Department of Education), who made the point that, in his view, Catholic Schools in the late 1940s and into the 1950s were both socially and professionally isolated. 'In the late 1940's there was no real system at all. No two Orders were in close contact. Within the schools each class was a watertight compartment. Some of the heads had never taught-they were simply superiors of convents.Ibid. p204.

<sup>81</sup> Archdiocesan Education Commission. "Report of Meeting held at St. Patrick's College, Wellington between Representatives of the Archdiocesan Education Commission and the Superiors of the

Adrian's frustration at there being 'two water-tight (almost air-tight) compartments – aiming at the same goal, but too often failing to comprehend each other's problems' was evident, but the obvious lack of functional communication and planning illustrated how unprepared Catholic education was for the extent of the changes they were having to deal with.

Problems were clearly emerging in 1953. Departmental Inspectors' reports commented on 'staff teaching for long hours', teaching ratio 'not as generous as found in State schools of corresponding numbers', 'some parts of the curriculum are not adequately treated by ordinary post-primary standards owing to the lack of facilities,' 'the accommodation and grounds fell very far short of what can be regarded as the basic requirements of a modern school.' An instance of the difference in class sizes was a post-primary convent school that had three full time and four part time teachers, whereas a similar sized state school would have a complement of six full-time teachers with additional allowance for part-time specialist work.<sup>82</sup> Yet, as Spencer has pointed out, this type of information was not adequately aggregated or their pressing implications considered. In 1953 the emphasis was upon building and expanding schools to meet the goal of having Catholic schooling available for all Catholic children. Still McKeefry had recognised there was going to be a problem in staffing the new schools. At a meeting of his parish priests in 1954, it was shown that, on the available statistical data, coping with the coming increase in the school-age Catholic population was going to be very difficult, if not impossible. The assembled clergy were reported to have been incredulous of the future scale of the problem.<sup>83</sup>

Any criticism of Catholic schools was lost in the wider crisis facing education generally. Catholic schools continued to be built and parishioners continued to withstand the cost. Catholic authorities were continuing to build more and more schools as quickly as resources would permit. For example, in excess of a

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Society of Mary and of St. Patrick's College, Wellington." In *WAA, Catholic Education Office, Archbishop's File, 1947-71 (1) #330*. Wellington, 1957. Monsignor McRae asked about the possibility of increasing considerably the fees of St. Patrick's College, Silverstream, where there was a long waiting list, and utilizing the surplus to finance St. Patrick's College, Wellington. He said that after all, Catholic policy everywhere is to skin the rich in order to help the poor and the needy, and that the type Silverstream caters for are able and prepared to pay extra for their boys, but unwilling to give otherwise, and, this is the only way of getting at these people.

<sup>82</sup>Department of Education. "Inspection Report Sacred Heart Girls College." In *ACDA, Lis 187*. Auckland, 1953., plus three other post-primary schools (St. Peter's Maori College, Marist Convent, St. Benedict's Convent).

<sup>83</sup> Spencer. *The Organisation of Catholic Education in New Zealand, Interim Report*. p212.

£1,000,000 was to be spent on schools in Otago and Southland between 1952 and 1962.<sup>84</sup> Authorities readily acknowledged that parental pressure, or as one parish priest would have it 'healthy pressure-tactics of the good laity', was the driver for the building programme and there could be no question of standing still!<sup>85</sup> But allied with the growth was the very real problem for the Catholic authorities of the amount of debt that a newly developed parish could sustain in terms of buying land, building schools and providing teaching accommodation. Although volunteer labour provided some cost relief, the demand placed on young families with limited incomes to meet the obligations had to be within reason.<sup>86</sup>

But the sense of being totally unprepared for what was happening was implicit in the observation by Chancellor McRae that

in the natural order it has compelled us to call upon reserves of strength and ability that would in more favourable circumstances have been allowed to lie dormant, and in the supernatural order it has forced us to exercise and so develop our faith (reliance in Providence) to a much higher degree than would otherwise have been the case.<sup>87</sup>

An almost total reliance on providence points to the shock being felt by the Catholic education authorities. They were, in a manner of speaking, a victim of their own success. A Catholic education for every Catholic child had been the unequivocal aim of the Church for nearly 75 years and since the World War II, the building programme seemed to be making this a reality. But the relative speed of population growth had caught the authorities by surprise. They lacked adequate information to recognize the extent of the dilemma that was happening in their schools, and although warning signs had been evident, the ability to respond was constrained by the priority of Catholic education and the expectation of a generation of parents who believed there was no other option.

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<sup>84</sup> "Over £1,000,000 For Schools Spent In Dunedin Diocese." *Tablet*, 14 February 1962.

<sup>85</sup> McRae. "Pulpit Announcement on the future of Catholic schooling."

<sup>86</sup> Duffy, Rev. T. "The Problems Of Catholic Education In New And Expanding Areas." *Tablet*, 22 November 1961.

<sup>87</sup> McRae. "Memo to Clergy re Pulpit Announcement."

## Teacher supply and Lay Teachers

Prior to the election of the Labour Government in 1935, there were sufficient checks and balances to ensure that Catholic education system coped. Policies of the Labour Government meant reforms across a range of New Zealand life forced a more rapid response than had been traditional. New housing developments meant a much more prompt reaction to changing events. Labour's major educational reforms of the primary and post-primary sectors, notably the availability of free secondary schooling to all children and the raising of the school leaving age, were key elements of the new Government's plans for the social and economic reconstruction of New Zealand life.<sup>88</sup> For the Church, discrete adjustment no longer worked, and the beginning of this rapid change to New Zealand society meant Catholic authorities lost control of the teacher supply.<sup>89</sup>

Teacher supply for the Catholic system was dependent upon an on-going number of women and men who were prepared to enter the religious life as members of religious communities. For Catholic education, religious teachers were integral in the maintenance of a separate schooling system. They would sustain a distinctive Catholic identity, through the transmission of faith and Catholic cultural practices to the next generation of Catholic pupils.<sup>90</sup> Their presence in a school bestowed legitimacy. Generations of Catholic New Zealanders had had no other experience of Catholic schools, and the schools were totally identified with the Religious in the minds of the wider community, Catholic and non-Catholic alike.<sup>91</sup> Donald Akenson uses the notion of a circle of religious devotion. 'The loyal adherence of the adult laity to the church allowed the primary schools to operate and to foster the intellectual belief that the religious and the supernatural penetrated all aspects of human life and also fostered an emotional loyalty to the church.'<sup>92</sup> In terms of setting the tone and standards for Catholic devotional, and possibly intellectual life, women religious were arguably more influential than priests and brothers. Nuns generally had those Catholic children enrolled in a convent school in their care from the time they started school until the age of ten or twelve for the boys, while most girls continued with the nuns until they left school. An American historian has noted, and it has application to

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<sup>88</sup> Collins. "For the common good: The Catholic educational mission in transition 1943-1965." p246.

<sup>89</sup> Spencer. *The Organisation of Catholic Education in New Zealand, Interim Report.* p202.

<sup>90</sup> Collins. "For the common good: The Catholic educational mission in transition 1943-1965." p163.

<sup>91</sup> Spencer. *The Organisation of Catholic Education in New Zealand, Interim Report.* p240.

<sup>92</sup> Akenson. *Half the world from Home: Perspectives on the Irish in New Zealand 1860-1950.* p172.

New Zealand, that 'the feminised nature of much of what passed for Catholic intellectual culture before Vatican II' was attributable, in part at least, to the influence of the nuns.<sup>93</sup>

Although not apparent at the time, the decision to employ lay teachers gave rise to a number of problems. Possibly the most fundamental was that by employing lay teachers, it allowed the expansion of the Catholic system to continue, with new schools and extensions to the existing buildings. Walter Otto predicted that a conservative estimate of the cost of additional classrooms would be £5 million. This did not include the cost of an estimated 300 lay teachers.<sup>94</sup>

The overall teacher problem was also affected by Canon Law. Each diocese was legally and administratively a separate entity and as such had the ability to take its own initiatives and decisions independently of the other dioceses. The bishops did share a common agreement but they did not depend upon a centralised authority. However each diocese had its own share of problems and had to manage them as they saw fit. Population drift went from the country to the city but more alarmingly increased numbers moving from the South Island to North Island, most notably Auckland. This increasing demand for Catholic schooling had to be met by employing lay teachers.<sup>95</sup>

In December 1959 the hierarchy announced the imposition of fees in parish schools.<sup>96</sup> The pastoral letter justifying this step pointed to the projected estimate, based on annual baptismal figures, of 88,000 Catholic children who would be of primary school age over the next eight years and the majority of whom would seek admission to Catholic schools.<sup>97</sup> The pastoral letter acknowledged that Religious were now not able to provide full staffing needs, and more lay teachers were being

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<sup>93</sup> Tentler, Leslie Woodcock. "On the Margins: The State of American Catholic History." *U.S. Catholic Historian* 21, no. 2 (2003): 77-95.

<sup>94</sup> "Classrooms to Cost 5 Millions. Conservative estimate for next ten years." *Zealandia*, 7 November 1957.

<sup>95</sup> "Teacher Shortage In New Zealand Due To Four Different Causes." *Tablet*, 30 May 1962.

<sup>96</sup> "Catholic Education".

<sup>97</sup> Baptismal numbers were used to support the claim for state aid. A somewhat crude diagram showing a twenty year projection of the numbers of primary and secondary children together with teachers needed was featured in *Zealandia* as being part of the evidence used to present material to political party leaders. "Party Leaders Turn Down Submissions On Education. Facts Largely Ignored." *Zealandia*, 14 November 1957. However the data was inaccurate. In 1966, seven, not eight, years later the census showed 127,000 primary aged Catholic children. The 1957 data was based on defective infant baptism statistics and no attention had been given to underlying trends in either the census data or the baptismal data. Spencer. *The Organisation of Catholic Education in New Zealand, Interim Report*. p219.



employed. Fees were to help pay an increased salaries bill, not only for lay teachers, but to give an increased allowance to the teaching religious.<sup>98</sup>

Parish priests supported the imposition of fees but were concerned about the prospect of control of parish schools passing into the hands of the religious teaching orders. If so, the teachers would have the right to admit or reject children, allowing 'an opportunity to entrench themselves financially that they would be a power against the Bishops and the priests in the whole matter of our schools.' Parents would see 'teachers as the power in the schools', reducing the authority of the parish priests.<sup>99</sup> But parish priests were given the discretion to remit fees. No child would be refused admission on the grounds of hardship.

Still the pastoral letter saw the future as involving religious teachers in Catholic schools. A plea for vocations to the religious life was a prominent part of the message, asking for 'our Catholic mothers and fathers, as devoted parents, to give serious and prolonged thought to the need for vocations, and to be generous in training their children on a proper sense of responsibility...' Increased vocations were identified as the 'first and most urgent need...'<sup>100</sup>

Yet the imposition of fees would only help to meet some of the costs, and the discretion available to the parish priest would make for an unsteady balance sheet. In terms of the crisis, there was no suggestion that entry to the schools would be limited. Other than the increased uptake of lay teachers, the pastoral made it quite clear that expansion of the education system was to take place, with no reference to how the other areas of the Church's mission were to cope.<sup>101</sup>

The 1957 decision to employ lay teachers introduced a two-tier system, which was clearly evident in the different pay scales employed. Even though the religious received an increase, it was nowhere near the wages paid to a lay teacher, or even close to market rates. This move to introduce a new source of teacher supply, namely lay teachers, released the religious orders from the obligation to fully staff a

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<sup>98</sup> Ernest Simmons observation about the Church being built on the backs of the Nuns was given an additional piquancy by the differential pay rates for female and male religious. For the Brothers who taught in parochial schools the allowance was £300 while the Sisters teaching in the same schools actually improved to £150.

<sup>99</sup> McKeefry, Archbishop Peter. "Memorandum to bishops re introduction of school fees." In *ACDA, Lis 161.5*. Auckland, 1959.

<sup>100</sup> "Catholic Education".

<sup>101</sup> Other parts of the Church's mission were its hospital, orphanage, geriatric and overseas missionary activities that required their own levels of funding.

school, as per the original agreement. That original agreement obliged the religious order, which ran the school, to ensure that the school was permanently staffed. The bishop, through the parish, saw to it that the school had pupils and the staff were housed and fed. But when the order could not provide a teacher, the parish or diocese would intervene and employ a lay teacher. The responsibility for replacement now lay with the parish or diocese rather than the order.<sup>102</sup>

Relieved of the obligation to provide a complete school staff, religious order superiors could move a religious teacher from a school in one diocese to another diocese without replacement. The first diocese then had to pay the cost of a lay teacher replacement. Poaching did occur. The breakdown of the old agreement allowed the Superiors to move their members from parochial primary schools to their own secondary schools, knowing that a lay replacement would be made.<sup>103</sup>

Religious teachers were being moved across to secondary teaching, many having trained as primary teachers before moving onto secondary.<sup>104</sup> Because the greatest growth was in the post-primary sector, religious orders moved to minimise their primary school commitment in favour of their secondary schools where the order itself had to pay the lay staff salaries. For example, growth in the Auckland diocese alone had the Marist Brothers establish four secondary schools during the 1950s and 1960s. It was the secondary schools, and the fees that had always been charged, that provided the Order with the necessary funding for their work.<sup>105</sup>

Although lay teachers became increasingly prominent in Catholic schools, there was no real career structure available to them. Salary scales for lay teachers in Catholic schools were set at below the state rate. However the difference between the state and Catholic rate was continually widened by regular wage increases for state

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<sup>102</sup> Spencer. *The Organisation of Catholic Education in New Zealand, Interim Report*. pp217-18.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid. p216-1.7

<sup>104</sup> Collins. "For the common good: The Catholic educational mission in transition 1943-1965." p302

<sup>105</sup> Clisby. "History of the Marist Brothers in the New Zealand Province." Edward Clisby notes that the allowances received from Brothers teaching in parochial or parish schools did not allow those teachers to make virtually any contribution to the central funds of the Order. For the Marist Brothers, Sacred Heart College in Auckland in the 1950s was the only school upon which the Order could draw funds for itself and its works. As Brother Adrian said in his letter to Archbishop McKeefry, 'No other province of the Institute was so dependent upon one school for its well-being, and indeed for its very existence. Adrian. "Letter to McKeefry about the position of the Marist Brothers." The new secondary schools, St. Pauls College, Ponsonby (1955), Marcellin College, Onehunga-Mt. Roskill (1958), Edmund Campion College, Gisborne (1960) and St. John's College, Hamilton (1962) were built to help provide an income for the Order.

teachers, faster movement up the pay scale and a range of special allowances that were not available in Catholic schools. As Father John Mackey noted

When the discrepancy is in shillings per week it is easy enough to ask for some degree of self-sacrifice. But when that discrepancy is in pounds per week and the wage we offer is increasingly out of proportion to existing rates in the community, it made employment in a Catholic school most unattractive.<sup>106</sup>

Lay teachers were initially seen as 'gap-stoppers to be hired when no Religious was available, and fired when a Religious became available'.<sup>107</sup> Their marginal status and lack of any career path meant that it was unlikely to attract first class teachers and would instead appeal to the inexperienced or those who had not been particularly successful in state schools. The environment in itself was much different and possibly disconcerting for a lay teacher. Traditional authority in a convent (usually next door to the school) was not conducive to such events as staff meetings. Decisions were routinely made through the established channels that worked for the religious teachers and their order, and often lay teachers would be the last to know. Practical problems arose as regards to such amenities as staff rooms where there has been no previous need as the convent, the nuns' home, was next door.<sup>108</sup>

Because lay teachers had a life outside the school/convent, they were often not treated as part of the teaching community for the school. In his annual report of visits to Catholic schools in the Auckland diocese in 1969, G.P. Kelly, the Director of Catholic Schools in Auckland, commented on the fostering of school unity, which, he believed, was significantly influenced by the demands on the Head Teachers. 'The fostering of school unity and staff co-ordination .....is difficult but possible where all staff members live in a convent community. On the other hand, the circumstances throw a heavy burden upon Head Teachers of staffs that include lay teachers. The latter, who often have domestic commitments, are frequently unable to spend time in either formal or casual interchange of ideas.'<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Mackey, Father John. "Letter to Liston regarding lay teachers' salaries." In *ACDA, Lis 192*. Auckland, 1965.

<sup>107</sup> Spencer. *The Organisation of Catholic Education in New Zealand, Interim Report*. p239.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.* p239.

<sup>109</sup> Kelly, G.P. "Auckland Diocesan Education Office - Visits to Schools and Colleges." In *ACDA, Lis 190*. Auckland, 1969.

The lack of any career opportunities was not to be realistically addressed until the 1970s. Even though lay teachers were a significant force in the system, none held a principal's position, and as the Christchurch Catholic Education Board noted, the difficulty in obtaining staff would remain unless 'headships' were opened up to lay teachers.<sup>110</sup> Recruiting and employing primary lay teachers was not the responsibility of the religious order and an appointment could be made, by the parish priest or more likely the Diocesan Education Office, often with little or no consultation.<sup>111</sup> This lack of co-ordination was not surprising given the momentous changes that the Catholic system was dealing with, and, for the religious, the drive to improve professional competence.

### **Confraternity of Christian Doctrine**

There was alarm also at the number of Catholic children forced to attend state schools because of the shortage of classroom space. While Catholic children had always been enrolled in state schools, this was usually where no convent or parochial school was available and parents had no choice. But the numbers being turned away in the late 1950s and into the 1960s alarmed the authorities. Parishes were reporting hundreds of children unable to attend the parochial school because of the lack of space.

The Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD) began formally in 1957 in New Zealand. Its aim was to have volunteer lay catechists instructing 'the young in their faith', by way of correspondence and personal contact. Since not all Catholic children could attend a Catholic school, the responsibility to provide instruction in the faith rested on the parents. CCD was to support the parental teaching of religion by correspondence or lessons outside of school hours. Parents of affected children were able to contact Church authorities and have their children enrolled. There were, in 1957, some 2,000 pupils in the Wellington Archdiocese who were unable to attend Catholic schools.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Spencer. *The Organisation of Catholic Education in New Zealand, Interim Report*. p240.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid. p239.

<sup>112</sup> "New Confraternity is established in Wellington." *Tablet*, 17 July 1957. CCD was canonically established in Wellington in June 1957. Much of the work on the programme had been done by Dr. Gascoigne over the previous 15 years, where catechetical instruction had been given by volunteers to children who 'were deprived on the normal benefits of a Catholic school'. The role of lay catechists

There was a considerable degree of effort required by both child and parent to meet the extracurricular demands of CCD, demands not required of Catholic school pupils. There, religious instruction was given as a matter of course. CCD was the Catholic equivalent of the Protestant Sunday schools.<sup>113</sup> It was, essentially, a work of the laity and, officially at least, had considerable status. Laity who taught religion shared in the magisterium, that is the teaching authority of the Church.<sup>114</sup> But, as the Parish Priest of Poirua-Titahi Bay noted, the theory of parents passing on their Catholic 'birthright', even with the assistance of CCD, was not always working out.<sup>115</sup>

But the spread of CCD was slow. CCD remained a correspondence course based in Wellington and it wasn't until 1963 that the first parish CCD group was established in Foxton. By 1966 only four parishes in Wellington had an official CCD group, although a number of parishes had unofficial groups operating. This contrasted with the Auckland diocese which began CCD in 1964 under the direction of Fr. Felix Donnelly. Auckland was motivated by the number of Catholic children unable to gain entrance to a Catholic school, but also recognising the unsatisfactory nature of the instruction available to those children. By 1966 Auckland had some 70 CCD groups functioning.<sup>116</sup> Dunedin established CCD during 1965 and in the same year when the Christchurch diocese had to deal with its own education crisis by halting enrolments to its primer classes, CCD was to fill the breach. Bishop Ashby wanted 'schools of religion' set up in every parish and those parishes to train lay volunteers. Teachers for the 'schools of religion' were drawn from the teaching profession and other laity who were invited to become involved and by 1966 numbered some 298 lay teachers and 25 religious.<sup>117</sup>

During the years 1963 to 1967 each diocese established its own CCD structure. Auckland provided some direction nationally in that it produced a CCD handbook in 1964 setting out the outlook and aims of CCD. For Fr. Donnelly, CCD was essentially a lay movement and its literature emphasised the need for competent personnel, familiar with contemporary theology. CCD, according to the handbook,

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had been prominent in the early days of the Catholic Church in New Zealand, when clergy numbers were small and lay involvement was essential to keep the faith going.

<sup>113</sup> Sweetman. *A Fair and Just Solution? A history of the integration of private schools in New Zealand*. p42.

<sup>114</sup> "Laymen Must Teach." *America Magazine* 107, no. 15 (1962): 483.

<sup>115</sup> Duffy. "The Problems Of Catholic Education In New And Expanding Areas."

<sup>116</sup> Spencer. *The Organisation of Catholic Education in New Zealand, Interim Report*. pp332-347.

<sup>117</sup> Ashby, Bishop Brian. "Pastoral circular- Catholic Education." In *ACDA, Lis 58/2*. Auckland, 1965, Spencer. *The Organisation of Catholic Education in New Zealand, Interim Report*. p340.

was not a substitute for the Catholic school, rather it was to be its own complete form of religious instruction, with its own training programmes for teachers. But development across the country was uneven as issues arose and were not dealt with. The movement had difficulty in being recognised by clergy and religious that it was a valid form of religious education, there was a lack of diocesan direction and the integrity of the training for CCD teachers was called into question.<sup>118</sup>

The years 1963-1967 were when CCD began to seriously grapple with the growing issue of Catholic schools being limited in their capacity. It would take some years to have CCD mature as a religious and social force committed to the Christian education not only of children at state schools, but also adults and young people.

## Conclusion

The period 1956 through to 1960 marked a significant change for the Church as the owners and proprietors of their school system. The 'necessary first step', as J.J. Small observed, had been taken but the way forward was becoming much more difficult. Politically an impasse had been reached as the authorities sought to maintain the momentum of the 1956 campaign, at least amongst Catholics, while having to work out how best to become more fully engaged in the political process. Importantly, the Catholic hierarchy had to recognise the worth of the political advice that was given to them by politicians. This was not necessarily easy, as any non-traditional group or organisation that represented the Church in education implied a greater involvement by the laity at the policy level and a much lower profile for the clergy. Walter Otto urged Catholics to pressure their members of parliament and actively question political candidates, hoping to bring about concessions that way. But wiser political advice recommended a more subtle approach than simply direct pressure on politicians. The 1958 Conference on Religious Instruction in State schools was a start as the churches showed they could constructively work together on common interests. It was not a blueprint for ecumenical harmony, but rather a pointer to the future. The future needed an organisational structure which allowed a degree of clerical input, but whose officials were democratically elected and able to meet government and opposition politicians on an official level.

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<sup>118</sup>Spencer. *The Organisation of Catholic Education in New Zealand, Interim Report*. pp332-347. The stand taken by CCD that it was its own valid form of Catholic education brought it into conflict with the PTA movement in Auckland.

Although state aid remained the most visible issue facing the Church, the emerging crisis in its education system was gathering momentum. In the lead up to the 1956 petition, signs of distress in the system were not recognised for what they were. The Church in the mid-1950s was still a clerically dominated institution whose lines of authority were quite specific, backed by the force of Canon Law. The laity were expected to pray, pay and obey, but more to the point, they had an expectation of Catholic education being made available to Catholic children. This expectation had been reinforced by the experience of generations of Catholics.

Before World War II the Church managed to cope with growth and expansion without great difficulty. But as demographic and social forces impacted on the post WWII society, the Church's educational mission was placed under increasing pressure to meet the growing demand for schools. When the Archbishop publicly asked if the effort put into providing Catholic schooling was worth it, given the disappointing numbers of pupils who remained active Catholics, it began a period of unrest, where the wider issues of funding and staffing the schools were to be the focus of concern, not by malcontents but Catholics who were committed to the maintenance of Catholic educational values. As the hierarchy began to make known their concerns about the difficulties facing the schools, the laity began to become more aware of the problems. Class sizes had always been larger than equivalent state schools, and many parents were aware of the demands placed on the teaching religious. In a sense that was the price for having a separate Catholic system.

But the rapidity of the increase meant the problems of pupil numbers and teacher-pupil ratio were impacting on the quality of education available. It wasn't that the numbers of teaching religious were declining, but rather the numbers needed to maintain the expanding school rolls. By 1957 the supply/demand equation was becoming askew. The teaching religious were also expected to up-skill themselves so as to meet the demands of the Thomas Report. The crisis was across the Catholic system, involving teaching staff, money, facilities and an increasing concern amongst parents that clerical authorities were not showing leadership in a time of rapid change. The old norms around deference to clerical authority were being replaced by a sense of parents wanting greater participation in their children's education, especially as they were paying for it. Because the Catholic system was not able to provide each child with a place, parents were being asked to take on the responsibility for religious instruction through the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine.

Unlike the Catholic school setting where religious instruction was delivered as a matter of course, children under CCD instruction had to undertake extracurricular demands. This programme was much more reliant upon parental involvement and responsibility.

During the latter years of the 1950s, lay Catholics were still on the bottom of the hierarchical pyramid, but necessity was forcing a rethink as to the role they played in the schooling system. The Catholic schooling system was experiencing a crisis that directly impacted upon how schools were staffed and managed. But at this point there was little evidence that the laity would be invited to move beyond a limited supporting role for Catholic education.



## Chapter Four: Cross Currents II

### Introduction

This chapter considers how the shape of the state aid issue changed as the political realities of obtaining assistance from the state had to mesh in with the need to cope with the crisis in Catholic schools. Although attempts had been made in the past to develop joint action with other mainstream churches on education matters, the signals coming out of the Second Vatican Council gave both Catholics and non-Catholics the confidence to work together in furthering their joint interest in state aid for their respective private schools. From a political perspective, an interdenominational approach gave a much more acceptable rationale to making assistance available, without necessarily resolving the core issue. For the private school sector, a channel had been made available through which to speak to the government and as both sides grew to trust one another, assistance continued to be provided. But it provided only limited assistance and for Catholic schools the problems did not go away.

But the laity had been seeking a greater practical involvement in their schools for some time. Even prior to the Vatican Council, some parents began to demand a greater role in the management of Catholic schools. Parent-teacher associations became more than fund-raising adjuncts of the school or the source of free labour.

It was the reality of parents being elected onto Catholic education organisations that allowed the political momentum to gain traction. Politicians were still sensitive about sectarian allegations that could arise when dealing with the clergy. Clergy remained part of these Catholic education bodies, but elected lay members of the Church were much more acceptable as office holders for governments to deal with, especially since providing increasing assistance to private schools became a regular feature of the National Governments of the 1960s. Elected parents became members of the Catholic Education Council and worked together with clergy appointed by the hierarchy. Although the Interdenominational Committee of Independent Schools was to become the main agency the government chose to use, it was the election process to these organisations that gave the politicians confidence to proceed.

During the 1950s, various governments had promised a commission of enquiry into education. It was duly constituted by the Labour Government and began work in 1960, sitting through until 1962. The then newly formed Catholic Education Council provided detailed submissions on state aid, but the Commission failed to make any recommendation in favour of aid to private schools. However, as in 1956, Catholics felt that the process was stacked against them and a political agenda pre-determined the outcome as far as state aid was concerned. Although the outcome for the Catholic case could be seen as a defeat, the Commission made the point quite clearly that state aid was a political, not educational, issue and needed to be determined in that arena. The Commission also rejected a number of the favourite arguments for state aid made by the Catholic Church, as having little or no relevance. The validity of Natural Law, the alleged rights enshrined in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and claims of distributive justice were dismissed. In rejecting these arguments, the Commission did provide clues as to how the Church might go about seeking assistance in the future.

The impact of Vatican II, increasing lay involvement, political action and co-operation across the private school sector all contributed to a new approach to the issue of state aid. Although the core problems remained, Church and state became less confrontational as they sought new ways to resolve their differences.

### **Parents in charge? - Parent-Teacher Associations**

The Catholic educational mission was suffering real stress at the end of the 1950s. One of the outcomes was the growth and maturing of the Parent-Teacher movement. Although this type of organisation had been in existence since the end of World War II, it was not until the crisis in Catholic education that the movement became more than a vehicle to 'assist the agitation for money'.<sup>1</sup> A Home and School Association was established in the Karori-Northland parish in September 1945.<sup>2</sup> By June 1946 there were sufficient Associations within Wellington to warrant the setting up of a

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<sup>1</sup> Anthony E.C.W. Spencer, *The Organisation of Catholic Education in New Zealand, Interim Report*. (Taunton, Somerset.: Russell-Spencer Ltd., 2005). p316.

<sup>2</sup> "Important New Adventure; Co-operation between Home and School," *Tablet*, 5 September 1945. This parish had the honour of being the first parish with such an association. Although a Catholic Home and School Association appears to have been founded in relation to St. Patrick's College, Wellington, but didn't find favour with the Archbishop. Spencer, *The Organisation of Catholic Education in New Zealand, Interim Report*. p315.

Council of Home and School Associations to co-ordinate the work of the parish based Associations.<sup>3</sup> Dr. Noel Gascoigne credited the increasing contacts between state and Catholic schools that grew out of the Thomas Report as providing the impetus for the formation of the Associations. Although stressing the importance of co-operation and contact between schools, teachers and parents, fundraising for the school was clearly their principal function.

Any notion that Home and School Associations were to be a partnership between both parents and the religious who ran the schools was not necessarily accepted by the Church authorities. In 1948 parents of pupils at the combined primary and secondary school in Gisborne, run by the Marist Brothers, formed a Home and School Association to try and improve amenities. A petition was sent to Bishop Liston asking to meet with him and discuss the problems. Liston's response was to have a letter read at all Masses directing that the Association be discontinued. A Home and School Association was not to be re-established until 1959.<sup>4</sup> Parish priests, who were effectively the managers of parochial schools, were not used to sharing their parish responsibilities with the laity and many found the intrusion difficult. Attempts to set up an Association did not always find favour with the Religious running the school.<sup>5</sup> But during the mid fifties, Parent-Teacher and Friends Associations were formed in a number of secondary schools. Walter Otto was the finance chairman of the Sacred Heart College Association and the driving force behind a debenture scheme to raise funds for building expansion at the College.<sup>6</sup>

Throughout the 1950s, the laity was repeatedly encouraged to become more involved in the life of the Church.<sup>7</sup> The modern lay apostolate was 'an indispensable necessity', given the growing shortage of priests. Calls from senior clergy were for the laity to be trained and prepared to carry their Christian principles with them as they lived their lives, bringing the spirit of Christianity into all spheres of human activity, exercised through the mandate of the hierarchy. Bishops had the authority

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<sup>3</sup> "Catholic Home and School Associations; First meeting of Council," *Tablet*, 19 June 1946.

<sup>4</sup> Edward Clisby, *History of the Marist Brothers in the New Zealand Province*, (Auckland: Marist Brothers, 2011), Chapter 17. In this case Liston was backing his Parish Priest who had prevented the Brothers from planning the extensions to the school. For a number of years the school suffered from a falling roll as parents were not prepared to put up with difficult conditions for both pupils and staff. In 1960 a new Marist Brothers School, Edmund Campion College, was opened in Gisborne.

<sup>5</sup> Spencer, *The Organisation of Catholic Education in New Zealand*, Interim Report. p315.

<sup>6</sup> Clisby. "History of the Marist Brothers in the New Zealand Province."Chapter 17.

<sup>7</sup> "The Holy Father and Lay Action," *Tablet*, 16 October 1957. '.....the comprehensive and unremitting guidance which the Holy Father has given both by word and by pen to the lay members of the Church.'

to accept or reject any lay movement within their diocese, and their personal views also played a part. McKeefry was of the view that the lay apostolate was, at heart, a matter of spiritual formation and could be undertaken through the existing sodalities in the Church.<sup>8</sup> So while the encouragement was there, it was tempered by an authoritarian structure that ensured lay participation was circumscribed. As one observer noted, the tradition of lay passivity had meant that docility was barely indistinguishable from apathy.<sup>9</sup>

Home and School or Parent-Teacher Associations were initially seen as part of the wider lay apostolate, subject to the oversight of the clergy and used for fund raising. Any real involvement for the laity in the Catholic education system did not begin until the Catholic Parent -Teacher Association (PTA) movement began to gain strength and demonstrate the contribution it could make in furthering Catholic education.<sup>10</sup> Such a development in the late 1950s could not really take place without the hierarchy's consent. Tony Spencer argued that in applying corrective measures to deal with the education crisis, the bishops, in changing their attitude to the PTA movement relied on parental participation and dialogue as providing a democratic legitimisation which they hoped would strengthen their campaign for state aid.<sup>11</sup>

The opportunity to develop PTAs in Catholic schools into more than fund raising bodies was taken up with considerable alacrity, especially in Auckland. There, a Diocesan Federation was established in 1959 with a membership of forty three individual associations, with more being formed.<sup>12</sup> PTAs were gradually set up in the four dioceses.<sup>13</sup> The Christchurch diocesan PTA wasn't set up until 1961.<sup>14</sup>

Auckland became the strongest Federation and provided the leadership in terms of pushing the case for state aid.<sup>15</sup> T.K. (Tom) Weal was the Federation's secretary

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<sup>8</sup> Reid, Nicholas. "A New World Through a New Youth: The Life and Death of the Catholic Youth Movement in New Zealand." In *The Spirit of the Past. Essays on Christianity in New Zealand History*, edited by Geoffrey Troughton and Hugh Morrison. Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2011. p164.

<sup>9</sup> Reid, John C. "A Lay Life in the Church." In *Liston*. Auckland: ADA, Lis 162.2, 1965.

<sup>10</sup> Veritas. "The Prospect For 1960." *Tablet*, 23 December 1959.

<sup>11</sup> Spencer, The Organisation of Catholic Education in New Zealand, Interim Report., p245.

<sup>12</sup> Weal, T.K. "Official Bulletin of the Auckland Diocesan Federation of Catholic Parent Teacher Friends Association." In *ACDA, Lis 192*. Auckland, 1959.

<sup>13</sup> Sweetman. *A Fair and Just Solution? A history of the integration of private schools in New Zealand*. p37.

<sup>14</sup> O'Reilly, K. A. . "Uncertain Dissent: Roman Catholics and their Schools in the Diocese of Christchurch 1958-1974." Research Essay, Canterbury, 1975.

<sup>15</sup> Sweetman. *A Fair and Just Solution? A history of the integration of private schools in New Zealand*. pp37-8.

and R.W. (Bob) Hubbard its chairman.<sup>16</sup> Bob Hubbard was to have a significant role in the future negotiations leading to the Integration Act and its implementation.<sup>17</sup>

From the outset the Auckland Federation made plain its intention of becoming 'a force speaking on all matters within the scope at all levels on behalf of member Associations'.<sup>18</sup> Its objectives were both political and educative. The Federation wanted to ensure its views were heard by the government, Catholic parents and the public at large.<sup>19</sup>

Catholic commentators recognised that the growth of PTAs was essential if parents and educationalists were to be convinced of the unique contribution made by Catholic education.<sup>20</sup> Although there was resistance from some of the Religious who managed the schools, for many nuns and brothers the PTA movement 'created a new world and the opportunity to mix with 'ordinary people'.<sup>21</sup> By the late 1950s the strict standards of religious life were being modified. At the same time Catholic educational pedagogy was moving from that of directive, controlling and task orientated individuals less concerned with the development of feelings and emotions to incorporating new pedagogical understandings into teaching practices.<sup>22</sup> Catholic schools, particularly at the secondary level, were now encouraging the social, economic and educational aspirations of all their pupils, while maintaining the

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<sup>16</sup> Tom Weal was a teacher at St. Peter's College in Auckland and active in the Social Credit Movement. On a personal note, I was taught by Tom Weal at St. Peter's and well remember his involvement in the Federation.

<sup>17</sup> Bob Hubbard was president of the Auckland and National Federation of Catholic PTAs, chairman of the West Auckland State School PTA and a member of the Catholic Education Council's Executive. Sweetman, p38.

<sup>18</sup> Weal, "Official Bulletin of the Auckland Diocesan Federation of Catholic Parent Teacher Friends Association."

<sup>19</sup> "Draft Constitution of Auckland Diocesan Federation of Catholic Parent-Teacher-Friend Associations," in Liston (Auckland: ACDA, 1960).

<sup>20</sup> Veritas, "The Prospect For 1960," *Tablet*, 23 December 1959.

<sup>21</sup> Collins. "For the common good: The Catholic educational mission in transition 1943-1965." p385. For the religious it was an opportunity to gauge how they were regarded by the community. A Marist Brother recalled how mixing with parents in the PTA and 'working bees' opened a new world for the Brothers. 'The respect they had for the Brothers was quite remarkable. They were working-class people from, say the likes of Sydenham and some of those families were the salt of the earth. They were really good people, although we didn't always think that about their sons. We thought "How could such nice parents have these children?"'

<sup>22</sup> O'Donoghue. *Upholding The Faith. The Process of Education in Catholic Schools in Australia, 1922-1965.* pp63-64. Catholic pedagogy was premised on a resistance to any development that smacked of "pretended self-government and unrestrained freedom on the part of the child" and that diminished "the teacher's authority and action". But there was a considerable variety in the teaching styles of individual Catholic teachers. There were many disciplinary teachers, but often balanced out by those who were more innovative and thoughtful, representing a diversity of pedagogical and disciplinary values and styles. Collins, "For the common good: The Catholic educational mission in transition 1943-1965". p382-3.

distinctive educational and religious values of Catholic schools. However, developing an effective liaison between teachers and parents was to take time. Educational policy remained the province of the bishops, but at the school level there were examples of the religious teachers refusing to attend PTA meetings. Lay reaction to this unwillingness to become involved tended to be mute as any criticism of the religious teachers could be construed as giving offence, an attitude which reflected the theological separation between clergy, religious and laity.<sup>23</sup>

Yet the more immediate impact of the PTAs, particularly the Auckland Federation, was felt in the 1960 election campaign. As Rory Sweetman noted, 'within six months of its formation the Auckland branch resuscitated the old threat of the Catholic block vote'.<sup>24</sup> When Walter Otto addressed a meeting of Catholic educational and lay organisations on the 23 November 1960, he asked if Catholics should 'attack' marginal seats on Election Day as a way of compelling action on state aid. Although he felt that Catholics should wait on the outcome of the Commission on Education, which had just begun hearings, the strong implication was that such an option was a possibility.<sup>25</sup>

The Auckland Federation pressed both main political parties for answers on their attitude to state aid. It wanted to know which party would give the 'fairest and most tangible recognition' to the Catholic claims, while expressing disappointment at the absence of concrete proposals for private schools in their manifestos.<sup>26</sup> Social Credit had offered a £10 rebate to the parents for each child in a private school. Telegrams were sent to Nash and Holyoake asking for some proposal similar to that of Social Credit.<sup>27</sup> Both leaders were accused of 'indifference towards the Private Schools' problem' and told that, although the Royal Commission on Education was operating,

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<sup>23</sup> O'Reilly. "Uncertain Dissent: Roman Catholics and their Schools in the Diocese of Christchurch 1958-1974."

<sup>24</sup> Sweetman, *A Fair and Just Solution? A history of the integration of private schools in New Zealand*. p37.

<sup>25</sup> "Mr Otto: 'Suffer in Patience'," *Auckland Star*, 23 November 1960.

<sup>26</sup> "State Aid-Political Issue," *New Zealand Herald*, 16 November 1960. The telegram read 'We view with grave concern your apparent indifference towards the Private Schools' problem by omitting to make some sympathetic reference to it in your policy speech last night. Letter following.' T.K. Weal, *Telegram to Leader of the Opposition.*, (Wellington: 1960).

<sup>27</sup> Weal, T.K. "Letter from Auckland Diocesan Federation of Catholic PTF Assn to Leader of the Opposition. advising that a meeting of Catholic organisations will examine the progress of State Aid prior to the General Election. ." In *ACDA, Lis 192*. Auckland, 1960. At the meeting there were to be representatives from every PTA, from every primary and secondary school, of which there were 78, each of the branches of the Holy Name Society, the Catholic Women's League, Homemakers, Hibernian Lodge, Catholic Youth Movement, Catholic Teachers' Society, Catholic Graduates Society and the Catholic University Club, plus other lay organisations.

a forthright statement on the issue from all political parties was necessary before 'we can cast a considered and confident vote.'<sup>28</sup> Their replies would be discussed at a combined meeting to be held just prior to the election.

The Auckland Federation was willing to show that it could wield some influence and made it clear to the delegates at the combined meeting that they should they return to their parishes throughout the diocese, and inform their fellow Catholics as to where each party stood on the issue.<sup>29</sup> Walter Otto had counselled patience so the message was not aimed at forming any block vote, but rather ensuring the politicians knew that it was still a possibility. Tom Weal told the meeting that Walter Nash advised he was hesitant to enter into discussions as the Education Commission was sitting and it was proper that the Government should await those findings.<sup>30</sup> Keith Holyoake, as Leader of the Opposition, promptly wrote back to the Federation denying his indifference, and promising immediate consideration to a list of detailed items.<sup>31</sup> As far as the Federation was concerned this concession was a small but significant victory in the ongoing campaign. Holyoake was quickly reminded of his promise after he became Prime Minister, and this election success for National did begin a sustained period of financial support for the private school sector.<sup>32</sup>

The Auckland PTA Federation's tactics during the 1960 election may have had no bearing on the outcome of the election, but they did demonstrate that concessions could be won if the right sort of pressure was applied. This was more astute politics than that of the 1956 Petition, although not yet to the point where the issue of state aid became an electoral determinant.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> \_\_\_\_\_. "Letter from Auckland Diocesan Catholic PTF Assn to Leader of the Opposition claiming indifference to plight of Catholics parents." In *ACDA, Lis 192*. Auckland, 1960.

<sup>29</sup> \_\_\_\_\_. "Letter from Auckland Diocesan Federation of Catholic PTF Assn to Leader of the Opposition. advising that a meeting of Catholic organisations will examine the progress of State Aid prior to the General Election."

<sup>30</sup> "Mr Otto: 'Suffer in Patience'."

<sup>31</sup> Holyoake, K.J. "Letter T.K. Weal rejecting criticism that the National Party were indifferent to the State Aid issue." In *ACDA, Lis 192*. Auckland, 1960. The items in question related to capitation grants for such things as school cleaning, heating, water supply, sanitary services, repair and maintenance plus a dozen or so more.

<sup>32</sup> Weal, T.K. "Letter to Prime Minister congratulating him on the election success. ." In *ACDA, Lis 192*. Auckland, 1960.

<sup>33</sup> Chapman, R. M, W K Jackson, A V Mitchell. *New Zealand Politics in Action. The 1960 General Election*. Wellington: Oxford University Press, 1962. p103, 231-2, 289-292. The authors consider that the importance of the PTA meeting, although widely reported, was greatly exaggerated. But it is not unreasonable to suggest that Holyoake's perception was that the Catholic vote may have become influential in marginal seats, influencing the decision to make greater provision for the private school sector. Dan Riddiford won Wellington Central seat for National by, in part, 'utilising the religious issue "with great subtlety and painful honesty"'.

Bob Hubbard sought to expand the PTA movement throughout New Zealand's Catholic schools and in 1962 put forward the Auckland Federation's constitution as a model for others. The movement was still seen as being part of the Lay Apostolate which emphasised the importance and duty of involvement to further the interests of Catholic education.<sup>34</sup> Fund raising was still very important, but clearly the notion that co-operative action by parents could lead to a wide range of benefits gave the PTA movement much more of a voice in Catholic education generally. By 1962 the Catholic Education Council was calling for greater PTA representation in its ranks.<sup>35</sup> The political edge to the PTA approach was sharpened by the decision to encourage Catholic parents to join their local state school committees.<sup>36</sup> As the Auckland Federation put it to their members,

You are strongly urged to join your local State Federation and you, as taxpayers contributing to the Public Purse [from] which Education's Funds derive, are fully entitled to do this as you should want to have some say in their expectations and in the product being turned out from those schools. It also lends itself to good public relations.<sup>37</sup>

Bob Hubbard was a prominent example of a Catholic who had an interest in both Catholic and state schooling. Hubbard had recognised the necessity of using more effective political tactics than those used by the Holy Name Society in 1956 and broadening political contacts.<sup>38</sup> Working with state school committees was part of that strategy. He was, amongst other positions, chairman of a west Auckland PTA as well as President of the Auckland and National Federation of Catholic PTAs.

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<sup>34</sup> "Parent-Teacher Associations And Parent's Responsibility," *Tablet*, 23 May 1962. That the PTA was a function of the Lay Apostolate lay in the notion that involved parents have duty to encourage non committed parents to attend and contribute to PTA meetings. Also Hubbard, R.W. "Parent-Teacher-Friend Associations." *Tablet*, 22 November 1961.

<sup>35</sup> "The Catholic Education Council ". *Tablet*, 23 May 1962.

<sup>36</sup> State school committees were obligated by part IV of the Education Act 1914 to 'keep the school in good repair and order, and to provide for the proper cleaning of the school and outbuildings, and for the heating of the school, and to make all such arrangements in regard to sanitary matters, and to the care of the school grounds, gates and fences as shall conduce to the physical health of the children and to the promotion of the habits or order and tidiness.' This section of the Act is quoted in Plank, Olga. "People, Policies, Progress. A short history of the development of the New Zealand School Committees' Federation (Inc)." edited by New Zealand School Committees' Federation (Inc). Wellington: New Zealand School Committees' Federation (Inc), 1987. p19.

<sup>37</sup> Weal, "Official Bulletin of the Auckland Diocesan Federation of Catholic Parent Teacher Friends Association."

<sup>38</sup> Sweetman. *A Fair and Just Solution? A history of the integration of private schools in New Zealand.* p38.



State school committees were elected every two years by householders in the school district.<sup>39</sup> Although principally responsible for the upkeep of school premises and the payment of the caretaker, state school committees were interested in a range of educational issues and collectively sought to have a greater say in the education system itself. As the *Otago Daily Times* observed, in commenting on the 1954 Dominion Federation of School Committees' annual conference in Dunedin, school committees were coming to exercise a more important role in education. They were, according to the newspaper, 'fulfilling the role intended for them under the Education Act of 1877 when they received powers which, because they lacked the revenue and for other reasons- they were not able to exercise.' Some twenty three years later the Federation wondered if anything had changed!<sup>40</sup>

Encouraging Catholic parents to join state school committees was a means of attempting to put across the Catholic point of view. State school committees had remained opposed to any extension of financial aid to private schools, mainly on the grounds that state aid would fragment the existing system and adversely affect state schools. Increasingly state school committees were involved in fund raising activities for equipment and organising 'working bees' to improve school grounds, activities with which Catholic parents were familiar.<sup>41</sup>

In 1948 the School Committees Federation unanimously opposed aid and continued annually to pass similar resolutions.<sup>42</sup> There were hints that opposition had a sectarian edge. In Patea, during 1949, state school committees of the Patea and Waverley District formed an Association and invited the Patea Convent to join. Catholic involvement would have been debarred however, since the first objective on the Association's constitution was 'to uphold and maintain the National system of free non-denominational and compulsory education'.<sup>43</sup> Inevitably this move to create a grouping of individual school committees caused consternation in Catholic circles.

<sup>39</sup> McLaren. *Education in a Small Democracy*. p10.

<sup>40</sup> Plank. "People, Policies, Progress. A short history of the development of the New Zealand School Committees' Federation (Inc)." pp21-22. McLaren notes that school committees never occupied the important place the legislators of 1877 intended as counterbalancing the powers of education boards, gained effective control of public primary education, in part by restricting the role of school committees. McLaren. *Education in a Small Democracy*. p10.

<sup>41</sup> McLaren. *Education in a Small Democracy*. p11.

<sup>42</sup> "Religious Schools Under Fire," *Tablet*, 17 March 1948, "State Schools not endangered; Southland paper appeals for justice.," *Tablet*, 18 March 1953.

<sup>43</sup> Hobbs, A.S. "Letter to School Committee Convent School, Patea from Patea and Waverley District School Committees Association." In *ACDA, Lis 186*. Auckland, 1949. McKeefry investigated and found that the promoter of the Association was a retired Secretary of the Taranaki Education Board and known to be very unfriendly towards Catholic schools.

McKeefry was concerned these 'associations are inspired by bigotry' and could lobby the Government with negative results for Catholic education. A similar type of Association arose in Wellington in 1949, and the Wellington School Committees and Educational Associations' opposition to any state aid was reported in the *Dominion*.<sup>44</sup> The Ngati-Toa Home and School Association filed a strong objection to the 1956 Holy Name Society petition as did the Dominion Federation of School Committees. Resolutions opposing state aid continued to be passed at their national conferences. In reality the main teachers' bodies, the PPTA and NZEI, were becoming the more prominent voices in opposition, especially as the relationships between state and Catholic schools at a local level were becoming more benign. Catholic religious teachers were sharing training and in-service courses with state teachers.

But reported remarks from School Committees' Association meetings showed opposition remained to wider state aid provisions. Walter Otto was especially concerned that comments from individual Association members vigorously opposing state aid were reported in the press as being the views of the Association. He had occasion to write to the Auckland School Committees' Association about the coverage given to statements made by a member opposing state aid. At the 1960 annual conference of the Federation of School Committees' Association, remarks were made by a delegate comparing Catholic schools with those of a Communist education system. Otto, in responding to the press article, chided the Association for not correcting that article which gave the impression Conference approved the remarks. He readily acknowledged the reported remarks were not the views of the Association, but wanted to emphasise that the Catholic school system was not being given 'a fair go'. But comment from individuals on school committees tended to reflect protection of the state system rather than anti-Catholic sentiment as such. Otto's reaction was more conciliatory than would have been the case in the past and he asked members of the Association to 'give us a fair go', implying that although opposition to state aid still existed, the prevailing mood was becoming much more tolerant.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> "Extension of Aid to Church Schools Opposed," *Dominion*, 5 July 1949. McKeefry thought that the statement of the Wellington group followed the general line of the Presbyterians in opposition.

<sup>45</sup> Otto, Walter. "Letter to President, Federation of School Committees' Association." In *ACDA, Lis 190*. Auckland, 1960, ———. "Reply to reported statements made at Conference of the Federation of School Committees' Association." In *ACDA, Lis 191*. Auckland, 1960.

Trying to win community sympathy or at least blunt opposition from state school committees was an important strategy in the campaign. But there were warnings that any move to threaten politicians with a Catholic vote would be counterproductive. Many non-Catholics, according to J. J. Small, saw the issue simply as the hierarchy forcing parents to send their children to Catholic schools and then asking the state to subsidise the expenses. Political threats gave substance to charges of Catholic 'intolerance and ruthlessness', providing a distraction from the substantive issues at stake. This, Small considered, was poor politics.<sup>46</sup>

### **Parents in charge?- The National Council of Catholic Education and the Interdenominational Committee of Independent Schools**

It was during this time that a number of other groups and organisations were developing which were to have a material impact upon the national debate on state aid. Unlike the Holy Name Society's campaign in 1956, these new groupings were to provide a multi-faceted approach to the issue and increasingly featured Catholic lay people in positions of authority. Catholic activism in terms of educational matters was increasingly being fronted by Catholic lay people.<sup>47</sup> Although it was not until later in the 1960s that laity were represented at all levels of Catholic education, the change began in the early 1960s as discontent with the system began to manifest itself and as the interventions by the hierarchy were proving ineffective. School committees were being elected and were slowly replacing the influence of the parochial clergy.<sup>48</sup>

When the National Council of Catholic Education was set up In April 1960, Catholic education was given an umbrella organisation which had broad representation from across the educational spectrum of Catholic life. Consisting of some sixty members, the hierarchy, diocesan education, school management, religious congregations and the Home and School organisations were each represented on the Council.<sup>49</sup> Not

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<sup>46</sup> Small, J.J. "Interest in Catholic Schools." *Tablet*, 13 March 1963.

<sup>47</sup> Hubbard. "Parent-Teacher-Friend Associations." Hubbard emphasised the co-operative, rather than subservient role of the PTA and urged parents to stand to their 'full stature in Catholic society.'

<sup>48</sup> O'Reilly. "Uncertain Dissent: Roman Catholics and their Schools in the Diocese of Christchurch 1958-1974."

<sup>49</sup> "A National Council of Catholic Education Is Formed," *Tablet*, 6 April 1960. Membership consisted of:- a representative of the Hierarchy, Diocesan Directors of Education and Social Works, Diocesan Inspectors of Schools, representatives of School Managers, a representative from every Religious Congregation engaged in education work, five representatives from each Diocesan of its Home and

surprisingly, the real power lay in the Executive, which was chaired by Bishop Kavanagh.<sup>50</sup>

One of its key objectives was 'fostering every kind of mutual assistance useful to achieving the purposes of Catholic schools.' This was a tacit acknowledgement that a properly structured national organisation was imperative if the purposes of Catholic schools were to make progress. Accordingly, its first task was to develop submissions to be made the Commission on Education set up by the Labour Government in 1960. In its first annual report of May 1961, the Council reflected on the amount of work required to detail the submissions but also the need to prepare material on contentious submissions made by other parties. An example was a submission by the PPTA which argued that it was socially desirable that as many as possible of the community's children should be encouraged to grow up side by side in the same schools, irrespective of parent's opinion or means. This struck at the heart of Catholic choice.<sup>51</sup>

While the presentation of submissions to the Commission took up most of its resources in the first year, its first annual meeting showed a distinct gap in expectations between the membership. The Executive was concerned with the major education questions, while the meeting itself debated school uniforms and homework.<sup>52</sup> The structure of the Council fell between that of an Executive concerned with technical issues of educational policy, and a membership whose views and opinions reflected those of ordinary Catholics. There was a 'low level of understanding of the causes of the crisis among the lay members of the Council which contrasted with the focus of the Executive'.<sup>53</sup> Ordinary Council members were responding to the concerns of the groups they represented, issues such as homework and school uniforms, and used the annual meeting as a forum for their

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School organisations, and representatives of national lay bodies with special interest in educational matters.

<sup>50</sup> Spencer, *The Organisation of Catholic Education in New Zealand, Interim Report*. p216. Article 4 reads – Since the Council has no juridical or administrative precedence over its members, it will pursue its aims with due respect for the authority which its members hold from their organisation, Superiors, Bishops.

<sup>51</sup> Catholic Education Council. "First Annual Report." In *ACDA, Lis 192*. Auckland, 1961.

<sup>52</sup> "First Annual Meeting of Catholic Education Council," *Tablet*, 24 May 1961. An editorial in the *Tablet* regarding the Conference commented exclusively on the issues raised (homework, school uniforms) and made no mention of the complex issues relating to Catholic education.

<sup>53</sup> Spencer. *The Organisation of Catholic Education in New Zealand, Interim Report*. p216.

views.<sup>54</sup> But the Executive was dealing with a school system getting out of control. This disjuncture between the Executive and the body of the Council mirrored the passive role that had been assigned to the laity. The agenda at those early meetings was focussed on school issues and avoided the most pressing topic, that of state aid. It was not until 1965 that the Executive arranged for material that dealt with structural education issues to be presented to the annual meeting.<sup>55</sup>

At the 1965 annual meeting, the agenda was much more attuned to the major education issues. The Director of Education spoke of the degree of co-operation with private schools, and how private schools were using Departmental training courses and other resources, the Rev. John Mackey spoke on the future of Catholic schools and Bob Hubbard presented a paper on the cost structure of Catholic schools. The Catholic Women's League wanted clerical assistance for school administration.<sup>56</sup> However the Council had entered into the political field a couple of years earlier, when, at a meeting between the Minister of Education and the Council, the Council was recognized as the official body dealing with Catholic education on a national level.<sup>57</sup> 1963 was an election year, and, taking a lead from the PTA movement, the Council determined to approach all sitting MPs and candidates, asking where they stood on state aid.<sup>58</sup> However any momentum was forestalled by the Prime Minister announcing a financial assistance package for private schools of £200,000. This largesse was part of a 'steady flow of aid in cash and kind' that the National Administration provided between 1960 and 1972, to the extent that the Minister of Education was empowered to make grants to private schools at his own discretion.<sup>59</sup> Prior to this policy, the rationale for state grants was that the benefit accrued to the individual pupil. But now it was clearly the school which was the main beneficiary. As such all private schools were favoured with tax rebates and capitation grants, a situation which found favour with many National members whose own schooling had been private and retained links with them. Those same members would have seen

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<sup>54</sup> As Kevin O'Reilly noted, in Christchurch the most pressing issues for the PTA until 1964 were school uniforms and code of conduct matters. O'Reilly, "Uncertain Dissent: Roman Catholics and their Schools in the Diocese of Christchurch 1958-1974."

<sup>55</sup> Ibid. Spencer was critical of the lack of statistical analysis available to the Council membership. p216.

<sup>56</sup> "Catholic Education Council Holds Fifth Annual Meeting," *Tablet*, 26 May 1965.

<sup>57</sup> O'Reilly, "Uncertain Dissent: Roman Catholics and their Schools in the Diocese of Christchurch 1958-1974". p15.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid. p44.

<sup>59</sup> Sweetman. *A Fair and Just Solution? A history of the integration of private schools in New Zealand.* p44.

the Australian Liberal Party's decision to provide state aid to private schools in 1963 as a positive development. Catholic agitation over the previous decade had had some impact, and National's Catholic members, such as C.G.E. Harker. Dan Riddiford and T.F. Gill had been active in advancing the Catholic cause within the Party.<sup>60</sup> As the Catholic Labour MP Ted Keating had noted in 1957, the old bitterness in Parliament had died and opposition strength was not as great as it had been.<sup>61</sup>

The fact that members of the Council Executive, apart from the bishops' representatives, were elected from their parent bodies, allowed the Government to have a more relaxed attitude to providing 'cash and kind'. Increasing the lay profile on the Council helped ease the National Government's concern over criticism of its increasingly large state aid grants made to private schools. Politically, the reality of dealing with an elected body instead of representatives of the hierarchy was much more appealing. Although the hierarchy were clearly an important part of the state aid issue, they were now less obvious in negotiations.

But another organisation was momentous in all but removing sectarianism from the issue. It was, in effect, a pan-Christian front for state aid, and its formation removed one of the last barriers to successful political engagement. The appearance of the ecumenical Interdenominational Committee of Independent Schools removed a major argument against state aid. Most Protestant Churches had opposed state aid at the hearings for the 1956 HNS petition. Speaking in Parliament to the hearings, members of the Education Committee referred to Protestant opposition to the petition and, as the Chairman of the Committee, Mr. D.M. Rae observed, 'we had the strongest opposition voiced by religious schools or organisations to any departure from the present system'.<sup>62</sup>

There had been earlier attempts to forge a coalition of private schools. A Private Secondary Schools Association, which included Catholic representation, was in place by the end of the war.<sup>63</sup> In 1950 a 'Governing Bodies Association of Private Secondary Schools in the Auckland City District' was meeting to try and secure

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid, pp44-45.

<sup>61</sup> Keating. "Letter explaining his position over the fate of the HNS petition to the House."

<sup>62</sup> Hansard, "*Financial Assistance to Private Schools. New Zealand Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 310, September 13-October 1956, pp2721-2746,*" in *New Zealand Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 310, September 13-October 1956* (Wellington: 1956), 2721-2746. p2726.

<sup>63</sup> Gascoigne, Rev. Dr. N. "Letter to Liston about membership of the Council for Educational Research, contact with the P.M. and criticism of John Reid." In *ACDA, Lis 186*. Auckland, 1945.

exemption from rates.<sup>64</sup> Liston rather hoped, or as he put it 'Later-perhaps-maybe, who knows...' that the bigger question of relief could be tackled or at least private schools would be able to speak as one on matters of education.<sup>65</sup> Liston's hopes reflected a move by the hierarchy away from the pre-war identification of state aid solely with Catholic schools, to embrace the positive work done by the private school sector. In a 1948 *Tablet* editorial, the role of the private religious schools was extolled, without there being any reference to Catholic schools.<sup>66</sup> Dr. Noel Gascoigne wrote a 'Memo to Boards of Governors on the Question of State Aid for Private Schools' in 1949, where, in setting out the familiar arguments for state aid, including the argument in 'Natural Law', the word 'Catholic' was replaced with 'Private'.<sup>67</sup> Boards of Governors of the non-Catholic private schools who read this document must have been surprised that the claim for state aid was apparently being made without distinction. They would have seen it as politically unrealistic and been sceptical about any government in an egalitarian society giving aid to elite schools, especially as this type of aid had not been available to the elite English public schools.<sup>68</sup>

In 1954 the hierarchy issued their first public statement on education for more than twenty years. The statement made common cause with private schooling, in that state aid should be available for all parents who chose a private school for their children. 'Our claim is that parents, be they Catholic or non-Catholic, who choose the private school for the education of their children, should be financially assisted in no less measure than parents who choose a State school for their children.'<sup>69</sup> This emphasis on private schools became a key theme of the Holy Name Society's petition. All private schools rather than just Catholic schools needed relief, and the

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<sup>64</sup> Rutherford, J. "Report of Inaugural meeting of Representatives of Governing Bodies Association of Private Secondary Schools in the Auckland City District." In *ACDA, Lis 185*. Auckland, 1950.

<sup>65</sup> Liston, Bishop James. "Memo to Hierarchy re formation of an Association of Religious Schools." In *WAA; Education- Interdenom. Council and Association of Independent Schools, #290*. Wellington, 1950.

<sup>66</sup> "Religious Schools Under Fire." 17 March, 1948.

<sup>67</sup> Gascoigne, Rev Dr Noel. "Memo to Boards of Governors on the question of State Aid for Private Schools." In *ACDA, Lis 184*. Auckland, 1949. Gascoigne made a number of claims about the status of 'denominational' schools in England, Scotland and Wales which Tony Spencer criticised as being quite inaccurate.

<sup>68</sup> Spencer. *The Organisation of Catholic Education in New Zealand, Interim Report*. p259.

<sup>69</sup> "Bishops' Statement," *Zealandia*, 18 November 1954.

invitation was extended to other private schools to lend their support.<sup>70</sup> They chose not to.

In the immediate years after the 1956 Parliamentary education hearings, opposition by the Protestant Churches to the granting of assistance to private schools waned.<sup>71</sup> This change of heart was most obvious in the submissions, and lack of them, that were made to the Commission on Education that began hearings in 1960.

### **The Commission on Education**

The Commission on Education in New Zealand 1960-1962, known as the Currie Commission after its chairman Sir George Currie, was set up in February 1960 to report on a wide range of educational matters. Prior to this Commission, the government had led attempts to provide educational direction with the New Education Fellowship Conference Report of 1937 and the Thomas Report on the Post Primary School Curriculum in 1943. This particular Commission attempted to present a broader and more comprehensive survey of the state system of schooling than those earlier reports and was to 'inquire into' the publicly-controlled system of primary, post primary and technical education in relation to the present and future needs of the country. This included the question of religious teaching in state schools.<sup>72</sup> In addition, the Commission was asked to consider the question of aid by the state to private schools.

For the Catholic Church the prospect of a commission that would consider state aid had been around since 1954 when Walter Nash suggested such a possibility. Nash was asked at a campaign meeting- 'Is it the intention of the Labour Party to subsidise religious education'. 'I don't think anyone should say from the platform whether or not

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<sup>70</sup> Otto. "The petition of Walter Stewart Otto.". The first clause of the deposition read –'That although the Education Act of 1877 provides that education of New Zealand children shall be "free, secular and compulsory", the secular education provided in private schools under the compulsory provisions of the Legislation, and accepted by the State as such, is not "free" to the parents of the children concerned.'

<sup>71</sup> Small, J.J. "Religion and the Schools in New Zealand 1877-1963." *Comparative Education Review* 9, no. 1 (1965): 53-62. p60.

<sup>72</sup> Scott, David J. "The Currie Commission And Report On Education In New Zealand 1960-1962." Ph.D, University of Auckland, 1996. p15. Philip Skoglund, the Minister of Education, had asked for 'a full impartial enquiry into the publicly controlled school system of this country, neither duly hurried nor unduly prolonged, with opportunity for the commission to take and sift a wide range of evidence, to initiate and carry through investigation of its own that it judges to be necessary, and, finally to bring down a report which will enable us to see more clearly the direction of educational development and which will recommend specific lines of action'. This was part of a letter from the Minister to Sir George Currie, quoted in I. McLaren 'Education in a Small Democracy', 1974. This extract is taken from Scott, p16.



we should subsidise private schools' said Mr. Nash. 'The question is too big for that. I believe that if we became the Government a commission should be set up, so that those interested could give evidence in public and in the open....'<sup>73</sup> McKeefry was sceptical and thought such a commission 'would probably be sitting for 10 years.'<sup>74</sup> Labour's policy was to stonewall until the proposed commission made its findings, and National took a similar though more flexible stand.<sup>75</sup>

However the Church's role in the chain of events that led to the formation of the Commission was incidental. The NZEI, the largest teachers' union, had asked for a Royal Commission in 1948, and by 1958 Skoglund was referring to the possible need for a Royal Commission.<sup>76</sup> In 1959 Skoglund announced his intention of holding a Royal Commission to look into educational methods and standards in the classroom.<sup>77</sup>

The National Council of Catholic Education prepared detailed submissions to the Commission. Their submissions were in four parts: aspects of the present situation for private schools; the right of parents to choose the kind of school they wished for their children and the grounds for that choice; answering the usual objections made (Divisiveness, Fragmentation to the state system); and the positive points to the Catholic claim.<sup>78</sup> While the first part of the submissions dealt with the situation the Catholic system was now facing in terms of growth, capacity and costs, the remainder was concerned with the moral and religious fundamentals of the Catholic system as well as the legal obligations that rested on the government. The Church

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<sup>73</sup> "Mr. Nash in New Plymouth," *Auckland Star*, 3 November 1954.

<sup>74</sup> McKeefry, Archbishop Peter. "Letter to all the bishops about meeting with P.M." In *ACDA, Lis 187*. Auckland, 1954.

<sup>75</sup> Chapman, *New Zealand Politics in Action. The 1960 General Election*. p103.

<sup>76</sup> Scott, "The Currie Commission And Report On Education In New Zealand 1960-1962".p39.

"Religious Training Situation Confused; Questions on Religion in Schools," *Evening Post*, 18 June 1958. Skoglund, in June 1958, commented at the Preliminary Conference on Religious Teaching in State schools that the issues could well need to be aired as submissions at a possible Royal Commission at some future date.

<sup>77</sup> It was intended that the Commission would be 'Royal', but political manoeuvres in early 1960 and the appointment of a chairman who was not a member of the legal fraternity meant that when the commission commenced, it was not able to instruct any particular interest group or person to attend. In fact it exercised less power than a committee of enquiry, as it was ministerially appointed, rather than being appointed by the Governor General. Scott, "The Currie Commission And Report On Education In New Zealand 1960-1962", p38.

<sup>78</sup> Catholic Education Council. "Submissions Presented to the Commission on Education July 1960." Wellington: Catholic Education Council for New Zealand, 1960.

wanted to avoid the appearance of being simply another pressure group, but be seen to be concerned with the justice of the issue and 'not just a cut of the public purse.'<sup>79</sup>

The submissions went to some length to blunt the objections which had been frequently raised during the 1956 Petition hearings, namely that state aid would promote divisiveness within society and the state school system would be fragmented by a multitude of private schools being built. Divisiveness, as an issue, had much less resonance in 1960 than in 1956. There was no evidence that Catholic schools produced inferior citizens or private schools in general promoted divisiveness within society. Any notion of a monopolistic state education system, with its associated communist implications, had been rebuffed by H.R.G. Mason when, as Minister of Education in 1945, he considered the private schools made a significant contribution to New Zealand's education through their diversity and independence.<sup>80</sup>

But criticism that private schools fragmented the state system had two elements to it. Firstly, that private schools, if given state aid, would proliferate and divert resources away from the state schools. This had been a frequent objection during the 1956 hearings. The second element was that fragmentation may be caused by parents who consider the state system did not meet their children's needs and, by withdrawing their children, would help weaken the system.<sup>81</sup> This aspect was part of a wider issue that the Currie Commission had to deal with, that is to say the quality of education available in state schools. It was quite likely that the principal of a local state primary school may have been concerned about the impact upon that school when a new convent school was opened in the area, but many of the concerns of that principal would have been similar to that of the convent school – class sizes, pupil evaluation, and teacher availability and quality. The areas of special concern for the Currie Commission were similar to problems within the Catholic system because they were inherent to education per se.

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<sup>79</sup> McRae, Monsignor A.J. "Letter to Liston about representation on the Commission on Education." In *ACDA, Lis 190*. Auckland, 1960. McRae warned about statements from the HNS that might give the appearance of simply wanting a financial solution and the principle of justice be overlooked.

<sup>80</sup> Mason, Hon. Mr. H.G.R. *Education Today and Tomorrow*. Second ed. Wellington: Government Printer, 1945.p 69. Mason welcomed 'the diversity that schools independent of the State are capable of introducing into New Zealand education...The private schools, I am sure, will make their greatest contribution to education in New Zealand not by imitation of the State schools, but by developing a character of their own.'

<sup>81</sup> Catholic Education Council. "Submissions Presented to the Commission on Education July 1960." p23.

As the Commission acknowledged, there were areas of special concern. Special attention was paid by the Commission to the recruitment and training of teachers as a means of attaining higher standards, the need for smaller class sizes, parental participation in the control and management of schools, Maori participation in education, and an improved assessment of pupils as they move through various stages of schooling. Each of these aspects was a feature of the Catholic crisis, although some dynamics were quite different e.g. the number and function of religious teachers and the hierarchy's role in the governance of Catholic schools.<sup>82</sup> But the fact that both systems shared similar problems gave the Catholic system a much more regular profile than that of the 1956 hearings. Many of the solutions would apply to Catholic private schools. In a sense, their differences became much narrower.

The makeup of the Commission drew relatively little public reaction from Catholics, unlike the reaction to the makeup of the Parliamentary Education Committee in 1956. J.H. Whiteford, president of the Holy Name Society, protested that the Commission membership should be increased to include representatives of private schools.<sup>83</sup> Although Cyril Harker, National M.P. for Hawkes Bay, considered Professor Colin Bailey's appointment as 'wrong' given Bailey's opposition to aid for private schools, there was no real objection to the Commission's membership.<sup>84</sup> However the appointment of Sir George Currie was welcomed, given the role he had played as chairman of the conference on religious instruction in state schools in 1958.<sup>85</sup>

David Scott described how the commissioners needed to be politically acceptable to both the Labour Government and the National opposition, (since an election was scheduled during the course of the Commission), the Unions, and within education circles.<sup>86</sup> Seven of the Commission were either practising or past teachers. There was representation from the rural sector, public service and the education

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<sup>82</sup> Commission on Education, "*Report of the Commission on Education in New Zealand*," (Wellington: Commission on Education in New Zealand, 1962). pp6-7.

<sup>83</sup> "Protest on Education Commission," *Auckland Star*, 18 February 1960.

<sup>84</sup> Harker M.P., C.G.E. "Letter from MP for Waipawa to Liston re Catholic education." In *ACDA, Lis 190*. Auckland, 1960.

<sup>85</sup> "Religious Teaching In Schools. Views on Secular Clause Clarified. Religion and Promotion of Teachers," *Evening Post*, 19 June 1958.

<sup>86</sup> Scott, "The Currie Commission And Report On Education In New Zealand 1960-1962". p149. A majority of the commissioners had South Island roots and, as such, the Commission was unrepresentative of the population as a whole. Demographically the population expansion in South Auckland meant the provision of school facilities was not keeping pace with the growth, and provided the Commission with one of the intractable problems it needed to address.

inspectorate. Two of the commissioners were women. Omitted were politicians and religious leaders, together with representatives of major industry, the scientific, medical and legal communities, as well as government departments concerned with the economy.<sup>87</sup> Selection of members was aimed at those who could be relied upon to focus upon tidying up the school system and accept compromise.<sup>88</sup> Potentially the makeup of the Commission could have led the Church authorities to be more alarmed, but the range of exclusions mollified suggestions that the private school sector was unfairly treated.

Although the hierarchy had an interest in much of the Commissions' deliberations, it was state aid to private schools and religion in schools that were of particular concern. Many of the submissions as regards both these topics were bound up with related topics of correct parenting, censorship and private education. Many advocates for religious teaching in schools were concerned to keep 'cranks' out of the system, allowing the interpretation of the established churches to dominate. For example the United Synagogues were opposed to religious teaching being limited to exclusively Christian teaching in schools, while the Mormon Church was 'ignored'.<sup>89</sup> But the number of individuals, groups, and societies who presented submissions ranged from well-researched presentations to eccentric letters, advocating a wide range of social, political but most prominently, educational reforms. Many educational establishments, schools, school committees, PTAs, universities, training colleges and boards made up a majority of the 409 separate written submissions. Among the more prominent submissions from distinctly religious bodies were those from the N.Z. Council for Christian Education, National Council of Churches (particularly the Women's Committees of various branches), the Methodist Church of New Zealand, Mothers' Union in New Zealand, Grand Orange Lodge, and the Church of the Province of New Zealand (Anglican). There were submissions from local church bodies (Congregations of the Protestant Churches of Thames) and individual ministers and priests. Religious teaching in schools turned out to be the biggest single matter discussed by individual submitters.<sup>90</sup> But the list of submitters

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid. p149-50. Scott makes the point that the omissions tell a lot about how the control of the selection of commissioners and the terms of reference were an important means of restricting the discourse.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid. p156.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid. pp179-180.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid. p322.

reflected overall concern with education in general, and with a much wider range of views and opinions than had occurred in 1956.<sup>91</sup>

The Commission's final report was presented in June 1962. As regards the two particular matters of Catholic interest, the Commission's decision put the state aid issue firmly in the political arena, while it gave the Nelson system of religious teaching in state schools the necessary endorsement for legislative action. As regards state aid, the Commission noted that the Catholic Church did not command the majority approval for its claim for assistance. Yet the shifting of opinion was evident in the support given to the view that there should be a continuation and, if possible, extension of the existing assistance given to private schools. The controlling authorities of major Anglican and Presbyterian schools, the Presbyterian Church, the Associated Chambers of Commerce, Federated Farmers the New Zealand Secondary School Boards Association plus some state High School Boards, supported, either in full or part, the giving and extension of indirect aid. The Anglican Church, as such, had 'no official opinion' on the question of state aid, although it was the opinion of the bishops that a majority of the Anglican community was opposed to the granting of further financial assistance to private schools.<sup>92</sup>

Opposition to any further financial assistance came from some familiar adversaries; N.Z.E.I., P.P.T.A., Education Boards' Association, the Dominion Federation of School Committees; National Council of Home and School and Parent-Teacher Federations, the New Zealand Protestant Federation, the Methodist Church of New Zealand, the Grand Orange Lodge and others.<sup>93</sup>

The Commission dismissed two key elements of the Catholic argument as irrelevant. Article 26 of the United Nations (UN) Declaration of Human Rights had been used to claim that the civil rights of parents have been denied when the state does not support private schools.<sup>94</sup> The Catholic case argued that the state did not replace

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<sup>91</sup> Education, "Report of the Commission on Education in New Zealand." pp765-773.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid. p713.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid. pp702-703. Other submissions against further assistance came from the N.Z. Rationalist Assn., Wellington Institute for Educational Research, the Education Committee of the North Taranaki School Committees Association, Teachers Christian Fellowship of N.Z., the Boards of Governors of Tauranga College and Riccarton High School and nine private individuals.

<sup>94</sup> Article 26 (précis) Everyone has the right to education and education shall be free at least in the elementary and fundamental stages; That education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; Parents have the right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children. See [www.un.org/en/document/udhr/](http://www.un.org/en/document/udhr/). The appeal to Article 26 and the notion of rights was of course only available after the UN Charter had been formulated. It would have been strange to older Catholics

nor could it dispossess the parents regarding education. For Catholic parents their natural duty was to secure for their children such education that is proper for them. The state only becomes an educating agency with the consent of parents. Those who do not consent to state authority in education have rights to an equality of financial treatment, a treatment that is not determined by elections, or by accepting the state system as a condition for that equality.<sup>95</sup> The Commission saw the issue quite differently, in that the U N Article forbade the legal impediment to parents discharging their educational obligations towards their children and that it was purely a matter for political and local determination as to the extent of state intervention for minorities and the manner in which those minorities determine their rights. This submission, according to the Commission, had no legitimate basis.<sup>96</sup>

Professor Colin Bailey was a commissioner who had, in 1956, spoken in opposition to the HNS petition. Some years later, he attacked the argument based on Article 26. When speaking to the Cabinet-Caucus Committee on State Aid in 1970, he was of the opinion that nowhere in the body of UN statements 'can be found any article, clause or statement of principle that either directly refers to or can be interpreted to imply state aid as an obligation on states.'<sup>97</sup> Catholic use of this argument about the meaning of the Declaration was aimed at embarrassing the government internationally, but the very general nature of the language used in the Declaration meant that so long as the general principle was acknowledged, interpreting it further led to ambiguities. State aid opponents had no difficulty in rebutting it.<sup>98</sup>

Another plank in the argument concerned the 'inalienable rights' of parent and child together with the principle of 'distributive justice'. 'Inalienable rights' were based on the Catholic teaching that the right of a parent to attend to a child's education is antecedent to any human law or institution. Any exercise of this right must be exercised in accordance with sound reason and consistent with the just demands of

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more used to pre-war teachings of Popes Leo XIII and Pius XI, who condemned liberalism and the 'idols' it represented.' Only in 1965 did *Pacem in Terris* develop a full range of teachings on human rights. Charles E Curran, *Catholic Social Teaching 1891-Present. A Historical, Theological and Ethical Analysis* (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2002). p154.

<sup>95</sup> Catholic Education Council, "Submissions Presented to the Commission on Education July 1960." pp13-14.

<sup>96</sup> Commission on Education, "Report of the Commission on Education in New Zealand." p706.

<sup>97</sup> Wilson, Maureen. "The State Aid to Private Schools Issue in New Zealand: 1963-1974." MA, University of Auckland, 1975. p11.

<sup>98</sup> The PPTA used para. 2 of Article 26 in support of their case when addressing the 1970 Cabinet-Caucus Committee. They applied a different interpretation of the same U.N. Declaration that part of the Catholic argument was based upon.

society. As such the state cannot take any action which amounts to dispossessing parents of this right. This view, according to the submission, is supplemented by Article 26 of the U.N. Declaration. Again the Commission disagreed with the Catholic argument. At heart it was, they considered, a political issue, since the acceptance of this argument depended upon all, or at least the majority, of the Churches adopting this position and having the state support it. This was not the case, and as the state was neutral in religious matters, the religious reasons of the Catholic Church could not be placed ahead of any others in this matter.

'Distributive Justice' as an argument relied upon the notion that the state was bound, in justice, to make available to all citizens their due and proper share of the advantages and benefits that it offers its citizens. Equally the burdens must be shared evenly.<sup>99</sup> The language of 'Distributive Justice' was consistent with Catholic social justice teachings over the previous fifteen years and was linked to efforts to provide equity and fairness in society and the workplace.<sup>100</sup>

Together with 'Distributive Justice', the Catholic claim also contended that Catholics, in carrying out their obligations as regards education, found themselves effectively taxed twice. 'Double taxation' had been part of the standard Catholic claim for many years, in that by having to find extra money to support their school system above and beyond the taxation they paid as a matter of course, they were in effect being taxed twice. Use of the term in this sense was inaccurate, as the submission acknowledged,<sup>101</sup> but it was considered a close analogy in that the state, by denying a share of taxation to private schools, in effect imposed a double burden.

Again the Commission reached a different conclusion. The failure to utilise a service provided by the state from public monies did not entitle recompense. Such a redistribution regarding education would not only involve Catholics but a significant portion of the population who did not have children at school. They considered it impossible to sustain distributive justice as a general principle in the face of the many exceptions that would occur across all social services. As regards 'double taxation',

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<sup>99</sup> Catholic Education Council. "Submissions Presented to the Commission on Education July 1960." p29.

<sup>100</sup> "Family Benefit and Freedom," *Tablet*, 30 July 1958. The Editorial makes the argument that Family Benefit is not a gesture of a benign Government, 'but a matter of Social Justice incumbent on the Government until such a time as the wages fixed by industrial laws and awards and the minimum wage which applies to those unaffected by such laws and awards are such that all parents can equip their homes and bring up their children at a reasonable standard of living.'

<sup>101</sup> There was no direct compulsory levy by the State twice on the same income.

the Commission used the same reasoning saying that Catholics who send their children to private schools are in the same category as those citizens who choose to use and pay for other forms of service than those provided by the state or local government.<sup>102</sup>

The Commission concluded that no change be made in the present public policy to the granting of aid to private schools. But there were some minor concessions, in that it was recommended that school transport regulations be amended to allow for private school pupils to be carried, if necessary, past the nearest state school where there was an established transport service, and that manual training centres be available for all Form I and II pupils.

These concessions, although small, were welcome. Travel to and from Catholic schools had been a problem in some areas of the country, but by the 1960s the Church authorities had had no need to write to the Ministry about the lack of co-operation from local education boards. The Commission had considered the wider issue of all school transport and found that the existing regulations were satisfactory. The recommendation for private school pupils, in effect, removed a petty rule that some education authorities chose to administer more zealously than others.

Preserving the secular character of New Zealand's state education was the Commission's principal motivation in making recommendations as regards religious teaching in state schools. But the Commission found it 'incontrovertible' that a majority of New Zealand parents wanted their children to have some form of introduction to religion. How this was to be achieved caused controversy!<sup>103</sup> While asserting the secular principle, the Commission's recommendations allowed for the legislative approval of the Nelson system, with a system of checks and balances by which parents could opt in or out of participation in any organised religious instruction

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<sup>102</sup> Commission on Education. "Report of the Commission on Education in New Zealand." pp839-840. The Commission held the view that on its own the 'double taxation' had some merit if it was merely concerned with appealing for sympathy from the State as to their difficulties as a minority group. However by invoking 'distributive justice' as a principle of government, the Commission rejected that it had validity.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid. p683. The Commission gave four considerations as to why the principle of secularity must remain in New Zealand primary schools (1) The lack of unanimity in the matter in the community itself; (2) Ibid. The virtual impossibility of a completely non-sectarian approach to religious teaching; (3) The considerable doubt which the Commission harbours upon the efficacy of the direct classroom teaching of religion; (4) The Commission's belief that the role of the school in religious matters is a secondary one and that the school's most valuable contribution in this field is already being made in the transmission of Christian ethical values.



approved by the school committee, without penalty.<sup>104</sup> State primary teachers were not permitted to give religious instruction on school premises during the school week.<sup>105</sup> They could, however, give religious instruction within the Nelson system in a private capacity. Private schools were not affected.

These recommendations were adopted by the Government 'with almost indecent haste'.<sup>106</sup> The *Religious Observances in Public Schools Act* of 1962 legalised the Nelson system. It allowed children to be withdrawn from religious instruction classes rather than opting in, as per the Commission's recommendation, and teachers had the choice of taking part in religious instruction. This Act reaffirmed the secular principle.

Any disappointment Catholic education authorities felt over the recommendation concerning state aid was probably justified. As one columnist wrote, the representation by the Catholic Education Council and the time and energy spent in preparation, 'had no chance of success because of the party political manoeuvring that preceded the setting up of the commission and because of the composition of the commission itself'.<sup>107</sup> The Commission's main task was the examination of the public system of primary, secondary and technical education. It also had the separate obligation to recommend to the Government a policy for state assistance to private schools.

Although the recommendation was for no change to existing public policy, the likelihood of any other outcome was remote, given the vested interests which shaped the terms of reference and the appointment of the commissioners. David Scott argues that the Commission was a departmentally structured and briefed enquiry.<sup>108</sup> Once the 'Royal' was dropped, control of the organisation and planning of the proceedings 'fell firmly' into Department of Education hands.<sup>109</sup> As a Royal Commission, the appointments would usually have involved a judge, would have coercive powers and the proceedings be covered by judicial privilege. Without this mandate, the Commission could be set up by Cabinet and without the need for a warrant. The reduced status meant an ordinary commission was not as politically

<sup>104</sup> 'In effect the pupil was expected to 'opt in' and where no choice was made, the pupil took part.' Scott, "The Currie Commission And Report On Education In New Zealand 1960-1962". p321.

<sup>105</sup> Commission on Education. "Report of the Commission on Education in New Zealand." p696.

<sup>106</sup> Scott, "The Currie Commission And Report On Education In New Zealand 1960-1962". pp305-306.

<sup>107</sup> Parliamentary Correspondent, "Parliament Observed," *Tablet*, 1 August 1962.

<sup>108</sup> Scott, "The Currie Commission And Report On Education In New Zealand 1960-1962". p38.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.* p40.

important as a Royal Commission and, as such, would not involve the Governor-General.<sup>110</sup>

The Commission was set up during a time of considerable public disquiet about young people and both political parties were sensitive to the issues raised. Staff shortages in schools and reports of 'unteachable children' disconcerted the Labour Government. Adolescent issues had reverberated throughout the 1950s with juvenile delinquency and the *Mazengarb Report*, the highly publicised Christchurch matricide involving two teenage girls, borstal riots in Invercargill and an emerging teenage culture embracing music, language, dress and sex which generated alarm across New Zealand society. Secondary schooling was now the place where most adolescents spent a significant period of their lives surrounded by other adolescents, becoming a key place where teenage culture was perpetuated.<sup>111</sup> In 1960 the aims, theories and principles of education were being challenged and some groups were becoming dissatisfied with what was seen as the liberal tendencies of the Department of Education. The Labour Government was not keen to become involved in dealing with delinquency claims, standards in schools and the other issues that were being sensationalised in the newspapers. For the Government the decision to have the commission 'downgraded' and entrusted to the Department was not difficult. As Scott points out, 'Overall, the commission's effect was to marginalise dissent and reframe recurrent problems.' Debate on education in Parliament during the two years of operations was stifled by the claim that to encourage it would pre-empt the Commission.<sup>112</sup>

Although the Commission's report went to some length to provide justification for its findings on state aid, the recommendation was consistent with the notion that 'Governments appoint committees and commission research when they already have a target and wish to legitimate their existing opinions'.<sup>113</sup> In setting up the Commission, the Government, through its Department, used trusted members of the education profession to support the departmental agenda. Certain topics before the Commission were historically contentious and caused considerable polarisation. 'The Commission and the report tended to rationalise and minimise any clash of

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid. pp40-41.

<sup>111</sup> Belich. *Paradise Reforged. A History of the New Zealanders from the 1880s to the year 2000.* pp506-7.

<sup>112</sup> Scott. "The Currie Commission And Report On Education In New Zealand 1960-1962." p35.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid. p132. Scott is quoting 'Harold Silver, "Education, Change and the Policy Process", Falmer Press, London, 1990.

these incipient educational ideals.<sup>114</sup> It could be argued that while the Commission was given a brief on state aid, the Departmental interests were aligned with the existing state system and had relatively little incentive to support a parallel system of private schools.

The report made it quite plain that it was the Commission's belief that whether aid is given to private schools or withheld from them was a matter for a political decision and not one for education authorities to decide.<sup>115</sup> Catholic reaction was one of understandable frustration at the 'no change' recommendation.<sup>116</sup> A series of articles by the Rev. J. Mackey and P.J. Downey ran in the *Tablet* and provided trenchant criticism of the Commission itself and its report. Criticism of the report was not confined to disappointed Catholics. The *Christchurch Star* was of the view that 'the general tenor of the report leaves the impression that all is well with the country's education – a view with which a great many people disagree'.<sup>117</sup> But for Mackey and Downey, the Commission and its report were flawed on a number of fronts, not least that it was 'obviously... written from within the New Zealand educational establishment and it necessarily suffers the limitations attendant upon knowledge and interest in one system'. In those circumstances and what was known of the membership of the Commission, they considered there was little chance any recommendation would emerge that would alter the existing educational structure and particularly as regards financial assistance to private schools.<sup>118</sup> Although their criticisms were many, they did recognise there were positive gains to be had. In the first place the public acknowledgement of the heavy financial burden for Catholics in supporting their schools was important. Another was the Commission's observation that had an argument been made not on principle but on needing a sympathetic hearing, there might well have been a different outcome. This was a clear hint that the Catholic argument needed to aim at inclusivity and the greater educational good, rather than maintaining a principled defence of what the Commission saw as an

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid. p332.

<sup>115</sup> Commission on Education. "Report of the Commission on Education in New Zealand." p708.

<sup>116</sup> Liston had prepared a draft Joint Statement by the Hierarchy which expressed disappointment at the result and stressing a determination by Catholics to continue to press their claims. Liston, Archbishop James. "Memo for Hierarchy- possible statement in readiness for the findings of the Commission on Education." In *ACDA, Lis 192*. Auckland, 1962.

<sup>117</sup> Scott, "The Currie Commission And Report On Education In New Zealand 1960-1962". p18. A series of lectures during 1963 regarding the Currie Report was put into a publication by the association for the Study of Childhood and entitled 'The Currie Report: A Critique', Wellington, 1964.

<sup>118</sup> Mackey, Father J and P.J. Downey. "Report Of The Commission On Education (1)." *Tablet*, 26 September 1962.

untenable position. Mackey and Downey agreed with the Commission's unambiguous statements that the whole matter is one for Parliament and not an educational problem. The last positive gain contained some rather surprising advice for Catholics: 'to attempt through public discussion and political action to persuade the community that they are placed at a disadvantage and that in their own and the State's interest they should receive assistance from public funds.'<sup>119</sup>

Opposition to aid varied from those wanting no further assistance to be made to others who favoured limited assistance. The Commission recognised that even amongst the leading religious organisations, who were generally satisfied with the existing system of state education, their support was by no means unqualified. Presbyterians, Anglicans, Methodists and the New Zealand Council for Christian Education all tied their submissions in with the question of religious instruction in state schools. Certainly the Commission was not convinced by the Catholic argument that there was no evidence for any proliferation of private schools if state aid was granted. It was of their view that if further assistance was granted, 'competing school systems might well be established in this country.'<sup>120</sup>

Although the findings of the Commission left Catholics disappointed, it was clear that the old arguments used to campaign for state aid were irrelevant. The issue was political and that meant the Catholic case would need to be reframed with the aim of convincing the political parties that the Catholic school system deserved aid because it was in the best interests of everyone.

### **The Interdenominational Committee of Independent Schools (ICIS)**

The appearance of the Interdenominational Committee of Independent Schools (ICIS), representing the Catholic Education Council, the Church of England Schools Governing Bodies Assoc., Presbyterian Board of Education, most Seventh Day Adventist Schools and undenominational schools, reflected the strong support for the essential diversity that independent schools provided in society. Catholics had long claimed the benefits of an independent school system as a counter to the state system. This theme of the inherent social value of an independent school system

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<sup>119</sup> Mackey, Father J and P. J. Downey. "Report Of The Commission On Education (4)." *Tablet*, 17 October 1962.

<sup>120</sup> Commission on Education. "Report of the Commission on Education in New Zealand." pp712-713.

had been regularly invoked since WWII. Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia were used as examples of states where the liberties were curtailed and private schools forbidden. Dr. Noel Gascoigne emphasised this point when putting the Catholic case for state assistance for private schools to the Labour Caucus in 1948.<sup>121</sup> Regular Papal announcements had emphasised the connection between freedom and the right of Catholic schools to be independent of the state. Those grounds formed a part of the 1956 petition. As part of its submission to the Currie Commission, the Catholic Education Council stressed the overall enrichment that came with a variety of educational institutions while deploring the possibility of a state monopoly on education which could lead to a 'dull, ingrowing uniformity'.<sup>122</sup>

The arrival of an ecumenical grouping such as the ICIS was due to two key factors: the growing appreciation among independent non-Catholic schools of spiralling costs and the impact of the Ecumenical Council in Rome, Vatican II. In 1961, when Pope John XXIII convoked the Council, he spoke of the need for both doctrinal clarity and mutual charity in the rebuilding of the unity of all Christians. He reiterated this theme during his speech at the opening of the Council in October 1962.<sup>123</sup> Although the Declaration on Ecumenism was not issued until November 1964 and that on Religious Freedom until December 1965, the signals coming out of the Council showed that the Catholic Church was serious about Christian unity. Papal encyclicals such as *Ad Petri Cathedrum* (1959), which spoke of the need for the Catholic Church to renew itself and *Pacem in Terris* (1963), addressed to 'All Men of Good Will', gave an insight into the elevated level of dialogue with non-Catholics that would eventuate.<sup>124</sup> The fact that the Catholic Church emphasised the need for its own 'renewal and reform' gratified many Protestants. Encouragement for Catholics and Protestants to join together in prayer signalled that common dialogue and that a new ecclesiastical relationship could take place at a community level.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Gascoigne. "An Address delivered by Rev. Dr. N.H. Gascoigne to the Caucus of the Labour Party on the question of State Aid to the Private Schools." Gascoigne had, in 1944, been appointed by the bishops as their liaison with the Minister of Education and the Department.

<sup>122</sup> Catholic Education Council. "Submissions Presented to the Commission on Education July 1960." pp20-21.

<sup>123</sup> Abbott, Walter.M., S.J., ed. *The Documents of Vatican II*. New York: The America Press, 1966. pp706,716.

<sup>124</sup> One very public sign of the intention of Pope John XXIII was the seating of Protestant and Orthodox observers across the aisle in St. Peters from the cardinals. John also set up a Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, which had equal status with other Council commissions, for use by and at the service of the observers. *Ibid.* pp336-337.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.* pp367-70.

It was in this spirit that the ICIS began to get momentum. In early 1963 the Association of Governing Bodies of Church of England Schools was formed. This was at the initiative of Mr. R. King, chairman of King's College Trust Board and Mr. Noel Fitzpatrick, the Bursar at King's College. One of the objectives of the Association was to work towards having the government provide assistance for its schools. At around the same time, Bob Hubbard, as chair of the Catholic PTA Federation, had written to the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church, the Anglican Bishop of Auckland and the Senior Pastor of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, requesting a meeting to discuss aid to private schools.<sup>126</sup>

King and Fitzpatrick met with Archbishop McKeefry, Bishop Kavanagh and the National M.P. Daniel Riddiford to put forward proposals. For King and Fitzpatrick the most contentious aspect was the agreement that any negotiations with government be conducted by laymen.<sup>127</sup> Their concern was that Catholic representation needed to be seen to be closely associated with educational organisations, such as the PTA, rather than devotional or religious groups such as the Holy Name Society. Catholic authorities agreed.<sup>128</sup>

Coincidentally the chairman of the St. Kentigern College Trust Board had, quite independently and about the same time, called a meeting of Auckland private school boards on the issue. King had attended that meeting and was able to report on the progress that had been made and invite other groups to join the Anglicans and Catholics. As a result an elected representative from the Presbyterian Board of Education, the Church of England Governing Bodies Association, Catholic P.T.A and Seventh Day Adventist Schools, formed the original ICIS. As per the original proposals made to the Catholic authorities, each of the four representatives was associated with an educational body and not directly with a Church.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Wilson, "The State Aid to Private Schools Issue in New Zealand: 1963-1974.". pp33-34. There was no reply from the Presbyterians, Bishop Gowing was happy to discuss the matter, while Pastor Stokes of the Seventh Day Adventists was 'uncomfortable', but would not frustrate any approach to government by any interested party.

<sup>127</sup> The proposals were (a) that Government be approached to provide financial assistance for all private schools on the basis of a percentage of the daily cost of educating a pupil in a state school; (b) that claims for aid in all other forms be abandoned; (c) that negotiations be conducted by laymen. Ibid. pp33-34.

<sup>128</sup> Father Noel Gascoigne, who had worked closely with Dr. Clarence Beeby and the Ministry of Education as the bishops' representative, acknowledged that 'for this particular issue it was felt and rightly so, that the laity, not only the Catholic laity, but of other Christian churches, should do the negotiating'. Gascoigne. "Letter to A.E. C. (Tony) Spencer."

<sup>129</sup> Wilson, "The State Aid to Private Schools Issue in New Zealand: 1963-1974.". pp34-35.

It was important that the ICIS avoided publicity. The representatives needed time to get used to one another and work towards a joint plan of action. Unity of purpose could only develop out of an understanding of 'each other's beliefs... educational philosophy, administration, practices and problems.' But they also recognised that a percentage of the congregations of the various churches could well have been uncomfortable or 'alarmed' at the extent of co-operation and put pressure on the church to modify or withdraw support. Tactically, the lack of publicity meant the known opponents to state aid would not be forewarned and be ready with a counterattack when an approach was made to the Government.<sup>130</sup>

The ICIS accepted the principle of separation of Church and state and did not seek any financial assistance to teach religion. The chief motivating factor in forming the organisation 'was the concern of the controlling Authorities of Independent Schools for the burden of fees being placed on parents largely because of the need to match, let alone exceed, basic state teacher salary rates.'<sup>131</sup>

Since all schools, both state and private, had to comply with the demands of secular teaching, the ICIS was of the view that all compulsory education requirements should be free, regardless of school. Because they were providing compulsory secular teaching, private schools were performing a public function and as such entitled to public financial support. The initial proposal for assistance was based on the daily cost of secular teaching in state schools, which the state would have to meet if the child attended a state school.<sup>132</sup>

In October 1963 the ICIS made its first approach to Government with a delegation led by Mr. Justice Stanton. Stanton, although not a member of the ICIS, gave the delegation considerable standing. He did not speak for any particular church, and individual members of the delegation wanted to make this point to the Government.<sup>133</sup> Their success in obtaining assistance gave them increased status with the Government, and from 1963 until 1972 the ICIS was recognised as the principal negotiator for private schools. Even where private schools had presented individual proposals or submissions to Government, they usually met with the ICIS to

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<sup>130</sup> Ibid. pp35-36. As Maureen Wilson points out, a search of the Auckland newspapers of the time shows no mention of the formation of I.C.I.S.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid. p35.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid. p15-16.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid. pp 36-37. One of the members commented that it was nice to have the Prime Minister saying 'Yes Sir' to our spokesman.

ensure that a united front was maintained. Success led to membership being increased to eleven, with Hubbard as chairman and Fitzpatrick as secretary.

The impact and influence of the ICIS was to last well into the next decade as the state aid issue became highly political and demanded that political parties concentrate upon its resolution. However during the 1960s, the ICIS remained the key organisation for private schools to access financial assistance from Government, albeit a decidedly sympathetic one. But its coming together was a product of the sheer economic necessity that affected all independent schools. Although there had been sporadic attempts after the Second World War to join forces in an effort to make a united case to government, sectarianism and a lack of trust had got in the way. It was the wholesale changes that came about through Vatican II which removed a great deal of the mistrust, and allowed 'all men of good will' to work together in coping with a problem that was at last recognised as involving all private schools.

### **Second Vatican Council**

For the Catholic Church in New Zealand, the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) was a milestone. For three years the bishops of the Church examined its function and place in the world. From the sessions came reforms that changed how the Church saw and conducted itself. Implementation of the reforms would take place over the decades to come, but importantly for Catholic education in New Zealand, the signals that came out of the Council and the documents that were later issued gave considerable stimulation and authority to the relationships, both ecumenical and political, that were being forged. (See Appendix 2 for a synopsis of the Council, looking particularly at the formation of the Council, the conservative/liberal divide and the principal documents).

While the Council issued some sixteen documents in all, of particular importance were the Dogmatic Constitution of the Church (*Lumen Gentium*) and the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et Spes*). At the heart of these documents were new understandings that the Church had about both itself as an Institution and its place in the modern world. Other significant documents dealt with ecumenism, the liturgy, Divine Revelation, religious freedom and relations with non-Christian religions. The net effect was to involve the Church in reforms that



challenged both the laity and their pastors as long held beliefs and attitudes were subjected to change.

However the net effect upon the political and educational culture of the Church in New Zealand was to confirm the path that had been taken since the early 1960s. *Lumen Gentium* and *Gaudium et Spes* recast the role and status of the laity in the Church as well as placing the Church in the world and not apart from it, with a mission to serve all of humanity. These constitutions reshaped the pyramid of hierarchical authority into a structure that removed the distinct divisions between clergy and laity and gave the laity their own sphere of influence in the world. Hierarchy and ordained clergy were on an equal footing with the laity although they commanded a status for the teaching authority invested in them and in the leadership of worship.

Declarations on Religious Freedom (*Dignitatis Humanae*) and Ecumenism (*Unitatis Redintegratio*) recognised theologically separated Christians as no longer outside the Church, but rather forming part of the Christian Church with Catholics, although not all Churches were on an equal basis. This modified the pre-Vatican concept of the 'one true Church', where non-Catholic Churches had a sort of relationship with the Church but were not real members of it.<sup>134</sup>

However the ecumenical path had not without its share of difficulties. Protestant observers at the Council recognised that ecumenism 'was here to stay', but saw a great deal of uncertainty among the bishops at the Council as to what it would mean.<sup>135</sup> Reports in the Catholic press showed that, despite inter-faith dialogue, the language used by the Pope about all Christians belonging in a common fold was ambiguous and could be interpreted as calling for Protestant submission to Rome.<sup>136</sup> Senior Cardinals spoke publicly to ensure the key messages were being heard. Religious freedom was now a fundamental principle, alongside the notion that the

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<sup>134</sup> McBrien, Richard P. *Catholicism*. New ed. New York: Harper Collins, 1994. pp684-85. Yves Congar, the French Dominican theologian, was, as far back as 1935, put forward a different emphasis. He wrote of a 'reunion' and not a 'return' of the 'separated brethren' to the fold. These views were not popular and he was later silenced by the Vatican. He argued that membership in the church is realised in different ways and to different degrees, by different people and different churches. Congar anticipated much of what Vatican II would debate on ecumenism. Lakeland, Paul. *The Liberation of the Laity: In Search of an Accountable Church*. New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group Inc, 2004. pp33-4.

<sup>135</sup> Brown, Robert McAfee. "Protestant Observer Views Second Council Session." *Tablet*, 8 January 1964.

<sup>136</sup> Jordan, Dom Placid. "Ecumenical Movement Faced With Many Problems." *Tablet*, 19 February 1964.

Church wanted nothing more in terms of liberty than that which the state and society granted to others. New Zealand Catholics would not have found anything new in the public comments by Cardinal Koenig on democracy, but they did signal that the Church was moving towards a genuine separation of Church and state and the rejection of privilege.<sup>137</sup> Allegations of Vatican inspired conspiracies for Catholic control of the state, which had been made during the 1950s in New Zealand, were never substantiated with documentary evidence and now no longer had currency.<sup>138</sup>

Signals that came out of the Council were important. Major documents were often not available until late 1964 and during 1965, but much of the intent could be ascertained through encyclicals (*Mater et Magistra*, 1961 and *Pacem in Terris*, 1963), speeches given and reports on Council sessions. These told both Catholics and Protestants that major reform was underway and that that reform had a strongly ecumenical tone. How reform was to be implemented was another question, but the ecumenical intent stimulated much more sincere contact between Christian churches and groups. The establishment of the ICIS, albeit with some considerable discretion, was a response to the signals coming from Vatican II.

### School Closure

In the winter of 1962, New Zealand Catholics learned of an Australian city where the Catholic schools were to be shut down because of a dispute between the New South Wales (N.S.W.) education authorities and the local bishop. Readers of the *Tablet* would have recognised a situation not dissimilar to that in New Zealand, which was of

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<sup>137</sup> Koenig, Cardinal Franziskus. "The Church Openly Supports Democratic Government." *Tablet*, 22 July 1964. "Cardinal Bea On Religious Freedom." *Tablet*, 3 June 1964. In the late sixties and seventies, the Catholic Church across the world was in a variety of political situations – Western style democracies, military dictatorships, totalitarian regimes and revolutionary single-party states. Vatican II effectively rejected Ultramontanism and the Church–state models such as theocracy and confessionalism were recognised as unsuitable for the latter part of the twentieth century. Accordingly each country was encouraged to choose the best option to meet its own needs. In Europe the democratisation of countries such as Portugal and Spain made the Catholic leaders work out a new relationship with the emerging democracies, and in Italy and Ireland increasing secularisation and political realities meant the Church and state had to negotiate new understandings. However in much of Central and South America Church-state relations continued to exist as though Vatican II had never taken place. Many hierarchies were comfortable with repressive and authoritarian regimes, although there were exceptions such as Archbishop Oscar Romero.

<sup>138</sup> At the time of the Petition to Parliament by the Holy Name Society, a number of religious bodies buttressed their submissions with allegations of undemocratic behaviour – the Presbyterian Church, the Orange Lodge and some smaller Protestant congregations. "Catholics 'Seek A Nation In A Nation.'," *Auckland Star*, 19 October 1956.; Orange Lodge. "Submission of the Loyal Orange Institution of New Zealand (Incorporated)."; Knight. "Submission re State Aid for Roman Catholic Schools."

a Catholic school system under financial pressure and being denied aid. The school closure was, according to Archbishop Eris O'Brien, undertaken 'specifically to draw public attention to the extent of the dependence of the State upon the contribution which the "Catholic schools make to public education"'.<sup>139</sup> The fact that a planned six week closure was called off after one week was made out to be a victory for the Catholics.<sup>140</sup> In reality the strike leaders recognised nothing was going to be achieved by keeping the strike going. A hostile press reaction and the lack of response from the state government convinced the parents to reopen the schools after a week.<sup>141</sup>

The dispute at Goulburn was a local matter between a convent school and the N.S.W. state education authorities that escalated into a national issue of state aid politics. The Monday following the closure some 2,000 children presented themselves to the state schools and requested admittance. Only 640 were enrolled, leaving twice as many unable to be accommodated. The issue was trivial, but the inexperience of the local bishop allowed the laymen of Goulburn to shape the protest their own way. Reasons for the incident included lay resentment at the Australian hierarchy's handling of the education issue, financial pressure that was impacting on parishes and a changing sectarian attitude towards Catholics in general.<sup>142</sup>

State aid did not have the same attention from the Australian hierarchy in the 1950s as the issue did in New Zealand.<sup>143</sup> New Zealand Catholics had been dealing with an increasing problem since the early 1950s, and it was the main focus of the hierarchy. Although suggestions had been made from time to time to undertake decisive action to emphasise to the government the growing severity of the problem,

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<sup>139</sup> Kennedy, J.P. "Catholic Parents In Goulburn Take Emphatic And Timely Action." *Tablet*, 18 July 1962.

<sup>140</sup> Hogan, Michael Charles. *The Catholic Campaign for State Aid. A study of a Pressure Group Campaign in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory 1950-1972*. Sydney: Catholic Theological Faculty, 1978. pp63-72.

<sup>141</sup> Health requirements meant the convent school needed an extra toilet installed, and despite various notices and warnings over a three year period, the work had not been done. The Department of Health threatened to withhold a Certificate of Efficiency which would have closed the school down. The local bishop took the stand that bureaucrats should not determine how he spent his budget, and the matter quickly became one of state aid rather than toilet facilities in a primary school. Militant parents took control and demanded all Catholic schools in Goulburn (6 schools and 2,000 pupils) be shut down. *Ibid.* pp63-72.

<sup>142</sup> Parish debt in Goulburn had, in the space of a decade, gone from £5562 to £62311.

<sup>143</sup> A major distraction for the hierarchy and many Catholics was the anti-communist Movement, the political troubles for the Australian Labor Party and the split that occurred between the bishops in Victoria and N.S.W. see Duncan. *Crusade or Conspiracy? Catholics and the Anti-Communist Struggle in Australia*.

closing the schools had never been seriously considered, although often talked about. Such talk was usually in the context of 'how would the government cope if Catholic schools closed'. The answer was that the government would take the schools over. A Wanganui parishioner wrote to McKeefry in August 1961 suggesting that the school he was associated with not open at the beginning of the following year.<sup>144</sup> He believed the Government would respond to such direct action by providing increased aid. McKeefry replied that such a course had been 'given very deep thought in recent years'. When he put it to the government as a possibility, the reply was 'that were we to consider such a thing they would then take over our schools temporarily, and run them as State schools'. As to the charge that such action would be extremely high-handed, the reply was 'If you create an emergency situation, then emergency action is justified by the Government.'<sup>145</sup>

Popular sentiment amongst Catholics was that school closure, as a tactic, could ultimately be used in the state aid campaign. But in reality Church officials knew that the government's powers, especially emergency powers it could grant itself, were such that the fate of the schools would likely be taken from Catholic hands. The Church stood to lose too much if it wanted to take on the government in a direct confrontation. Aside from reputational damage with non-Catholic New Zealanders and the mistrust of government, any school closure could see a percentage of parents not returning their children to Catholic schools once they reopened. Some Catholics did disagree with using children as political pawns and one of the consequences of the Goulburn strike was that some 10% of the children who were accepted into state schools never returned.<sup>146</sup>

Nonetheless as constant pressure on the Catholic school system mounted, the Christchurch diocese was, in 1965, forced to take direct action to manage its education crisis. In a pastoral letter Bishop Brian Ashby outlined the problem to his parishioners. Catholic schools in the diocese were overcrowded and the cost of maintaining them, despite the imposition of fees and parish levies, was creating large deficits. Ashby noted that some 1,000 Catholic children could not be accommodated

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<sup>144</sup> McDonald, J. "Letter to Archbishop McKeefry about the cost of Catholic schooling." In *WAA, Catholic Education Office, Archbishop's File 1947-70 (1), #330*. Wellington, 1961.

<sup>145</sup> McKeefry, Archbishop Peter. "Letter to J McDonald setting out why the non opening of Catholic schools would not be feasible." In *WAA, Catholic Education Office, Archbishop's File 1947-70 (1), #330*. Wellington, 1961.

<sup>146</sup> Hogan, *The Catholic Campaign for State Aid. A study of a Pressure Group Campaign in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory 1950-1972*. p70.

by the diocese as their inclusion would increase costs enormously. His solution was dramatic, at least in terms of what had occurred in the past. No new schools and school extensions were to be built, first year primers were not to be enrolled in schools with a roll of more than 150, parish levies for education were to be increased and parents who were obliged to send their children to state schools would receive assistance in the religious education of their children.<sup>147</sup>

This 'New Education Policy' was the result of a new Director of Catholic Education for the diocese looking closely at the financial position of primary schools in the diocese and persuading the new bishop to recognise the gravity of the situation. All the elements of the Catholic education crisis were at play. Employing lay teachers on full rates of pay, demands to reduce class sizes, pressure to have religious teachers upskilled (and employ replacement lay teachers while they were absent) and the retirement of other religious. Estimated deficits were alarming. The adjusted predicted shortfall for 1963 was shown to be £4,600, but a deficit of that size had not been predicted until 1967. The 1965 deficit was now estimated at £7,000.<sup>148</sup> Ashby had implemented the policy, repeatedly referred to as a 'temporary retrenchment', to meet existing circumstances, not the least being a threat, by state inspectors, to deregister diocesan schools.<sup>149</sup>

Since the deregistration threat explicitly identified the lack of trained teachers in front of classes, Christchurch began, albeit cautiously, to send nuns to the local state teachers training college. The caution was around how the state authorities would react to having religious sisters in the college environment. This development was watched closely by other Catholic education bodies throughout the country and the success of the 'Christchurch experiment' was to provide a model for other dioceses.<sup>150</sup>

The Christchurch situation was not a political act, unlike the Goulburn incident. But it did illustrate the very parlous position Catholic education was in, although Liston in Auckland chose to put a different interpretation on the crisis. He said the

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<sup>147</sup> Ashby. "Pastoral circular- Catholic Education."

<sup>148</sup> O'Reilly, "Uncertain Dissent: Roman Catholics and their Schools in the Diocese of Christchurch 1958-1974". pp17-18.

<sup>149</sup> Collins, "For the common good: The Catholic educational mission in transition 1943-1965". p343.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid. p344. There were some initial problems that required negotiations with the training college authorities. One was the wearing of habits in college which were causing some problems for lecturers. This was resolved by having the sisters change into civilian dress before attending class.

Christchurch situation did not pertain to Auckland.<sup>151</sup> This was rather at odds with *Zealandia* of August 1965 reporting that all Auckland schools were under pressure.<sup>152</sup> A report to Liston in the same year from the Henderson parish priest showed the very real staffing and financial position the convent school faced, even proposing that there be no new entrants for the following year.<sup>153</sup> Liston's statement was a little disingenuous, possibly reflecting the differences in attitude between the much younger Ashby and the old patriarch.

Kevin O'Reilly considered the 'most important effect of the New Education Policy in 1965 was as a catalyst which brought to the surface widespread discontent with the condition of Roman Catholic schools throughout New Zealand.'<sup>154</sup> Reaction was varied. There was vigorous correspondence in the local media, while the *Tablet* and *Zealandia* expressed sorrow at the situation and put some of the blame on the lack of adequate state aid. Columnists in these papers wondered if the Christchurch situation was happening in their own dioceses and there was now an urgent need for a 'thorough examination of the direction, methods, results and organisation of the Catholic educational system by professional investigators.'<sup>155</sup> That sense of discontent was evident in the Goulburn incident, where the laity took control of the situation, telling a senior Sydney bishop to mind his own business.<sup>156</sup>

During this time the Vatican Council's 'Declaration on Christian Education' expressed the need to relate Christian education to a pluralistic society and did not endorse the view that school-systems for Catholic education were inherently desirable. Rather the emphasis was upon education taking place in an environment provided by family, Church, school and society.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> Liston, Archbishop James. "Statement about Catholic education in the Auckland diocese." In *ACDA, Lis 161*. Auckland, 1965.

<sup>152</sup> O'Reilly, "Uncertain Dissent: Roman Catholics and their Schools in the Diocese of Christchurch 1958-1974". p19.

<sup>153</sup> Mackey, Father John "Report on the position of Catholic School in Henderson." In *ACDA, Lis 192*. Auckland, 1965.

<sup>154</sup> O'Reilly, "Uncertain Dissent: Roman Catholics and their Schools in the Diocese of Christchurch 1958-1974". p20.

<sup>155</sup> Veritas, "The Christchurch Decision," *Tablet*, 18 August 1965. That particular plea would be answered two years later when the bishops invited Anthony Spencer to conduct such an examination.

<sup>156</sup> Hogan, *The Catholic Campaign for State Aid. A study of a Pressure Group Campaign in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory 1950-1972*. p71.

<sup>157</sup> See [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_decl\\_19651028\\_gravissimum-educationis](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_gravissimum-educationis) and in particular Section 8. V. Allan McClelland, "Education (Gravissimum Educationis)," in *Modern Catholicism*, ed. Adrian Hastings (London: SPCK, 1991). pp172-174.

Throughout this period the Government continued drip-feeding assistance to private schools. The Christchurch situation did not excite any marked political reaction. Ashby's pastoral letter was not a political document. It concentrated on the educational matters at hand and made no reference to justice denied or the other watchwords of recent state aid campaigns. But the significance of the New Education Policy was that it not only brought lay discontent to the surface, but made obvious and public the crisis in Catholic education. Losses in terms of a decline in pupils attending Catholic schools began to show. By 1968 Father John Mackey referred to this loss as a national trend.<sup>158</sup> The advice from the Currie Commission about framing the Catholic case for aid was germane. Goulburn had shown that the state could not readily absorb the number of pupils who would want entry if the Catholic school system collapsed.

## Conclusion

The Sixties were to begin a time of momentous change for the Catholic Church, and the driver was the Second Vatican Council and the reforms it set in motion. Signals from Council sessions gave momentum to some forces already under way, obvious examples being the new approach to ecumenism and the role of the laity in the Church. Both these factors had a decisive bearing on how the Catholic Church in New Zealand was to cope with its education crisis.

However reform within the Catholic Church would have probably occurred, to a greater or lesser extent, even if the Council had not been called.<sup>159</sup> In New Zealand, as in many other western countries, the laity was becoming more active. Parents were becoming more involved in their schools, being voted onto organisations, such as the local PTA. Since the Catholic education system began, successive governments had had to deal with the hierarchy and its appointees. After 1956 and the rejection of the HNS petition, the challenge to the Church authorities was how to reinvigorate the state aid campaign. The PTA movement slowly became more than a fund raising arm of the local school. It sought to hold politicians accountable over state aid and, in doing so, could point to some successes. The formation of the

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<sup>158</sup> Mackey, Father John. "Letter to Liston enclosing a statistical account of Diocesan Primary Schools as at beginning of 1968." In *ACDA, Lis 190*. Auckland, 1968.

<sup>159</sup> Edward Norman, "An Outsider's Evaluation," in *Modern Catholicism*, ed. Adrian Hastings (London: SPCK, 1991). p461.

National Council of Education in 1960 included elected laity as well as clerical appointees. Lay people were much more acceptable to a government as a vehicle for negotiation. Certainly National felt more comfortable in dealing with a group which was democratically elected.

Neither main political party had formulated policy on state aid by the early 1960s, although successive governments gave limited assistance to private schools during the 1950s. Yet, as the Education Commission (1960-62) determined, the question of state aid was solely a political issue and not one of education. The Commission rejected as invalid a number of the key arguments of the Catholic case, such as the appeal to Natural Law and rights under United Nations provisions. Consequently the grounds, some of which began with Bishop Moran in the late 19th century, on which the state aid campaign had been fought were now unsustainable. However both the Education Commission and the Education Committee in the 1956 petition hearings gave advice as to how the state aid issue might be resolved. Rather than relying upon ideological and theological arguments, attempts should be made through public discussion and political action to show that the Catholic education system is placed at a disadvantage and that it is in everybody's interests that they should receive assistance through public funds. But, just as importantly, the sectarian component of state aid must be replaced by a combined approach if it was to succeed as a genuine vehicle for the interests of all private schools.

The ICIS was a major breakthrough for the Catholic education authorities. When the government of Keith Holyoake accepted the ICIS as the principal negotiators for private schools, Catholics had a political voice that capitalised upon the increased involvement of the laity in the Catholic education system. Political advice given by sympathetic members of parliament had repeated that a unified voice from all the major churches on state aid would yield much more positive results than merely trying to harass members of parliament or electoral candidates. But it did signal a more sophisticated approach to the problem, which, while not a panacea, was effective in channelling assistance to private schools at a greater rate than before. The ICIS would continue to play a major role in the educational reforms of the 1970s, but its early ecumenical makeup was influenced both by what was coming out of Vatican II as well as local ecumenical contacts.

This period marks the real end of the state aid campaign that had been at the centre of Catholic education since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. It rested on a number of theological



points which underpinned the rigid belief that the Catholic Church was the one true Church and could not compromise. Recognising plurality would be the equivalent to saying one religion was as good as another. Arguments based on natural law and the duties of Catholic parents were no longer recognised as having particular relevance in what was now a political issue. Ted Keating's advice in 1956 that the process would likely take a series of decisions over some years and eventually be accepted by the public was accurate. With the ICIS, the PTA's and the Catholic Council for Education established, a mechanism was in place to treat with the government as part of a wider education sector, rather than a church based schooling system looking for aid from the state.

Table 1: Fees in Private Schools

			Catholic		Non-Catholic	
			Day.....	Boarder	Day.....	Boarder
Primary	1960		\$12	243-350	\$63-144	360-600
	1965		\$12-18	270-368	\$94-237	450-675
	1968		\$12-24	300-368	\$120-282	522-750
	1970		\$15-24	375-450	\$150-300	600-756
Secondary	1960		\$18-63	240-375	\$108-210	330-675
	1965		\$30-75	270-405	\$ 162-293	430-816
	1968		\$45-90	300-450	\$180-360	522-936
	1970		\$45-90	312-600	\$240-396	522-1000

Source: Wilson, Maureen. "The State Aid to Private Schools Issue in New Zealand: 1963-1974." MA, University of Auckland, 1975.

## Section Two- Welfare and Social Justice

### Chapter Five: Social Justice and the Welfare State

#### Introduction

Catholic social thought began to take shape at the end of the nineteenth century. The Industrial Revolution triggered the extremely conservative and reactionary Catholic Church to confront the social issues that particularly impacted upon the European working class. Marxism had begun to gain a place in the lives of workers who had not only been alienated from the fruits of their labour, but also from their traditional faith. Marx had warned them that religion was but an opiate designed to make them forget their oppressive situation. By the time the encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (On the Condition of Workers) was published, many thought it was already too late to get the attention of the poor. Organised communism, complete with hierarchy, an elite, a liturgy and a catechism, could, according to Gramsci's notion of hegemony, provide a substitute for organised religion.<sup>1</sup> But it did mean that the Catholic Church began to teach a consciously systematic manner of theology of social justice and all that it implied.<sup>2</sup>

This chapter will consider how the Catholic Church saw its obligations in light of the welfare state, and why the Church limited its engagement to a certain extent. Its stand on the traditional authority exercised by Catholic bishops determined its attitude to some aspects of its broader welfare role, especially where the state wanted to impose conditions, such as in the running of chaplaincy services. Social justice and the emerging body of teaching encouraged Catholic Action to help invigorate the Church while the Catholic Rural Movement tried to bring those Catholic Action principles into a rural context. But church welfare was increasing the range of services offered, as moral issues arose challenging attitudes towards marriage, sex,

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<sup>1</sup> Judt, Tony with Timothy Snyder. *Thinking the Twentieth Century*. New York: The Penguin Press, 2012. p83. Judt makes the point that the substitution by the communist party for organised religion helps explain why organised communism in the Leninist model does so much better in Catholic or Orthodox countries than in Protestant ones. Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) was an Italian Marxist philosopher and led the Italian Communist Party in the early 1920s.

<sup>2</sup> McBrien. *Catholicism*. pp 644,913.

alcohol and gambling. This was not a period of great change, rather small steps in working more comprehensively with the state.

### Catholic Social Justice

Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum* (1891) and Pius XI's *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931) were the foundation texts.<sup>3</sup> They spoke to the role of government in society and in the economy, rights of workers to organize, the principle of a just wage and provided a Christian critique of both capitalism and socialism. Catholic tradition held that the state is natural, necessary and good. Revolution occurs when citizens perceive the state as coercive and oppressive. Leo XIII proclaimed the doctrine that the civil power is more than the mere guardian of law and order, it has a positive function. But the state is also limited, as the individual person and the family unit constitute restrictions on the role and function of the state. From this came a number of principles that were to further develop in papal teachings:- the language of human rights ( it was used in *Rerum Novarum* although Leo was strongly opposed to any notion of religious freedom); the social nature of human beings, their need for social ties of family, associations, and the full development of political community; subsidiarity and how the state (as a higher agency) should not interfere with a lower agency (individual, family, voluntary associations) in tasks that can be done as well or better by the lower agency.<sup>4</sup> Encyclicals developing social justice principles were to become more frequent from 1961 onwards with Pope John XXIII's *Mater et Magistra* introducing the principle of socialization. Socialization recognizes the increasing interdependence between the state and its citizens, as well as the need for growing state intervention, because only the state can deal with all the complexities of a modern society.<sup>5</sup>

With the parameters set by *Rerum Novarum*, Catholic social teaching opposed liberalism, with its glorification of reason, freedom and the conscience of the

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<sup>3</sup> Sam Lister, a newspaper proprietor and prominent in Otago working-class politics during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, noted how the commitment by *Rerum Novarum* to full employment, a just wage and private property as a basis of social justice was 'a position congruent with the local tradition of Labourist socialism...at the time.' Olssen, Erik and Clyde Griffen with Frank Jones. *An Accidental Utopia? Social mobility & the foundations of an egalitarian society, 1880-1940*. Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2011. p221; Curran. *Catholic Social Teaching 1891-Present. A Historical, Theological and Ethical Analysis*. pp68, 141-2; McBrien. *Catholicism*. pp912-3, 1000-01.

<sup>4</sup> Curran. *Catholic Social Teaching 1891-Present. A Historical, Theological and Ethical Analysis*. p10.

individual. But it also opposed the type of socialism which gave too great a role to the state and failed to recognize the true dignity and rights of the individual. As the 20<sup>th</sup> century progressed, communism became the leading threat, and in response Catholic social teaching gave greater prominence to the dignity, freedom, equality and rights of the individual. Importantly, although no major encyclical on social justice came out during the pontificate of Pius XII (1939-58), he did, albeit cautiously, accept that democracy was the best form of government. Pius XII recognized that the state had a limited juridical role in defending basic human rights and promoting the freedom of peoples. Moving away from Leo's tone of authoritarianism and paternalism, Pius's teachings considered how a moral framework for addressing international political and economic issues, including the inequalities inherent in them, was necessary. So long as inequalities were not arbitrary and were in accord with justice and charity, a limited constitutional government was best for the Church and its people.<sup>6</sup>

During the two decades after WWII, the Catholic Church in New Zealand sought to promote these teachings. They were an evolving body of work, supportive of the Cold War and its anti-communism yet recognizing the inherent flaws in the capitalist system. Vatican II provided a sea-change in the breadth of social justice teaching, where the shift from classicism to historical consciousness allowed the Church to recognize, for example, the right to religious liberty, a position condemned by Leo XIII. What was condemned in the nineteenth century was authorised to be taught in the twentieth.<sup>7</sup>

In New Zealand, the traditional Catholic charities remained an important feature of the social fabric. The Church wanted to be seen as an unthreatening and valued partner in the Protestant dominated state.<sup>8</sup> Catholic religious provided a workforce to staff hospitals, orphanages, old people's homes and other institutions that survived

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid. pp70-72. McBrien, *Catholicism*. pp912-13.

<sup>7</sup> 'Classicism stressed the universal, the essential, the unchanging. It applied moral commandments and official teachings to specific cases by a process of deduction. Historical consciousness conceives the Christian moral life as one of personal responsibility within changing historical circumstances. Moral norms are important and binding, but they reflect the historical situation in which they were formulated and subsequently interpreted. Its method is more inductive than deductive, as it emphasizes the particular, the evolutionary, and the changeable'. Other examples of documents that reflected this historical emphasis is 'Instruction on the Historical Truth of the Gospels' (1964), and *Octogesima adveniens* (1971) where Paul VI points out the wide diversity among the situations in which modern day Christians find themselves. McBrien, *Catholicism*. p911; Curran, *Catholic Social Teaching 1891-Present. A Historical, Theological and Ethical Analysis*. p60.

<sup>8</sup> Belgrave. *The Mater. A History of Auckland's Mercy Hospital 1900-2000*. p26.

on a combination of charitable donations, community support and assistance from both central and local government. These institutions imparted a distinct sense of Catholic identity, but also emphasised a spirit of inclusiveness that linked them with the wider non-Catholic community. The goodwill of that wider community was particularly important in terms of raising funds, where fairs and other events relied on that wider community support.

Catholic charity also involved lay organisations such as the St. Vincent de Paul Society and the Catholic Women's League, whose mission was that of Christian charity: compassion, where charity was an unconditional response to an immediate need; testimony, where it was used to bear witness to the notion of a loving God; and personal regeneration, where it became a means of changing lives.<sup>9</sup> During the depression of the 1930s, St Vincent de Paul was one of a group of agencies, both church-based and secular, involved in charitable works such as feeding the poor and dealing with families in crisis. Although the Catholic impulse was separatist, having a suspicion of community institutions which they tended to regard as essentially Protestant, it did not prevent Catholic charitable groups and institutions from co-operating with other Christian groups responding to the on-going needs of the time.<sup>10</sup>

This was not necessarily the fruit of an evolving social justice doctrine, but rooted in much earlier Catholic teaching on social obligations. The religious orders were inspired by their founding ethos, which embraced poverty and service. For the laity, the main charitable role involved money and prayer together with support for the charities, both religious and lay. Catholics were continually exhorted to exercise charity, but as the social justice teachings began to grapple with the relationship between the Church and the state, Catholics were challenged to recognize the broader context in which charity now sat. Charity, with its connotations of poverty and discretionary disbursement, was giving way to welfare. The welfare state was an expression of the Christian ideal, the 'applied Christianity' of Michael Savage, which,

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<sup>9</sup> Tennant. *The Fabric of Welfare. Voluntary Organisations, Government and Welfare in New Zealand, 1840-2005.* p22.

<sup>10</sup> Lineham, Peter. "The Voice of Inspiration? Religious Contributions to Social Policy." In *Past Judgement. Social Policy in New Zealand History*, edited by Bronwyn Dalley and Margaret Tennant. Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 2004. p60.

in its broadest sense, oversaw full employment and economic development as well as the protection provided by social security.<sup>11</sup>

As WWII was finishing, Catholics were asked to support 'Catholic Services Welfare' as a way of supporting returned Catholic service personnel. Importantly it was the language of welfare, the national support for an identified group whose need was obvious. Margaret Tennant defines welfare in its narrowest sense as the relief of poverty and more widely to include economic, industrial, taxation, social lending and wage policies of the government, while non-government activity involves advocacy and mutual aid.<sup>12</sup> Mutual aid and advocacy by a non-governmental group was consistent with the social justice principle of subsidiarity, in that while the state was involved in rehabilitation for servicemen and women, it did not forbid or frustrate voluntary endeavours. Rather it encouraged them. Government facilitation was evident, but the Churches were active in placing individuals and families, often directly assisting migrants and refugees according to their religious affiliation.

Over the next decade, the welfare state became slowly more entrenched. Catholics, like other New Zealanders, were beneficiaries and, because the Catholic Church had a large working class base, possibly more so than most. But the Church authorities balked at open-ended co-operation with the government if the price was a loss of their traditional authority, the authority to employ Church resources as they saw fit. Until Vatican II re-stated much of Catholicism's relationship with the rest of the world, engaging with the state was limited by the conditions the state put on that relationship. At the heart of the campaign for state aid to private schools was the question of authority, and that same issue affected the state's attempts to establish services such as chaplaincies.

## The Welfare State

When the first Labour Government was elected in 1935, the beginnings of the modern welfare state in New Zealand were established. Labour's vision was both Christian and humanist, emphasizing dignity and equality and wanting to put 'a

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<sup>11</sup> Evans. "Church State Relations in New Zealand 1940-1990, with particular reference to the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches." p84.

<sup>12</sup> Tennant, *The Fabric of Welfare. Voluntary Organisations, Government and Welfare in New Zealand, 1840-2005.* p11.

decent New Zealand back together again'.<sup>13</sup> The socialism of the three men who comprised the nucleus of the transformational Labour Cabinet, Michael Joseph Savage, Peter Fraser and Walter Nash, was less to do with a set of specific beliefs rather than an attitude of mind. Nash was 'a socialist in the sense that I believe that a major responsibility of Government is to provide collectively for the economic welfare and security of the individual. But I am conservative in the sense that I look upon the family as the foundation of the nation.'<sup>14</sup>

The 1938 Social Security Act ushered in a system of universal entitlements, which together with state housing promised to provide a standard of living which was more than simply a safety net from destitution. The universalism and equality of this welfare programme treated the family and work as the priority. The man was the breadwinner and the woman mother and manager of the family. Free primary health, family benefits and the mechanism for setting fair wages meant an unprecedented acknowledgement of women's work in the home.<sup>15</sup> 'By placing the needs of women and families at the centre of the state's understanding of need, government's reluctance to interfere or be responsible for the private and domestic world of the households was broken down.'<sup>16</sup>

Labour had also moved well away from moral-based welfare, where welfare was considered to create a risk of dependency and encourage indigence, to one where changing the physical conditions would help to remove poverty. Poverty was the main impediment to improvement of well-being for people. Changes to the social environment would help create social equality for families by treating them in a more even handed manner and with dignity.<sup>17</sup>

During the Depression years, the churches' views on social issues became more politically pertinent, and the early 1930s 'represented a high point in the churches'

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<sup>13</sup> Chapman, Robert. "From Labour to National." In *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, edited by W.H. Oliver with B.R. Williams. Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1981. p338; Mein Smith. *A Concise History of New Zealand*. p154.

<sup>14</sup> Sinclair, Keith. *Walter Nash*. Paperback ed. Auckland: Auckland University Press. Oxford University Press, 1976.pp112-13.

<sup>15</sup> 'A "fair wage", was in fact a "family wage". The family wage buttressed by full employment, guaranteed the male breadwinner the ability to comfortably maintain himself, a wife and three children. de Bruin, Anne Marguerite. "Transformation of the Welfare State in New Zealand with special reference to Employment." PhD, Massey, 1997. p64

<sup>16</sup> Belgrave, Michael. "Needs and the State. Evolving Social Policy in New Zealand History." In *Past Judgement. Social Policy in New Zealand History*, edited by Bronwyn Dalley and Margaret Tennant. Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 2004. pp29-31.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.* pp28-29.

expression of views on social policy'.<sup>18</sup> Employment, the causes of poverty and the plight of the working class were of great concern since by ignoring them, many of the working class could succumb to the appeals of radical socialism. The churches did react, not only in terms of practical help for the poor through soup kitchens and other sorts of practical assistance provided by inner city missions, but in an increasing awareness of the political dimensions. Charity and philanthropy, terms that in an earlier era had respectable connotations, became increasingly associated with dependence and had negative moral overtones.<sup>19</sup>

For the Catholic Church the social justice implications of *Quadragesimo Anno* were being reported to the faithful through church newspapers and Pastoral Letters. Catholic teaching stressed that social justice was a religious and not simply a humanitarian issue, and that the leadership in this should not fall by default to secular humanists.<sup>20</sup> The Church claimed, through its application of 'Natural Law', that it alone had the authority to teach the solutions to the economic crisis.<sup>21</sup> Its teachings revealed the essential principles without which all efforts to reform society would flounder, exacerbated by the fact that masses of men neglected God and His law. A return to Christian principles was necessary, and governments needed to put in place wise laws to prevent the exploitation of the people and ensure a better distribution of wealth. The encyclical made the point that just as the opposition of classes was not the basis for human social unity, 'the right ordering of economic life cannot be left to a free competition of forces'. The rich, in turn, were obligated, 'to practice almsgiving, beneficence and munificence'.<sup>22</sup> Catholics were urged to show example by joining in organised groups to study the social conditions of the day, or work with the St. Vincent de Paul Society to help meet community needs.

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<sup>18</sup> Lineham, "The Voice of Inspiration? Religious Contributions to Social Policy." p66.

<sup>19</sup> Thomson, David. *A World Without Welfare. New Zealand's Colonial Experiment*. Auckland: Auckland University Press with Bridget Williams Books, 1998. pp132-34.

<sup>20</sup> Simmons, Nicholas Anthony. "Archbishop Francis Redwood: His Contribution To Catholicism In New Zealand." Master of Arts, Massey, 1981. p51;. van der Krogt. "More a Part than Apart: the Catholic Community in New Zealand Society 1918-1940." pp400-01.

<sup>21</sup> Catholic neoscholastic tradition recognized different types of law: eternal law, divine law, natural law and human law. Eternal law is the plan for the world in the mind of God. All other laws mediate that law. Divine law contains prescriptions that God has revealed to human beings. Natural law is the participation of eternal law in the rational creature. Human law either repeats the natural law or makes specific what is generic in the natural law. An example is according to natural law people should drive their cars carefully and in an orderly way. Human law determines which side of the street everyone should drive on. Curran, *Catholic Social Teaching 1891-Present. A Historical, Theological and Ethical Analysis*. p146.

<sup>22</sup> see [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/pius\\_xi/encyclicals](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xi/encyclicals) paras. 50,88.



Catholic organisations and institutions maintained a distinct communal identity, but they did achieve a degree of interaction between Catholic and non-Catholics. The St. Vincent de Paul Society was a lay charitable organisation, founded in Paris in 1833, whose mandate was to undertake a variety of social activities in the service of the Church. Originally a branch (conference) of the Australian Society, the New Zealand Society gained full independence in 1932. Visiting the poor and giving contributions of food and other necessities became the principal work of the Society. Much of the work was undertaken by women's auxiliary groups. Aside from work with the poor, the Society distributed religious literature and developed a mission to support seafarers (Apostleship of the Sea). The Society, like other Catholic groups that were involved in charitable activities, such as the Catholic Women's League (CWL), based its charitable work on religious principles, regarding charitable work as a means of achieving personal sanctification. Their activities were not just confined to the Catholic community. In the wider community members were encouraged to promote Catholic moral and social ideas as part of their charity. Organisations such as St Vincent de Paul and the CWL wanted to ensure Catholics could participate in the wider society without sacrificing their religious commitment.<sup>23</sup>

Examples of Catholic charity co-operating with non-Catholic organisations were numerous. St Vincent de Paul was one of the groups involved in the Auckland Social Workers Association during the Depression, working with the likes of Colin Scrimgeour, Anglican City Missioner Jasper Calder and representatives of the Presbyterian Social Services, Salvation Army and others.<sup>24</sup> The CWL was affiliated with the National Council of Women and the Society for Protection of Women and Children worked closely with the Catholic Social Services in Auckland.<sup>25</sup>

The other dimension to Catholic charity was the work of the religious orders. Almost since the arrival of the Catholic Church in New Zealand, religious orders had been involved in the pastoral care of the sick, the poor and dispossessed. Catholic nuns and brothers provided a dedicated workforce who not only staffed the network of schools, but built and ran institutions and ministered to the sick, the elderly and other groups within the community who were disadvantaged. It was this workforce, bound

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<sup>23</sup> van der Krogt, "More a Part than Apart: the Catholic Community in New Zealand Society 1918-1940". pp86-7,162.

<sup>24</sup> Tennant, *The Fabric of Welfare. Voluntary Organisations, Government and Welfare in New Zealand, 1840-2005.* p82.

<sup>25</sup> Crimmins, Judith. "History of Catholic Social Services in the Auckland Diocese." Auckland: ACDA, 2004.

to the Church through their vows and free of ordinary family responsibilities, which gave the Church the ability to maintain a welfare network throughout the country. This network was not to grow anywhere near the size of the Catholic school system, but orphanages, hospitals, and homes of various descriptions were set up principally in the larger towns and cities. Because the religious staff received very little by way of wages, running costs were able to be kept to a minimum, although, like the schools, costs kept rising and the nuns and brothers had to be paid at least enough to meet their own needs.

The introduction of the religious orders into New Zealand was at the request of the various bishops. Bishop Pompallier requested that a group of the Sisters of Mercy come to New Zealand to serve the educational and spiritual needs (as the Catholic Church saw them) of Maori.<sup>26</sup> Bishop Grimes negotiated for a group of Sisters of the Little Company of Mary to found a hospital in Christchurch.<sup>27</sup> Mother Suzanne Aubert and her Sisters of Compassion, who in 1892 were the only Catholic order to originate in New Zealand, were invited by Archbishop Redwood to nurse the 'sick poor' in Wellington.<sup>28</sup> Other orders were encouraged into New Zealand as the bishops sought to meet both the education and welfare needs of Catholics. But the welfare component was in no way restricted to Catholics. Mother Aubert's work in Wellington was known to be available to anyone and this tradition was, by and large, the principal reason why these religious earned community wide respect.

Vows of chastity, poverty and obedience were the common feature of the life of religious communities. Overheads were kept low because staff costs were minimal and so long as the supply of men and women into the religious life continued, these institutions could continue to function. As regards funding, these institutions learned to cope with the vagaries of government funding prior to 1935 and rely upon their own resources and resourcefulness.<sup>29</sup> For example when the Sisters of the Little Company of Mary opened a hospital in Wellington in 1929, they had raised £20,000

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<sup>26</sup> Belgrave. *The Mater. A History of Auckland's Mercy Hospital 1900-2000*. p26. The original focus of the Mercy Sisters on Maori was disrupted by the wars of the 1860s. Maori withdrew from Auckland and the Sisters concentrated on teaching the growing number of non-Maori Catholic children in the city, the suburbs and the provincial towns.

<sup>27</sup> Trotter, Ann. *Mary Potter's Little Company of Mary. The New Zealand Experience 1914-2002*. Wellington: Bridget Williams Books Limited for the Society of the Little Company of Mary, 2003. p20.

<sup>28</sup> Munro, Jessie. *The Story of Suzanne Aubert*. Reprinted ed. Auckland: Auckland University Press with Bridget Williams Books, 1996. p247.

<sup>29</sup> Fund raising included fetes, bridge parties, skating parties, street days and radio appeals. Trotter, *Mary Potter's Little Company of Mary. The New Zealand Experience 1914-2002*. p48.

within the diocese prior to the opening. The £30,000 debt was guaranteed for the Bank of New Zealand by Sir Joseph Ward and a partner, as they believed the hospital would pay for itself.<sup>30</sup> These hospitals ran a system of private care and public charity, where the fees from the private patients subsidized the public charity beds and provided backers and banks with an assurance that any long term mortgages would be honoured. After the provisions of social security were introduced, these hospitals became part of the whole system of health care, receiving subsidies for patients, salaries for doctors and funding for extensions.<sup>31</sup>

During the 1940s the Labour Government had introduced subsidies for hostels for young adults on a pound for pound basis and providing long term loans for up to one third of the capital cost. Later Labour wanted to extend this scheme to accommodation for the elderly where facilities were provided by churches and charitable organisations. The subsequent National Government was favourably disposed towards voluntary agencies' involvement in age care, and subsidies for the building of accommodation for the aged began in 1950, extending through into the 1960s.<sup>32</sup> Religious organisations were trusted by the public to provide services for the elderly and the increasing scale of support by the government recognized a decline in sectarianism, removing some of the sensitivities around the issue of funding religious organisations. In the past the state had provided the 'top up' after the church had sourced the primary funding. Now the opposite was expected.<sup>33</sup> But Jack Marshall, a committed Presbyterian, saw the solution as a 'sound social, humanitarian and financial policy' which saved the state considerable costs.<sup>34</sup>

Institutions run by Catholic religious were to continue to be partially funded by the state until a combination of factors led to a major transformation of the Church's relationship with the state from the late 1960s onwards. Possibly the most significant was Vatican II and the impact it had on Catholics, both religious and lay.

Recruitment to the religious orders had been slowly decreasing as the overall demand grew, the same situation the Catholic school system was having to cope with. Hospitals, without their low paid religious workforce, had to deal with the reality

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid. p45.

<sup>31</sup> Belgrave. *The Mater. A History of Auckland's Mercy Hospital 1900-2000*. p71-2.

<sup>32</sup> Between 1950 and 1966 subsidies totalling £6 million established some 2500 home beds, 625 geriatric hospital beds and more than 600 beds in flats. Tennant, *The Fabric of Welfare. Voluntary Organisations, Government and Welfare in New Zealand, 1840-2005*. p147.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. p147-48.

<sup>34</sup> Marshall. *Memoirs Volume One: 1912 to 1960*. p197.

of existing in an increasingly competitive market for health care. Other Catholic and for that matter Christian services had to deal with the relevancy of faith based organisations in an increasingly secular culture. What was the role of religion in welfare?

### **Protestant engagement with social justice and reaction to the Depression**

Social justice and its connotations were not solely a Catholic concern. Since the mid nineteenth century and especially within liberal Protestantism, the growth of the social gospel movement sought to address problems that came from the same causes that motivated the papal encyclicals, namely social change, industrialisation and urbanisation. The language of social gospel had a strongly evangelical tone, recognised as being a means of reaching the working class and increase church attendance. In New Zealand Protestant churches had little difficulty blending social and evangelical concerns.<sup>35</sup>

The interwar years caused anxiety amongst the churches world wide as to the future of society. At Stockholm in 1925 the Universal Christian Conference on Life and Work provided theological discussion on the dignity of the human soul which must be superior to anything in the economic world and that need to control individual actions that cause the widespread social problems.<sup>36</sup> But the Stockholm gathering was beset by theological disagreements which made any agreement on social responsibility impossible.<sup>37</sup>

The 1937 Oxford Conference on Church, Community and State, where delegates included Reinhold Niebuhr, Emil Brunner, Paul Tillich and T.S. Eliot, discussion on the economic order upheld four major criticisms: the enhancement of acquisitiveness, inequalities and the distribution of wealth, the irresponsible possession of economic power and the frustration of the sense of Christian vocation. Underpinning these criticisms were two theological ideas; that 'the kingdom of God is the source of both hope and judgement' and secondly that 'love is the standard by which the economic order should be judged and yet these are not to be separated because love should will justice.' In the view of one participant, Oxford projected a Christian ethic for the

<sup>35</sup> Troughton, Geoffrey. "Jesus in New Zealand: 1900-1940." Massey University, 2007. p130.

<sup>36</sup> Krebs, Englebert. "The Stockholm World Conference." *America* 34, no. 22 (1926): 519-521.

<sup>37</sup> Bennett, John C. "Breakthrough in Ecumenical Social Ethics. The Legacy of the Oxford Conference on Church, Community and State." *Ecumenical Review* 40, no. 2 (1988): 132-146. p135.

economic order that was relevant to the industrialised nations.<sup>38</sup> Both Stockholm and Oxford were important in terms of articulating the theological challenges facing the wider Protestant body. These ecumenical gatherings were the precursors to the formation of the World Council of Churches after the Second World War. (An overview of aspects of Protestant Social Theology is attached as Appendix 4.)

Concern about the functioning of social structure in New Zealand during the Depression became a concern for the Churches. Protestant church councils began to discuss the issues that arose from the crisis that dominated all political, economic and social relations. *Quadragesimo Anno* was, in a sense, a model for others to follow, in that it was recognised as providing competent analysis and merited attention from a wide audience regardless of doctrinal beliefs.<sup>39</sup> But because the encyclical addressed itself to the whole world, it could not descend to practical details 'for national differences are too great'.<sup>40</sup> The *Harvard Business Review* of October 1932 praised it for its clear international outlook and the moral and religious dimensions set out as a means of readjusting the industrial chaos of the time. It provided competent analysis and merited attention from a wide audience regardless of doctrinal beliefs or the lack of them. Reservations were expressed about state economic planning, especially in Italy where the powers of the Fascist Grand Council had substituted bureaucracy in place of private enterprise. But the *Review* argued that the principles of the encyclical were worthy of study as a defence against 'communistic revolution and bureaucratic evolution.'<sup>41</sup>

Yet social Christianity, which rejected militant socialism and stressed a generalised commitment to co-operation, social amelioration and the reduction of inequality, had become increasingly associated with liberal theology and the political left.<sup>42</sup>

Internationally, attempts to make progressive social transformation a primary role of the protestant churches at the expense of evangelism were strenuously resisted.

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid. pp132,134,145.

<sup>39</sup> The encyclical was drafted by Oswald von Nell-Breuning, a German Jesuit who was a well recognised political economist. Nell-Breuning had done his dissertation on the morality of the stock market and had achieved prominence after the 1929 crash. He originally wrote the draft in German. Scholars then prepared a text in an elegant, curial Latin that, according to Nell-Breuning, frequently lost the nuances and subtler meaning of the original German. The Latin version became the official text. Murphy, Francis X. "Oswald von Nell-Breuning: Papal Surrogate." *America* 165, no. 12 (1991): 293-295.

<sup>40</sup> Dempsey, Bernard W. "Quadragesimo Anno in the Business World." *Harvard Business Review* 11, no. 1 (1932): 57-66. p66.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Troughton. "Jesus in New Zealand: 1900-1940." p172.

Social and theological conservatives fought back against any innovation in terms of the certainties of scripture and dogma. In New Zealand social gospel thinking tended to be evangelically liberal, rather than an outright modernist liberalism with its radical views on interpreting the role of the church. Evangelical liberalism was strongly Christocentric and this prominence helps illustrate the extent to which evangelism shaped New Zealand Christianity.<sup>43</sup>

Perhaps one of the most explicit examples of engaging with the economic expertise which was being introduced into the public realm was the work of the Economic Subcommittee of the Presbyterian Church. The state, during the 1930s, began to exert more direct influence upon the economy.<sup>44</sup> Government was seeking professional economic advice.<sup>45</sup> Sponsored by the Public Questions Committee to the General Assembly in 1932, the Church recognised the need for sound scientific advice. This sub-committee was made up mainly of economists and chaired by Rev. Dr. J.D. Salmond, also a trained economist. The subsequent report presented to the General Assembly urged church members to work against unemployment, while warning of the dangers in blaming the unemployed or groups such as Jews, capitalists, communists for the crisis. In endorsing a scientific approach to social problems, the report considered issues of supply, the decline of industrial production, the laying off of staff, longer working hours and how people deprived, especially the young, fared without work. It was 'a subtle and distinguished explanation of Christian issues in depression times.'<sup>46</sup> The work done by the sub-committee led to the General Assembly calling for greater protection for workers, a greater emphasis on education and taking a delegation, together with other Christian bodies, to meet with the Minister of Employment. Education was highly valued within the Church and advancing education in the areas of social and economic justice was recognised as being entirely relevant in the search for social justice.

However many of the churches had, in the early years of the depression, initially focused upon improving community standards, solidarity and relief work. Calls were

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid. p172.

<sup>44</sup> Brooking, Tom. "Economic Transformation." In *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, edited by W.H. with B.R. Williams Oliver. Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1988. p241.

<sup>45</sup> The Reserve Bank was established in 1933 and J. Gordon Coates appointed three economists to his Department. Lineham, Peter. "Christianity and Public Policy; the New Zealand Experience." Paper presented at the Future of Christianity Conference, Dunedin 2002. p13.

<sup>46</sup> ———. "Christianity and Public Policy: the New Zealand Experience." 1-41. Auckland: Massey University, 2002. pp14-15; Guy, Laurie. *Shaping Godzone: Public Issues and Church Voices in New Zealand 1840-2000*. Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2011. p228.

made for brotherliness and co-operation while blaming the failure to follow Christ as the cause of the crisis. Some saw it as an opportunity for gospel preaching, while others opposed the liberal messages. If an American sociological survey can be taken as a rough guide, then many clergy would have reacted to the calls for social justice in a manner consistent with the wider consensus within their community. The majority would have undertaken religious work rather than embarking on any sort of radical social action which would have likely created conflict within their respective communities.<sup>47</sup>

In the aftermath of the 1932 riots though, responses began to change as the churches recognised the need for structural reform. From mid 1933 Methodist leaders were more forthright in calling for a more just distribution of resources within the community.<sup>48</sup> Transforming the social order became a much louder call, yet the Christian action associated with reform was deliberately unspecific. This lack of detail had a parallel with the papal encyclical, in that it was attempting to provide both social and economic analysis together with a particular Christian explanation for the crisis, but recognising that specific reforms must come through the existing political process.

As the churches began to deal with the impact of the depression and articulate positions on reform, many of those outpourings corresponded with the policy being developed by the Labour Party. Methodists and Catholics tended to be most sympathetic to Labour, as both denominations viewed religion as requiring an imperative to social action.<sup>49</sup> Father J A Higgins SM regularly wrote for *Zealandia* on social justice issues. John A Lee was of the view that any of the Higgins articles would have been well received in any Labour publication.<sup>50</sup> Labour humanitarianism meshed well with the gospel values while the religious backgrounds of both Michael Savage and Peter Fraser were seen to provide sympathy to the Christian message.<sup>51</sup> By 1935 Labour had gained much broader church support, helping to support the

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<sup>47</sup> Davis, Jerome. "The Social Action Pattern Of The Protestant Religious Leader." *American Sociological Review* 1, no. 1 (1936): 105-114.

<sup>48</sup> Guy. *Shaping Godzone: Public Issues and Church Voices in New Zealand 1840-2000*. p225.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid. p231.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid. p231.

<sup>51</sup> Troughton. "Jesus in New Zealand: 1900-1940." p181.

belief that Labour would bring about positive social change, as opposed to radical upheaval.<sup>52</sup>

### Traditional authority

Until the Second Vatican Council changed the nature of the relationship with the rest of the world, the Catholic Church reserved for itself the right to intervene in politics as ‘a divinely commissioned arbiter of morals in a political situation raising a moral issue, with the object of securing the primacy of the spiritual over the temporal and of right over might.’ In a democratic state such as New Zealand, the ability to intervene is limited by parliament, but as ‘the secular power is always encroaching on the freedom of the spirit and even goes so far as to demand submission to the State’s all embracing influence’, the authority of the individual bishop was considered paramount.<sup>53</sup> Each individual bishop was related vertically and subordinately to the pope, without horizontal relationships with other bishops.<sup>54</sup> This vertical relationship meant that an individual bishop had considerable power and authority in his own diocese and was able to manage diocesan resources as he saw fit. In practice the New Zealand bishops acted in a collegial manner over most issues, but at heart lay the principle of that direct relationship with the pope. Bishops responded to the state’s ‘all embracing influence’ by insisting that their priorities be recognized and this tension was at the centre of the relationship with the state.

By insisting on upholding the traditional authority of the bishops when faced with the state’s determination to participate in the delivery of certain social services, the Catholic Church found itself, to a certain extent, at odds with the growing welfare state. Traditional authority was not to be confused with civil authority. During the controversy over state aid to private schools and the petition to Parliament, Catholic newspapers restated the point that Catholics owed no allegiance to the pope as a civil ruler. Catholics would never have to make a choice between obeying the pope and the lawful authority of their country. Catholics as citizens must obey their lawful

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<sup>52</sup> Guy. *Shaping Godzone: Public Issues and Church Voices in New Zealand 1840-2000*. p226.

<sup>53</sup> "The Embarrassing Friends -An Examination of Relations between Church and State.," *Tablet*, 31 May 1950.

<sup>54</sup> McBrien, Richard P. "The Church (Lumen Gentium)." In *Modern Catholicism*, edited by Adrian Hastings. London: SPCK, 1991. p85.



civil rulers in all things that pertain to their function and authority. The pope was only to be obeyed on matters of faith and morals.<sup>55</sup>

In New Zealand the state was expanding its welfare net much wider after the World War II and embracing the principle that voluntary welfare activity should receive state financial support. Catholics, including the priests, nuns and brothers, were immediate beneficiaries of the social security provisions and the general benefits in areas such as state housing and health were readily welcomed by the Church. But social justice teachings gave warnings about the encroachment of the state into the lives of ordinary citizens.<sup>56</sup> This post-war version of social thought, as articulated by the papacy, was strongly influenced by the excesses of totalitarianism and communism. It repeatedly warned of the consequences when the state gathered too much power and control. According to the principle of subsidiarity and endorsed by *Quadragesimo Anno*, the needs of the community are best met from within the community as a first resort. The state cannot simply assert control.

As a result of insisting on retaining its traditional authority, the Church was not always willing to accede to the state's demands for a degree of control in exchange for funding. This was most evident in the campaign for state aid for private schools, but also in those areas of welfare activity in which Catholics featured, such as hospitals, prisons and in the military. The Church was determined to retain its own authority when it came to using its own resources and not have the state or a non-Catholic church dictate how that resource should be selected or used. As always, compromises of sorts were made. Catholics continued to be ordinary New Zealanders, albeit having the additional financial burden of supporting a Church which, by refusing to meet all the demands of the state, was denied funding for much of their educational and welfare activity.

But this did not apply to all aspects of Catholic welfare work. Major institutions such as Catholic hospitals, orphanages and residential care facilities were known for policies of community inclusiveness and had enjoyed broad community and state support. These institutions were plainly Catholic, most obvious when staffed by nuns in their distinctive garb. They were also important in the promotion of Catholic

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<sup>55</sup> "Are Catholics Loyal To Their Country?," *Tablet*, 16 January 1957.

<sup>56</sup> "Dangers In The Welfare State," *Tablet*, 16 March 1955. "Freedom and Responsibility," *Tablet*, 6 February 1957.

ethics.<sup>57</sup> Other forms of voluntary welfare undertaken by the Catholic Church were usually in an environment where Catholicism was in a minority, such as a prison, an army camp or in a public hospital. Outside the Catholic institutions, Catholic voluntary welfare operated in a non-Catholic society. This, in turn meant that the effort to establish a Catholic presence often demanded compromise from both sides, especially as concessions would only go so far. They would not extend into ecumenical territory as doing so as this would be the equivalent of saying that one religion was as good as another.

However the most significant difference was ownership. These institutions were usually owned by the religious orders that built and ran them. They were not owned by the diocese, unlike the majority of the primary schools, churches and parish buildings. While the bishop and diocese had a close working and often financial relationship, governance was with the Order.<sup>58</sup> Governance meant working with the bishop to whom all religious working in the diocese owed obedience. When an Order wanted to take out loans over a certain amount, permission from Rome was necessary. This had been introduced to prevent Orders committing the Church to debts beyond what was considered unreasonable. This assistance from the bishop was especially helpful.<sup>59</sup> But the local bishop could provide other support, especially in making and maintaining political connections and ensuring strong backing from the Catholic community.<sup>60</sup> James Liston's long association with the Mater Hospital included vigorously defending it against all critics.<sup>61</sup> Catholic hospitals were the largest grouping in the small private hospital sector, and were well versed in representing their own interests. Boards of Governors, Trust and Advisory Boards were the usual means of providing governance assistance to the senior nun or brother. Trustees, some of them non-Catholic and usually with business skills,

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<sup>57</sup> Reid, *James Michael Liston A Life*. p315.

<sup>58</sup> Trotter, *Mary Potter's Little Company of Mary. The New Zealand Experience 1914-2002*. pp56-57.

<sup>59</sup> Belgrave, *The Mater. A History of Auckland's Mercy Hospital 1900-2000*. p64.

<sup>60</sup> McKeefry was able to help the Sisters of the Little Company of Mary fund suitable living quarters in Wellington through his political contacts and access to the Health Department. Trotter, *Mary Potter's Little Company of Mary. The New Zealand Experience 1914-2002*. pp53-55. James Liston was furious when, in 1944, the parish priest in Hamilton attacked the Mater for 'class distinction...pandering to the wealthy', and asserted that it wasn't a truly charitable institution. The priest wondered how 'Christ and his badly-dressed, uncouth-looking rabble of Apostles' would be welcomed if they attempted to enter the Mater. Reid, *James Michael Liston A Life*. pp166-67.

<sup>61</sup> Reid, *James Michael Liston A Life*. p315.

helped the nuns or brothers deal with financial issues and fundraising. Involvement of non-Catholic trustees helped to maintain community goodwill.<sup>62</sup>

Traditional authority was an important element in the ecclesiastical functioning of the Church. Because of their direct relationship with the pope, each bishop managed his diocese as he saw fit. In New Zealand the hierarchy operated collegially, and the use of that authority caused little difficulty. However in Australia the trouble that occurred during the 1950s over the Movement and the anti-communist campaign showed that this authority could be subverted. Some bishops elected to use their traditional authority to provide support for distinctly political causes with the result that the Australian Catholic Church suffered the scandal of a divided church.

### Chaplaincy

During WWII the Catholic Church and many of the Protestant denominations provided chaplains for the armed services. WWI had seen a major effort by the various denominations to ensure the Armed Forces had sufficient chaplains to be sent to the key war theatres. A relatively loose arrangement had existed during peace time, whereby the enthusiasm of individual clerics led to their involvement in a local territorial unit. When WWII broke out, the Churches were again asked for clerics to accompany the troops, and for the next five years ministers and priests, often on rotation, served wherever New Zealand forces operated and came to be considered an integral part of the military.

Like the military, chaplaincy services to the prisons were by way of ad hoc arrangements. Churches would make arrangements with local prison management for entry into the prison, although legislation did provide for clergy to conduct worship in prisons and interview inmates of their particular denomination.<sup>63</sup> As regards the sick, Catholic priests from the local parish were charged with the responsibility of spiritual care of hospitalized Catholics. 'A priest is called by the patient and sent by the Church Authorities to help the patient establish himself in a proper relationship with God.'<sup>64</sup> These various chaplaincies were generally recognized as a function of

<sup>62</sup> Trotter, Mary Potter's Little Company of Mary. The New Zealand Experience 1914-2002. p121.

<sup>63</sup> Mansill, Douglas. "A Civil and Ecclesiastical Union? The Development of Prison Chaplaincy in Aotearoa-New Zealand." M Phil, Auckland University of Technology, 2008. p10.

<sup>64</sup> Courtenay, Rev Father B. "Report to Cardinal McKeefry on the meeting of the Inter-Church Consultation on Hospital Chaplaincies." In *ACDA, Del 37-7/2*. Auckland, 1970.

ministry and were part of the network of voluntary welfare activities undertaken by the churches.

Chaplaincy had a distinct meaning for Catholic priests. It was to give the soldier, prisoner or patient the opportunity to participate in divine worship in the Mass and provide regular opportunities to go to confession and holy communion. As Father Leo Downey pointed out as regards prison work, Catholic chaplains were not welfare officers nor should they become identified as being departmental officials.<sup>65</sup> This attitude was consistent with the approach taken by the Catholic chaplains in WWII, in that their primary purpose was to ensure the men had regular access to the sacraments. They were primarily concerned with ministering to their fellow Catholics.

The development of chaplaincy after WWII illustrates, for the Catholic Church at least, some of the difficulties of integrating with the expanding Welfare State. By the end of WWII military chaplaincy was recognized as having a permanent place in the structure of the armed forces. At the end of the war a Chaplains Department was established within Defence and since then chaplains have had a permanent place in the Armed Services.<sup>66</sup> In turn, the clerics were paid for their involvement. This was to be the pattern, whereby the previously voluntary efforts by the Churches to minister to the spiritual needs of their 'flock' were given a more permanent and funded status. In return the state expected each denomination to ensure that there were sufficient chaplains available to ensure all patients, soldiers or prisoners received the care and assistance sought. But the state, being indifferent to denominational differences, also began to insist upon an increasing co-operation between the denominations in the delivery of these chaplaincy services. It was this latter point that the Catholic Church found the most difficult to reconcile with.

A precedent of sorts had been set by General Freyburg. As the Second New Zealand Expeditionary Force was being formed in 1939, he urged that denominational differences be set aside. Military matters were to have priority. Although the Catholics were given latitude in terms of the separateness of their sacraments and liturgy, by 1941 the chaplaincy had developed a strong ecumenical

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<sup>65</sup> Mansill, "A Civil and Ecclesiastical Union? The Development of Prison Chaplaincy in Aotearoa-New Zealand." p92.

<sup>66</sup> Haigh, J Bryant. *Men of Faith and Courage. The official history of the Royal New Zealand Chaplains Department.* Auckland: The Word Publishers Limited, 1983. p13.

culture.<sup>67</sup> The war and the strong appeal to minimize denominational differences made the Protestant-Catholic divide at the front shrink in scale and intensity. Catholic chaplains mixed freely with the servicemen and other chaplains, sharing in the dangers and helping to deal with the physical and emotional damage that was war. This particular chaplaincy established a reputation for close co-operation between Catholic and non-Catholic 'padres'. Returned servicemen brought back with them a much more relaxed attitude to denominational difference and while returned Catholic chaplains were required to observe church discipline as regards other denominations, their shared experience with Protestant chaplains was useful in dealing with sticking points, such as ensuring ANZAC day commemorations were conducted as civic rather than religious ceremonies. Yet while inter-denominational co-operation had improved during the war, the attitude to ecumenism by the Catholic authorities remained distinctly negative.

But as the welfare state consolidated, the role of the voluntary welfare activity was being re-evaluated. It was not as though the need for charity had been removed by the advent of the welfare state, but rather the need for service by the citizen remained an obligation in a healthy society. Social advance relied upon a very active voluntary sector. State sponsorship of a variety of voluntary associations was, argued William Beveridge, a 'middle way through "the Scylla of Laissez-Faire and the Charybdis of Totalitarianism"'.<sup>68</sup> The beliefs and attitudes of senior public servants and politicians during the 1950s and 1960s began to influence the degree of co-operation between the voluntary sector and the state. Some, such as S.T (Sam) Barnett, the Secretary for Justice, and John Marshall were instrumental in establishing a permanent prison chaplaincy. Barnett had an evangelical Baptist background and Marshall's active Presbyterianism meant they shared a view of the influence of practical Christianity in prisons.

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<sup>67</sup> Buckley. "Bringing Faith to the Front: Catholic Chaplains with the Second New Zealand Expeditionary Force 1939-1945." pp32,143. King's Regulations recognized the separateness of the Catholic Church and the Catholic chaplains maintained that they had no authority to do otherwise.

<sup>68</sup> Tennant, *The Fabric of Welfare. Voluntary Organisations, Government and Welfare in New Zealand, 1840-2005*. p132. William Beveridge, often regarded as the architect of the British welfare state, visited New Zealand in 1948 and gave a number of lectures. His mythological reference is taken from *Antipodes Notebook* (Janet and William Beveridge, Pilot Press, London, 1949). John Marshall recounts dining with Beveridge, where, '...I sat beside, and metaphorically at the feet of, the father of the Welfare State and the high priest of modern liberalism.' Marshall, *Memoirs Volume One: 1912 to 1960*. p113.

...together we formulated the policy for a prison chaplain service. Up till this time various churches has held services in the prisons, and church ministers had, on some occasions, visited prisoners who wished to see them. We believed that much more effective work could be done by placing all the Protestant chaplaincy in the hands of one full time chaplain for each institution. In those days, before the benevolent dispensation of Pope John, Roman Catholics kept to their own flock, and cared for their own black sheep.<sup>69</sup>

If there was to be any state funding, so the argument went, it should be accompanied by some sort of control. As regards churches, the principle of church/state separation needed to be maintained with a distinction between welfare programmes on one hand and evangelism and religious education on the other.<sup>70</sup>

In July 1951 Sam Barnett spoke to the National Council of Churches (NCC) Annual Meeting on the subject of prison chaplaincy. The NCC were concerned to find out what the Government's intentions were, as rumours had been circulating that a scheme of centralized prison chaplaincy services might exclude ministers from various churches.<sup>71</sup>

Barnett told the meeting that not only was it desirable for an official chaplain to be appointed to each prison, but their qualifications for this ministry should be more important than the church denomination they represented. An honorarium would be paid by the Department of Justice for part-time service, but an appointee would be expected to conduct weekly worship, establish personal contact with prisoners and be involved in administration.<sup>72</sup> The NCC gave the necessary structure to both church and state for the appointment of chaplains without any suggestion that one church had status over another. Ecumenism within the churches of the NCC made the establishment of a prison chaplaincy service possible.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Marshall, *Memoirs Volume One: 1912 to 1960*. p229.

<sup>70</sup> Tennant, *The Fabric of Welfare. Voluntary Organisations, Government and Welfare in New Zealand, 1840-2005*. p123.

<sup>71</sup> Mansill, "A Civil and Ecclesiastical Union? The Development of Prison Chaplaincy in Aotearoa-New Zealand." p71.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.* p71-2.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.* p81,86. Other ecumenical bodies such as the Inter-Church Council on Public Affairs had been considering issues of prison reform since 1942. But the focus of the Council was not on the establishment of a Prison Chaplaincy Service, rather penal reform as such.

Legislation for the appointment of prison chaplains was in place by 1954, but the Catholic Church was not included in the arrangement as it was not part of the NCC. The reason for the Catholic Church not entering into a similar arrangement with the government for chaplaincy services was to do with the authority of the bishop and the appointment of a chaplain. Ecclesiastically the Church held that the appointment of a priest to the chaplaincy was the prerogative of the bishop alone. It was not up to the state to decide if a person was qualified for the role, it was the bishop's judgment and the chaplain was accountable to the bishop. As had happened in the military, Catholic authorities were suspicious that a Protestant cleric could have authority over a Catholic priest. Barnett did recognize the requirement of the Catholic hierarchy to preserve their authority and their unwillingness to enter into an agreement with Protestant churches to provide a combined ministry. In 1958 Barnett, committed to finding an arrangement that was agreeable to the Catholic authorities, invited McKeefry to select a senior chaplain and Father Leo Downey was appointed.<sup>74</sup>

From 1958 the Chaplaincy Service settled into a period of development. But ecumenism was something for non-Catholic churches to practise amongst themselves.<sup>75</sup> While there were incidents of tension between both sets of chaplains, at the same time co-operation was taking place. A combined Anglican-Catholic mission took place in Mt Eden Prison in 1959, in 1960 at Waikeria Youth Centre and in 1961 two former military chaplains, Rev. J.S. Somerville and Father Ted Forsman acted as missionaries, again at Mt Eden Prison.<sup>76</sup>

Vatican II brought a significant change to how ecumenism was understood in the Catholic Church, and as the Catholic prison chaplaincy began to use religious brothers, sisters as well as lay people, attitudes began to change. It wasn't until 1965 that the first joint conference of NCC and Catholic chaplains was held and a Prison Chaplains Association was formed. Discussion about the role and responsibility of Catholic chaplains in the hospital setting was being held in 1970 as part of the Inter-Church consultation on Hospital Chaplaincies. One of the points at issue was the notion that the chaplain was a member of a team of hospital personnel

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid. p85. None of the Catholic chaplains received payment for their prison duties. This cost continued to be carried by the Church for the time being.

<sup>75</sup> Reid, *James Michael Liston A Life*. p256-57. James Liston's view was that the Catholic Church was divine and could not compromise by taking any part in the ecumenical movement as this would be the equivalent of saying that one religion was as good as another.

<sup>76</sup> Mansill, "A Civil and Ecclesiastical Union? The Development of Prison Chaplaincy in Aotearoa-New Zealand.". p104.

which assumed joint care and responsibility for the patient's rehabilitation. Catholic opposition centred on the priest being part of a team. Rather the priest was a representative of the Church and as such be allowed to give independent advice, such as in the case of an abortion being offered as treatment.<sup>77</sup>

### **Social Justice – Catholic Action and the Catholic Rural Movement**

When Catholic Action was being introduced into New Zealand in the early 1930s, the idea that lay people were a vital part of the Church was challenging for an institution committed to hierarchical governance. Defined as 'the participation of the laity in the apostolate of the Church's hierarchy', bishops, priests and laity needed to adjust to an idea that invited the lay people to become participants in the 'lay apostolate', the active involvement in the work of the Church.<sup>78</sup> But in both New Zealand and Australia there was considerable confusion as to its precise meaning, and opinion varied as to the degree of lay autonomy as against clerical control (see pp217-220 for an overview of Catholic Action in Australia).

In Australia a group of Catholic intellectuals who were actively involved in establishing Catholic Action in Australia became the focal point for Catholic intellectualism in the 1930s. The *Campion Society* was a discussion group for young Catholic intellectuals and university students. Melbourne University had a vigorous group, including a young B.A. Santamaria, and

for some eight years, from 1931 to 1938, it exerted an influence unparalleled by any other Catholic lay association in Australia's history. Indeed, it is doubtful if anywhere in the world there existed an entirely lay-led organisation which could boast a comparable record of achievement.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Courtenay, "Report to Cardinal McKeefry on the meeting of the Inter-Church Consultation on Hospital Chaplaincies."

<sup>78</sup> The encyclical *Ubi Arcano Dei* (1922) of Pius XI is considered the document that inaugurated Catholic Action. The appeal to lay participation is implicit through the document (especially paragraph 58) and was further developed in later writings.

<sup>79</sup> Mathews, Race. "Collateral Damage: B.A. Santamaria and the Marginalising of Social Catholicism." *Labour History*, no. 92 (2007): 89-111. See Jory, C.H., *The Campion Society and Catholic Social Militancy in Australia 1929-39*, Hatpham, Sydney, 1986, p121. The *Campion Society* was named after the English Jesuit martyr, Edmund Campion (1540-81) and was formed in Melbourne in 1931. Another group was set up in Sydney in 1934, and spread to other centres such as Brisbane, Perth and Adelaide.



Advocacy by the Champions was largely responsible for establishing the Australian National Secretariat of Catholic Action (ANSCA), which was a joint 1937 decision by the Australian and New Zealand hierarchy to establish a full time secretariat to co-ordinate the running and establishment of the various Catholic Action movements that had emerged in Australia.<sup>80</sup> Implementation of social encyclicals and the development of the lay apostolate had been on the periphery of official Catholic thinking, preoccupied as they were with the practical problems of building schools and churches. It was the Spanish Civil War and the growing communist threat in Australian unions that focused the attention of the bishops on the need to co-ordinate lay activity.<sup>81</sup>

New Zealand had no real equivalent of ANSCA nor did it have the dynamism of a Champion Society. Domestic communism did not pose anywhere near the same threat. Rather than have Catholic Action developed by a lay group, Father Frank Bennett of Holy Cross Seminary became its early exponent. He was clearly of the view that it was 'only a participation in the apostolate of the clergy, and hence it must be exercised in complete obedience and submission to the hierarchy.' The laity were only called upon to share the apostolate.<sup>82</sup> Control of Catholic Action and the broader lay apostolate always remained with the clergy.

As in Australia, the term 'Catholic Action' was applied loosely. Some clerics interpreted it as having a broad all-inclusive meaning, embracing organisations such as the Holy Name Society, the Hibernian Benefit Society or the St Vincent de Paul Society as Catholic Action. Others applied a much stricter definition. Bennett argued that any Actionist group must be engaged in specific apostolic work under the direction of the bishop. Most Catholic lay groups had a different focus, either personal sanctification as in a Sodality such as the Legion of Mary or a broad welfare aim such as St Vincent de Paul.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Doig, Richard John. "National Catholic Rural Movement and a 'New Deal' for Australia. The Rise and Fall of an Agrarian Movement 1931-58." PhD., Charles Sturt, 2002. p198. ANSCA, under direction of the bishops, created a series of Catholic Action movements among which were a National Catholic Girls' Movement, a Young Catholic Workers' Movement, a Young Catholic Students' Movement and a National Catholic Women's' Movement.

<sup>81</sup> Massam, Katherine. *Sacred Threads. Catholic Spirituality In Australia 1922-1962*. Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 1996. pp199-200.

<sup>82</sup> van der Krogt, "More a Part than Apart: the Catholic Community in New Zealand Society 1918-1940". p91.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.* p92-3.

By the late 1930s forms of Catholic Action were flourishing in each diocese. Dunedin, under Bennett, opted for the stricter version, while in Wellington, the criteria was much looser. Wellington had Father J.A. Higgins SM as its Director of Catholic Action. He favoured study groups as a means of educating the laity on the importance of Christian principles as a basis for social justice. Wellington did claim some eighty Catholic Action groups in the archdiocese in 1940. The other dioceses were somewhere in between. In Dunedin Bennett had introduced the Jocist (*Jeunese ouvrière chrétienne*) model, pioneered by the Belgian priest Joseph Cardijn. Jocist principles were 'See, Judge, Act'. This required members to reflect on a set of Catholic principles, judge a particular situation in light of those principles and then decide on a course of action. Jocistes viewed Catholic Action as being composed of vocational (students, industrial workers) groups, organized through cell groups, with a priest at the centre, and under the direct auspices of the local hierarchy. This model rejected special interest groups as being the focus of Catholic Action activity.<sup>84</sup>

After the war, Catholic Action came to be seen as the work of younger people and particularly the Catholic Youth Movement (CYM). During 1941 Bennett had run a study session for a number of priests, exploring the concept of the 'lay apostolate' and the principles of Jocism. The CYM grew from this session, promoted by Dr. Reginald Delargy in Auckland, and Fathers David O'Neill in Wellington, John Curnow in Christchurch and Bennett in Dunedin.<sup>85</sup> In 1946 Archbishop O'Shea gave the CYM his mandate for Catholic Action. The rationale was that parish based CYM groups worked in co-operation with the Archbishop and clergy.<sup>86</sup> But although the emphasis on social activity, given that it was a youth movement, might not have met Bennett's strict criteria, they did see themselves as Catholic Action and these ideas 'were to engage two generations of young Catholics'.<sup>87</sup> Personal sanctification was not sufficient and CYM members were urged to fight 'the apathy of our times' by 'restoring their working places in Christ' and to help make New Zealand society more

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<sup>84</sup> Doig, "National Catholic Rural Movement and a 'New Deal' for Australia. The Rise and Fall of an Agrarian Movement 1931-58". p59.

<sup>85</sup> King. *God's Farthest Outpost. A History of Catholics in New Zealand.* pp165-6.

<sup>86</sup> "Catholic Youth Movement. First Annual Report," *Tablet*, 1 January 1947.

<sup>87</sup> King. *God's Farthest Outpost. A History of Catholics in New Zealand.* p167.

Christian.<sup>88</sup> But for many Catholics there was still a 'good deal of haziness' about what Catholic Action meant.<sup>89</sup>

In the 1948 Australian publication *Studies in Catholic Action*, the role of Catholic Action, it was argued, was 'to make known and understood the principles of social justice and the general indications given by recent Popes of the main defects of modern society and the general lines which reform must take.' Individuals should follow their conscience as to the best means of 'establishing a sound social and economic order'.<sup>90</sup> In New Zealand during this post war period, the lay apostolate, which included the CYM, the Christian Family Movement, and the Legion of Mary, was invigorated by 'thousands' of well trained and active members who, in collaborating with the hierarchy and clergy, were 'gaining and giving a new vision of the Church'.<sup>91</sup>

In New Zealand a small Catholic rural movement was applying some of the key themes of Catholic Action in an attempt to return people to the land. In June 1942, Liston received a letter from the Bishop of Wagga Wagga in New South Wales. Bishop Henschke was writing to a number of bishops who had enquired about promoting the Rural Movement in their dioceses.<sup>92</sup> At the time ANSCA was set up in 1937, the bishops asked that a farmers' movement, that drew from Jociste principles of 'See, Judge and Act', be organised. From this came the National Catholic Rural Movement (NCRM). Bob Santamaria was its first secretary and he was impressed by the reformist aims of American Catholic agrarian thought that grew out of Roosevelt's New Deal.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> "Catholic Youth Movement; Catholic Action is Catholic Living," *Tablet*, 30 March 1949, Simmons. *A Brief History of the Catholic Church in New Zealand*. pp103-4.

<sup>89</sup> "Catholic Youth Movement: A Member describes the Work," *Tablet*, 23 January 1952.

<sup>90</sup> Doig, "National Catholic Rural Movement and a 'New Deal' for Australia. The Rise and Fall of an Agrarian Movement 1931-58". pp202-03; *Studies in Catholic Action*, ANCSA, Melbourne, 1948, pp137-39.

<sup>91</sup> Simmons. *A Brief History of the Catholic Church in New Zealand*. p107.

<sup>92</sup> Henschke, Francis, Bishop. "Letter to Liston re the Catholic Rural Movement." In *ACDA, Lis 216*. Auckland, 1942. Henschke also wrote to O'Shea in Wellington

<sup>93</sup> Doig. "National Catholic Rural Movement and a 'New Deal' for Australia. The Rise and Fall of an Agrarian Movement 1931-58." pp190-94. The American influence of the National Catholic Rural Life Movement and the National Catholic Welfare Conference upon Santamaria and others in the Movement embraced not only issues around the broader issues of state involvement in restoring the agrarian society, but experiments in rural living such as the Granger homestead, a co-operative which received support from Eleanor Roosevelt. Two similar settlements were begun in Australia through the auspices of the NCRM – Maryknoll and San Isidore. Both still exist, although now municipal entities rather than the communal settlements they began as.

Agrarianism, and in particular the work in the United States by the National Catholic Rural Life Movement (NCRLM) and the National Catholic Welfare Conference (NCWC), had been of particular concern to members of the Campion Society based at Melbourne University. Their interest in rural movements was part of their anti-capitalist critique that was much more radical than the tone of *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno*. Events in the United States were followed with great interest, and Catholic publications such as *America* and *Commonweal* provided material on contemporary political and social issues. They endorsed Roosevelt's New Deal and the 'homesteading' schemes that sought to get people back on the land. A 1937 article in the *Catholic Worker* sets out the rationale for their 'back to the land' movement;

With an adequate agricultural training, not only could the entire unemployed population, but also a large number of our industrial workers, for whom the city holds no future other than the humdrum existence of the factory, could be given security and a decent standard of living.....For the workers themselves the alternative lies between being their own masters on the land which they themselves own or remaining the slaves of the soul-less trusts which control modern industry.<sup>94</sup>

By March 1945 the NCRM had some 260 groups, with twelve in New Zealand. Santamaria hoped to reach a target of 10,000 members by year's end. But by 1948 the New Zealand branch was diverging from the Australian parent movement.<sup>95</sup> This divergence showed that the New Zealand branch was uneasy with the Australian NCRM structure. NCRM was highly centralized and based on a 'cell' structure, as advocated in the Jocist methodology. Cells were to be concerned with economic and social problems. Members were to reflect on a set of Catholic principles, judge a particular situation in light of those and then decide on a course of action. Santamaria's vision was much broader than the hierarchically controlled and clerically led Catholic Action organisation in New Zealand. He made it clear that the type of social reforms he was seeking involved government action and changes to legislation. Pressure should be applied through electoral sanctions, strikes or the

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid. p187. This particular article was written by Santamaria. The *Catholic Worker* was founded as the newspaper of the Campions and its radical tone frequently made it unpopular with mainstream Catholics.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid. p273.

withholding of financial support to compel governments to produce the desired results when a political party has been elected to office.<sup>96</sup> This approach of merging spiritual values and social aspirations with overt political involvement, especially in the hands of a lay man, did not sit comfortably with the New Zealand hierarchy. The hierarchy's relationship with the Labour Administration of Peter Fraser was too valuable to be placed in jeopardy by an Australian brand of social action.

The New Zealand Catholic Rural Movement (CRM) drew on the themes the Campions developed, particularly those of corporatism and distributism. Both these themes harked back to earlier European social thought and featured in both *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno*. Distributism came out of Cardinal Manning's work on the poverty and dispossession in Victorian and Edwardian England. As the term suggests, distributists favour a 'society of owners', where property belongs to the many, not the few. The concentration of property in the hands of either the rich, as in capitalism, or the state, as advocated by socialists was wrong and the ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange must be widespread.<sup>97</sup> Gilbert Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc became ardent promoters of the movement. In New Zealand, Des Nolan, organizing secretary of the CYM and later to side against F. P. Walsh in a FOL showdown, argued the merits of distributism in the *Tablet*. He dismissed charges of utopianism and argued that distributism demands de-centralisation and a balanced rural-urban relationship.<sup>98</sup> His critics maintained that many distributists became carried away by the vision of a new order, and failed to understand that the application of principles became extremely difficult due to the complexity of economic activity and the diversity of human needs within the family, the local community, the nation and internationally.<sup>99</sup> This latter view of the complexity of modern life was later implicit in the findings of Vatican II on the Church in the modern world (*Gaudium et Spes*).

Corporatism was inspired by the medieval guild system and Catholic thinkers saw it as a means of binding workers and owners in a co-operative arrangement in order to

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid. p204-7.

<sup>97</sup> Mathews, "Collateral Damage: B.A. Santamaria and the Marginalising of Social Catholicism." p92-4. Co-operatives grew out of the distributist ideal. Trade unions had their origins in the friendly society model and over time grew to provide a means to enable their members to obtain better working conditions and a fair price for their labour. So in this sense, the Labour Parties of the U.K, Australia and New Zealand owe much to the principles of the co-operatives and the mutualism it inspired.

<sup>98</sup> "Letters to the Editor - Deeper reflections on Distributism," *Tablet*, 6 June 1951.

<sup>99</sup> "Thinking It Over: We Reply To Our Critics." *Tablet*, 27 June 1951.

regulate prices, wages and working conditions. By the time Pius XI issued *Quadragesimo Anno*, variations of the corporatist schemes had been operating in Italy, Austria and Portugal and the encyclical, while not endorsing any specific form of state, gave credence to the corporatist model.<sup>100</sup> These social experiments gave fascism a degree of respectability as they seemed to allow workers a more genuine representation, guided by a paternal state while harmonizing class and interest group struggles in official institutions. Criticism was levelled at Pius XI's support for corporatism because of the fascist associations, but defenders claimed such criticism failed to take into account the full import of the encyclical.<sup>101</sup> The Pope, who had no direct knowledge of the political and social nature of fascism, did qualify his support by warning against the excessive bureaucratic and political character involved in those schemes. But to the Campions, Roosevelt 'appeared as an anti-capitalist crusader who could deliver a genuinely corporative state' that rejected the ersatz corporatism of fascism.<sup>102</sup> The New Deal was the one realistic hope for a new social order, with a democratic form of corporatism.

Although Pius XII did not write an encyclical on the social question, he did write and deliver many addresses on all aspects of human existence. Importantly he recognized the overwhelming merits of democracy as the best form of government, particularly after the war when Christian democratic governments became prominent in post-war European politics. These governments by and large strongly opposed communism.

Many of these addresses came out of the immediate aftermath of the war and started to give shape to a post-war corpus of social justice teaching. The pre-war themes of subsidiarity, corporatism and distributism continued to resonate in these addresses and the Rural Movement began to give voice to the notion that the rural community

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<sup>100</sup> The encyclical sought a middle path between laissez-faire capitalism and socialist collectivism. According to Oswald von Nell Breuning the German Jesuit responsible for drafting the document, the encyclical established no specific form of state. It merely stated the state should refrain from taking on activities not within its purview, thereby honouring the subsidiarity principle. Capitalist society based on a market economy should be established within which individuals in their occupation group should be able to contribute to the well-being of the whole. Nell-Breuning was horrified when this section of the encyclical was used to justify the Fascist corporate states of Mussolini's Italy, Hitler's Germany, Salazar's Portugal and Dollfuss's Austria. Murphy. "Oswald von Nell-Breuning: Papal Surrogate."

<sup>101</sup> "A Human Social Order: The Pope defines only efficacious basis.," *Tablet*, 13 February 1952.

<sup>102</sup> Doig. "National Catholic Rural Movement and a 'New Deal' for Australia. The Rise and Fall of an Agrarian Movement 1931-58." p180. Father V. Cleary, the first Australian priest to gain a doctorate from the Catholic University of America endorsed the creation of a corporatist state and in rejecting the argument that Germany and Italy represented genuine attempts at corporatism, considered Roosevelt's National Recovery Administration was 'an approximation of the Guild system, despite certain defects'. p234.

had a distinct set of rights. In New Zealand these rights were aimed being stewards of the soil and creating an environment in which all participants, children, the family unit, farm labourers and farmers themselves, were able to remain on the land. Given that that nearly 30% of all working males in 1945 were engaged in farming, the CRM's confidence was not misplaced. This was a much higher percentage than either Australia or Canada and suggested more New Zealanders looked to a future on the farm.<sup>103</sup>

A political agenda was implicit in the social reform message. Rural movements were urged to focus education needs on the rural community, agitate for land reform that included provisions for the security of family owned land, encourage co-operatives as means of intellectual, moral and material advancement, discourage large land holdings as undemocratic and unsocial, ensure adequate provision for farm workers, the elderly and the sick.<sup>104</sup> These were not necessarily new demands, but now the ethos of rural life was to be imbued with Catholic social teaching. The fight to instil spiritual values into the ownership and economics of land owning used the imagery of a past where guilds and other medieval forms of economy were held to be superior, that co-operation was in itself a moral virtue, both as a practical means of increasing production and limiting the involvement of the state.<sup>105</sup> Corporatism, distributism and subsidiarity, the language of Catholic social teaching, ran through the reports of CRM activity, which were underscored by a spiritual demand for 'the countryside for Christ, and Christ for the countryside'.<sup>106</sup> It was to be the work of Catholic Action in the rural community.<sup>107</sup> When Catholic Services Welfare, which had been established at the end of WWII to assist with returned service personnel, required assistance with land resettlement, it turned to the CRM.

There was a self-help side to the CRM. It sponsored events such as a 'Heifer Raising Scheme' whose proceeds were to assist returned servicemen onto the land, raised seedlings for shelter belts, and support for Agricultural Clubs.<sup>108</sup> But it was not

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<sup>103</sup> Thomson, Jane R M "The Rehabilitation of Servicemen of World War II in New Zealand 1940 to 1954." PhD, Victoria, 1983. p214.

<sup>104</sup> National Catholic Rural Life Conference. "Man's Relation to the Land: A statement of principles which shall underlie our national, state and individual actions." In *ACDA, Lis 216*. Auckland, 1946.

<sup>105</sup> "Constitution of the Catholic Rural Movement," in Catholic Rural Movement (Wellington: WAA, Miscellaneous Catholic Sodality/Societies, #114).

<sup>106</sup> "Catholic Rural Movement-Conference at Wanganui," *Tablet*, 23 May 1945.

<sup>107</sup> "Constitution of the Catholic Rural Movement."

<sup>108</sup> "Catholic Rural Movement-Conference at Wanganui." "Catholic Rural Movement; Important Combined Meeting," *Tablet*, 8 August 1945.

structured to provide practical assistance such as that available through Federated Farmers. Its declared purpose was to inspire Catholic farmers 'to lead the country back from the isolation of individualism to a community of Charity, to renew that pride in honest work and craftsmanship which was life of the Middle Ages.'<sup>109</sup> Efficient use of the land was important as that enabled farmers to be masters of their own economic destiny, but the primary measure of efficiency was the spiritual, social and material values of the community.<sup>110</sup>

As a practical measure of co-operation the Ohakune Group began the establishment of a Credit Union, but the overall relevance of the CRM was being affected by modern agricultural theories and management. In Australia, the NCRM and Santamaria had for some time been accused of trying to recreate a European peasantry. A senior figure on the Australian Rural Reconstruction Commission, Professor Sam Wadham, had strong views on rural policy being determined by the efficiency of production. These clashed with those of NCRM advocates, whose policies were considered utopian and out of touch with political realities.<sup>111</sup> At least in Australia the NCRM had sufficient status to become involved in the political debates concerning post-war reconstruction, including the settlement of large numbers of immigrants. Although the NCRM did not prevail in terms of policy as regards the revitalization of the rural sector, it was a voice and was being heard.

This was not the case for the CRM. Unlike Australia, support from the Church in New Zealand for CRM activities was minimal. Father Stan Lorigan had been given the task of organizing the CRM after 1942, and had built up the twelve branches Santamaria reported on in 1945. But by 1946 interest was beginning to fade and pleas were made to Archbishop O'Shea for a full time organising secretary to try and maintain the earlier momentum.<sup>112</sup> However Lorigan continued on in a part-time role and by 1948 an article in the *Zealandia* was at pains to point out that the CRM

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<sup>109</sup> "Catholic Rural Movement; The Cause of Our Decay," *Tablet*, 21 May 1947.

<sup>110</sup> Conference, "*Man's Relation to the Land: A statement of principles which shall underlie our national, state and individual actions.*" This was an American document distributed by the National Catholic Rural Life Conference based in Des Moines, Iowa.

<sup>111</sup> Doig. "National Catholic Rural Movement and a 'New Deal' for Australia. The Rise and Fall of an Agrarian Movement 1931-58." p30. Wadham was Professor of Agriculture at Melbourne University. Wadham frequently clashed with Colin Clark, an economist with an international reputation who had an special interest in rural economies. Clark was Santamaria's expert on rural matters. pp259-60.

<sup>112</sup> Crossdale, Joseph. "Letter to Archbishop O'Shea concerning the waning of interest in the CRM." In *WAA, Miscellaneous Catholic Sodalities/Societies, #114*. Wellington, 1946. Bird, P.J. "Letter to Archbishop O'Shea urging the appointment of a fulltime secretary." In *Catholic Rural Movement*. Wellington: WAA, Miscellaneous Catholic Sodalities/Societies, #114, 1946.



continued to function.<sup>113</sup> At the conference that year, CRM members were asked not to be disappointed by the fact that so little had been accomplished, for they needed to take a long view, 'Ours is a fifty year plan'.<sup>114</sup>

But the relevance of this type of social action had dissipated, as the policies of the state as regards land settlement were to a considerable extent in sympathy with the broader thrust of social justice teachings. Legislation had been introduced to control land aggregation. The number of small farms had increased through a policy of closer settlement the period 1921 to 1951, much of that coming through estate subdivision and settlement for returned service personnel.<sup>115</sup> The NCRM was very interested in the Land Settlement Promotion Bill of 1952, and McKeefry was obviously pleased that proposed New Zealand legislation was of such interest to 'Catholics over there' and their push for similar legislation.<sup>116</sup>

Yet policies regarding land settlement by returned servicemen were being relaxed by the National Government after 1949. In Opposition it had pressured the Labour Government to settle more returned servicemen on farms and to do it more quickly. Legislation such as the Servicemen's Settlement and Land Sales Act of 1950 tended to distort the market price of land which antagonized the farming community. By 1952 the land settlement programme slowed down as public support for rehabilitation land settlement also declined. The rehabilitation preference continued until the 1960s, but as the Rehabilitation Board itself recognized, the appeal of rehabilitation was now being discounted.<sup>117</sup>

The CRM was to become an anomaly in New Zealand reasonably quickly. By 1952 it had largely become irrelevant and disappeared from the pages of the Catholic newspapers. A regular column began in the *Tablet* mid-way through 1947 but by February 1949 it had ceased. Education and its post-war ramifications absorbed

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<sup>113</sup> "The Catholic Rural Movement - What has it done?" *Zealandia*, 11 March 1948.

<sup>114</sup> "The Land in a Stable Society; Aims and Objects of the Catholic Rural Movement.," *Tablet*, 7 July 1948.

<sup>115</sup> Fairweather, John. "Land Policy And Land Settlement In New Zealand. An analysis of Land policy Goals and an evaluation of their Effect." Christchurch: Lincoln College 1985. p 27. The Land Act (1948) and the Land Settlement Promotion and Land Acquisition Act (1952) did 'purport to control land aggregation'.

<sup>116</sup> Santamaria, B A. "Letter to McKeefry about 'The Land Settlement Promotion Bill' introduced into NZ Parliament." In *WAA, Miscellaneous Catholic Sodalities/Societies, #114*. Wellington, 1952.

<sup>117</sup> Thomson, "The Rehabilitation of Servicemen of World War II in New Zealand 1940 to 1954". pp218,227-28.

much of the Church's energy.<sup>118</sup> It was not as though the CRM wanted to challenge the government over its land tenure policies or that the state could be held to account on social justice principles as regards the rural sector. It is quite likely that some Catholics thought the CRM visions were utopian and out of touch with the concerns of a modern state and its economy. Even though Monsignor L. Lugutti, the Executive Secretary of the Catholic Rural Life Conference in Des Moines, Iowa visited New Zealand in 1947 and urged greater efforts, McKeefry wasn't to be pushed into any hasty action. As he told Lugutti 'All here goes along very well and someday I hope to be able to release Father Lorigan to go over and get a closer acquaintance with the Rural Life Movement.'<sup>119</sup> It never happened. Although the hierarchy supported the CRM in principle, the pressures of post-war recovery and Catholic education meant the lack of tangible support allowed the CRM to slip into oblivion.

New Zealand's Catholic Action never achieved the notoriety earned by its Australian counterpart. The diverse groups that made up Catholic Action had no ANSCA to potentially create a powerful secretariat. There was to be no Bob Santamaria and the polarization of opinion amongst Catholics. But social justice issues were being discussed and argued about. A 1956 report to McKeefry about a social studies group showed considerable numbers of men attending lectures and discussions on topics such as 'Man and his world', 'Man in the face of communism' and asking for more.<sup>120</sup> CYM meetings discussed social justice issues. The CYM had the call to the gospel at the heart of its activities and used the Jocist 'See, Judge and Act' approach when considering social issues.<sup>121</sup> McKeefry was less enthusiastic about the CYM. His criticism revealed a lack of sympathy with the movement and the notion of the 'lay apostolate', and, in his view, what the CYM undertook could have been accomplished through older or existing sodalities.<sup>122</sup> McKeefry's criticisms

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<sup>118</sup> Henschke. "Letter to Liston re the Catholic Rural Movement." In his letter Henschke made it quite clear that a major part of the problem lay in the attitude of the Catholic teaching orders who persisted in an anti-rural bias. '...until our various teaching orders adopt a different attitude towards the land, the cream of our Catholic country children is going to be drawn to the city.'

<sup>119</sup> McKeefry, Archbishop Peter. "Letter to Mgr Ligutti about the Rural Life Movement." In *WAA, Miscellaneous Catholic Sodalities/Societies, #114*. Wellington, 1952.

<sup>120</sup> Wright, Rev Father F. "Report of Social Study Group." In *WAA, Education: State Aid, #298*. Wellington, 1956. Wright commented that the men fell into two categories-' those who want to force all to go to daily mass and to offer that effort to Our Lord or Our Lady for the changing of the world, leaving everything else to God; and those who want to go out and force physical changes on their unwilling neighbours, for preference to seek out Communists and belabor them.'

<sup>121</sup> Reid. "A New World Through a New Youth: The Life and Death of the Catholic Youth Movement in New Zealand." pp156-7.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.* pp 163-4.

aside, the CYM, although never widely popular among Catholic youth, did produce leaders who would feature in community work and public life.

Catholic Action tended to be taking place in the broader sense of inclusiveness, much in the way the Pope defined it. All groups of the lay apostolate would belong to Catholic Action, preserving their individual name and autonomy in a federation called Catholic Action.<sup>123</sup> In New Zealand those groups included CYM, the Holy Name Society, the Catholic Women's League and the Children of Mary. The emphasis was upon the federated group being known as Catholic Action and no one organisation had the mandate to use the title. Catholic Action remained firmly under the control of the hierarchy.

### **Moral panic!**

In the 1960s Catholic institutions and other welfare services were forced to look closely at their claims of distinctiveness and moral probity. In the immediate post-war era, Christian churches had seen themselves as the 'moral police' working closely with the state. There were many in government and the public service who were active Christians, and willing to promote New Zealand as a Christian nation. There was 'a general policy of law to favour and safeguard the Christian religion.'<sup>124</sup>

While Catholic attitudes to alcohol and gambling were much more tolerant than many Protestants would care for, they spoke out strongly on other moral matters, especially sexual and personal behaviour. At a prize-giving ceremony in Wellington in 1949, the Rector of St Pat's Silverstream, with the obvious agreement of the Prime Minister seated alongside him, bemoaned an education system 'that produces men and women who read the news by headlines, who frequent films full of shoddy sentiment, sensation or violence; who lack a sense of responsibility to work; who are selfish and pleasure loving, lacking true sense of community spirit; who find leisure boring unless they can lose themselves in sport or aimless travel.....'.<sup>125</sup> Concern over the decline of moral standards in the welfare state remained a popular topic, well evidenced by the outcry when the Mazengarb *Report into Moral Delinquency in Children and*

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<sup>123</sup> "The Pope defines Catholic Action." *Zealandia*, 17 October 1957.

<sup>124</sup> Evans, "Church State Relations in New Zealand 1940-1990, with particular reference to the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches." p88.

<sup>125</sup> "Education, the Church and the State - end of year ceremonies at St. Pats Silverstream and St. Pats Wellington," *Tablet*, 14 December 1949.

*Adolescents* was released in 1954. Although it revealed significant problems as regards overcrowded housing and the lack of amenities and social supports in the growth of new suburbs, its denunciation of sexual activity in the young attracted most attention and criticism.<sup>126</sup>

Catholicism had long taken a strong conservative position on abortion, euthanasia, birth control and the treatment of the sick, which became a point of difference between the Catholic and non-Catholic community, officially at least.<sup>127</sup> From the 1960s onwards Catholics themselves were plainly divided over the moral stance taken by the Church on these matters, and this was highlighted by the strong reaction to Pope Paul VI's *Humanae Vitae* encyclical of 1968, restating the Church's prohibition on abortion and artificial forms of birth control. Moral positions were becoming allied across social and religious lines rather than necessarily reflecting a more homogenous religious community. Social policy issues brought together Catholics and Protestants who shared either a conservative or a liberal perspective regardless of denomination.

The state was beginning to recognize that the church was not the only voice in the community to be considered as regards moral standards. New and different community attitudes were emerging and the church was merely 'a responsible body of public opinion.'<sup>128</sup> While church-based welfare still provided a spiritual component to their services, the 'tight society' ensured a degree of vigilance was kept over moral values. As society began to change in the 1960s, this vigilance lessened and moral values were becoming less of an expectation, or a precondition for receiving state aid.<sup>129</sup>

### Catholic Social Services

Church based social services grew out of the need to have an organisation that reached beyond the parish boundaries and one of the first examples was the

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<sup>126</sup> Tennant. *The Fabric of Welfare. Voluntary Organisations, Government and Welfare in New Zealand, 1840-2005.* p135.

<sup>127</sup> Belgrave. *The Mater. A History of Auckland's Mercy Hospital 1900-2000.* p93.

<sup>128</sup> Evans, "Church State Relations in New Zealand 1940-1990, with particular reference to the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches." p127.

<sup>129</sup> Tennant. *The Fabric of Welfare. Voluntary Organisations, Government and Welfare in New Zealand, 1840-2005.* p191.

Presbyterian Social Service Association formed in Dunedin in 1906.<sup>130</sup> In Auckland the beginnings of Catholic Social Services (CSS) came about through the Catholic Big Brother Movement which began in Auckland in 1923. This was the Catholic version of the YMCA's Big Brother Movement and worked with the Probation Service and Child Welfare to provide an alternative supervising option for young people appearing before in the Children's Court. Catholic Big Brother worked with the YMCA but its emphasis was on a Catholic way of life.<sup>131</sup> This early move into social service illustrated how 'Catholicism existed over against the larger protestant majority and acted as a chaplain almost exclusively to its own constituency.'<sup>132</sup> Emphasis on ministering to Catholics did not exclude non-Catholics, as evidenced by the non-denominational attitude of hospitals and other institutions run by Catholic religious, but the resources allocated by the bishops were primarily aimed at ensuring that Catholics were catered for.

By the mid-1940s Father Leo Downey was in charge of a growing workload which included 'the selection of cases to orphanages, care of unmarried mothers, Children's Court, deserted wives and children, marital discord, cases arising from juvenile delinquents, rehabilitation of inebriates.' The work was being done by both paid staff and volunteers, but was handicapped by a lack of finance.<sup>133</sup> In 1954 Archbishop Liston appealed for funds for two homes, one for youths with special needs, the other for children under five, both to be run by Catholic Social Services. Partial funding was to be sought from government, but the cost of purchasing the property and annual running costs were to be met by Catholic Social Services.<sup>134</sup>

Marriage Guidance was proposed for the CSS in 1956. The first Marriage Guidance Council had been formed in Christchurch in 1948 and by the mid-fifties a national Marriage Guidance movement was under the sponsorship of the Department of Justice. As with the Prison Chaplaincy initiative, public servants and politicians combined to deal with the problem of broken homes and the impact it had on criminal

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<sup>130</sup> Ibid. p115.

<sup>131</sup> Buckley. "The Holy Name Society. A Short History of the Society in Auckland." p13. Big Brother was an organisation run through the YMCA. It worked with the Probation Service and Child Welfare to provide an alternative supervising option for young people appearing before in the Children's Court. The Catholic Big Brothers worked with the YMCA

<sup>132</sup> Davidson, Allan K. "Chaplain to the Nation or Prophet at the Gate." In *Christianity, Modernity and Culture*, edited by John Stenhouse assisted by G A Wood. Adelaide: ATF Press, 2005. p318.

<sup>133</sup> Crimmins. "History of Catholic Social Services in the Auckland Diocese."

<sup>134</sup> "Catholic Social Services (Pastoral Letter)." *Zealandia*, 4 November 1954.

behaviour.<sup>135</sup> The state became involved in funding this national movement at an early stage in its development as both parties held a similar view about the state of marriage and the family. Marriage Guidance had the national network and the workers, the state had the money. It developed into a productive working relationship.<sup>136</sup>

Many of the churches had anticipated family relationship problems in the post war era and individual clergy had tried to provide assistance to troubled couples. For the Catholic Church, whose teachings on marriage, procreation and the centrality of the family were deeply conservative, the new advocacy from overseas was threatening. Sex education and understanding sexual fulfilment in marriage seemed to promote attitudes that went against traditional morality.

But faced with the evidence of an increase in failing marriages, the Catholic Church did set up Marriage Guidance as part of its social services. As with the Big Brother, the intention was to provide a Catholic way of addressing the problems. A Catholic Marriage Guidance Council was in place by 1959 and over the next few years the work expanded with request from parish priests, doctors, solicitors, other Churches and groups in the community. Councillors were trained through a government scheme, Leo Downey and another senior priest were accepted as official supervisors, engaged couples courses were run. By 1965 the emphasis began to shift for CSS. Vatican II's teaching on pastoral responsibility, especially in the document *Gaudium et Spes*, was the spur to make these social services more widely available and by the 1970s, there were sixteen agencies throughout the Auckland diocese delivering a variety of services, including marriage guidance.<sup>137</sup> These local social services were a practical expression of the Church's social justice teachings.

Marriage Guidance was an aspect of state assisted welfare work that the Church was able to embrace because it could retain its traditional authority, especially in terms of its teachings on marriage and sex. But it was part of a national secular voluntary movement which had a distinct religious presence amongst its early leadership. Sam Barnett and John Robson, both committed Christians, promoted the movement to the Minister and successfully agitated for funding. Funding was received through 'Vote

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<sup>135</sup> Marshall. *Memoirs Volume One: 1912 to 1960*. p230.

<sup>136</sup> Tennant. *The Fabric of Welfare. Voluntary Organisations, Government and Welfare in New Zealand, 1840-2005*. pp137-39.

<sup>137</sup> Crimmins, "History of Catholic Social Services in the Auckland Diocese."

Justice' as well as a share of Golden Kiwi monies. It was a good example of the increases in funding from the government to the voluntary sector during this time.<sup>138</sup>

## Conclusion

The principles of Catholic social justice and the aims of the welfare state were broadly consistent with one another. Points of difference arose over how far the state should intrude into the lives of citizens. Papal social justice teachings urged vigilance, even in a seemingly benign liberal democracy, as regards the extent individuals, families and community had the power to control their lives and not be in thrall to the state. These teachings reflected the ravages of totalitarianism in Europe and the on-going menace of communism. Pope Pius XII, in moving away from Leo XIII's understanding of a paternalistic state with its acceptance of the many inequalities of human existence, recognized the modern democratic state as the preferable form of government. He accepted the state, whose leaders were elected representatives of the people, has the limited juridical role of defending human rights and promoting peoples' freedom.

In the post-war era and well into the 1960s the growth of the welfare state seemed inevitable to most New Zealanders. Catholic social teaching was warning that even something as beneficial as a welfare state was capable of slipping into forms of totalitarianism. James Belich is of the view that 'Kiwi totalitarianism' helped explain why there were quite powerful state controls imposed during wartime.<sup>139</sup> Catholic newspapers applauded the unease some National politicians felt about the encroaching state. Catholic newspapers, as with the secular press, would comment upon major pieces of social legislation or occasions such as a decision by the Arbitration Court on wages, but there was little by way of outright criticism. Criticism of the state was, by and large, restricted to the issue of education.

Catholic Action in New Zealand had a low-key profile, when compared to its Australian counterpart. Although the meaning of what constituted Catholic Action was open to interpretation, the hierarchy ensured that they retained control. The CYM became one of the main sources of Catholic Action in New Zealand and they

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<sup>138</sup> Tennant. *The Fabric of Welfare. Voluntary Organisations, Government and Welfare in New Zealand, 1840-2005.* pp137-39.

<sup>139</sup> Belich. *Paradise Reforged. A History of the New Zealanders from the 1880s to the year 2000.* p295.

helped instil a sense of vigour to the Church during this time. The emphasis was on fighting apathy and trying to make the country a more Christian society. There were debates about some of the main aspects of the social justice teachings. For an organisation such as the Catholic Rural Movement, social justice was the cornerstone of its agrarian vision of Catholic Action. Here the welfare state had identified some agrarian and land tenure issues that were consistent with the Movement's ideals. Ironically the government's action on these helped contribute to the CRM's demise. Although the government later adjusted some of its legislation as regards land tenure, it did illustrate that papal teaching was reflecting values that the welfare state was prepared to endorse.

The Church willingly co-operated with the welfare state. Aside from the generalized concerns about the welfare state that were also voiced by conservative politicians such as Jack Marshall, the benefits went a considerable way to meet the demands of Catholic social teaching. The rise of New Zealand's welfare state has been portrayed as 'world beating humanitarianism' and it replaced a morality-based welfare with a system designed to change the social environment for ordinary people.<sup>140</sup> Improved wages and housing as well as a strong emphasis on the centrality of the family were all features that the papal social encyclicals had identified as essential for a Christian society to reject godless totalitarianism.

The post war state actively encouraged the churches' involvement in aspects of welfare. This was often done with much lower costs because of the voluntary nature of many of the religious organisations who undertook the work. In the case of the Catholic religious orders and their institutions, the Church not only had low wage overheads, but also a disciplined workforce whose ethos was bound up in charity. These institutions also appealed to a wider public because of their non-discriminatory policy towards non-Catholics. It was this policy that made funding such institutions politically easier.

It was also seen as a cheaper option. The National government recognized that encouraging the voluntary sector to care for the elderly and infirm freed up public hospitals from having to provide that care. And this was a time when the public had trust in religious organisations being able to deliver these services. The propriety of

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<sup>140</sup> Tennant. *The Fabric of Welfare. Voluntary Organisations, Government and Welfare in New Zealand, 1840-2005*. p14.



the state funding religious organisations providing certain welfare work had been recognized, although the government initially saw it as a bargain. But for the Catholic Church the retention of a low paid religious workforce was important to sustain the status quo.

Co-operation was also evident in the development of chaplaincy, although limited by the unwillingness to cede to the state authority that the Church claimed rightly belonged to the bishops. This was a key sticking point between the state and the Church. Traditional authority was a crucial aspect of pre-Vatican II ecclesiology, as the hierarchical structure was the visible link between the local bishop and the pope. The same principle that underscored the education issue meant some aspects of the government's willingness to develop chaplaincy were unacceptable, namely that only a bishop had the right to determine how Catholic resources could be utilised. Having a Protestant cleric exercise administrative authority over a Catholic priest was a step too far. Vatican II caused the whole question of this authority to be re-examined.

However where traditional authority was not put to the test, Catholic social services worked closely with the state. State assistance for marriage guidance, for example, still allowed the Church to express Catholic teachings in the delivery of the programme. In the late 1960s the New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services provided an umbrella organisation to communicate with government on broader sector issues, as well as representing the interests of members. But the two decades after World War II showed Catholic social services reacting to societal changes and in a sense 'playing catch-up' as it sought to assist Catholics in coping with modern living while maintaining their faith.

Catholic social justice was a developing body of teaching that emphasised the validity and rectitude of the modern welfare state. However it was also concerned that the welfare state could tip into totalitarianism if checks and balances were not in place and put the freedom of individuals at risk. Social services were a practical expression of social justice ideals. By their very nature they were primarily aimed at assisting Catholics, and as such expressed Catholic values. Where the state sought to intervene, and in doing so tampered with those values, the Church chose to partially disengage until a compromise could be reached. During the two decades after World War II both the state and the Catholic were learning how to co-exist, while each retaining their own sense of purpose. Vatican II was to change the dynamics for the Church and how it related to the state.

## Section Three- Anti-communism

### Introduction

In 1966 Bill Oliver wondered if 'a Santamaria or two would diversify a colourless political scene'.<sup>1</sup> Oliver's essay was considering, inter alia, why New Zealand Catholics tended to merge into New Zealand society rather than undertaking separate political action. It was not that New Zealand Catholics were not involved in politics, but rather they had never taken separate political action. If there was one group which 'one might expect to hold a pistol to the country's head, which has been tempted to do so, and which is closely enough knit to carry through such an effort', it was, he said, the Catholic Church.<sup>2</sup> New Zealand had never had a confessional political party, and although a supposed threat from Catholic activism provided the *raison d'être* for the formation of the Protestant Political Association in the early years of the twentieth century, Catholics did not react with their own political movement. Oliver thought this a pity, since, in his view, the local political scene might have been enlivened through the influence of an effective third party, such as was the case with the Democratic Labor Party (DLP) in Australia. The following is an extended introduction and overview of the events which embroiled the Australian Catholic Church in national politics and caused a major rift within the Church itself.

A group of expelled and disaffected Australian Labor Party (ALP) members, supporters of B.A. Santamaria, formed the Australian Labor Party (Anti-Communist) in 1954, which in turn became DLP in 1957. The DLP was instrumental in denying the ALP a federal election victory for just on twenty years. Membership of the DLP was substantially, but not exclusively, Catholic, although attracted broader appeal through its conservative and anti-communist policies.

The Santamarian Movement in Australia had no counterpart in New Zealand. Santamaria, by virtue of his Catholic Social Studies Movement, became the most powerful layman in the Australian Catholic Church. The Movement, which grew apace as the Cold War increased in intensity, was 'an official instrument of the Church to implement a far-reaching programme of Catholic Social Action'.<sup>3</sup> Christian

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<sup>1</sup> Oliver, W.H. "Christianity among the New Zealanders." *Landfall* 20, no. 1 (1966): 4-20.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p8.

<sup>3</sup> Duncan. *Crusade or Conspiracy? Catholics and the Anti-Communist Struggle in Australia.* p126.

policies were needed to counter communism and such work couldn't simply be left to politicians. Catholics needed to exert control of civil and political organisations to effect these policy changes. The Movement was neither Catholic Action nor an independent organisation of Catholics and control of this hybrid remained ambiguous, being formally under hierarchical control but also being an independent lay movement. Santamaria was able to exploit this ambiguity as the increasingly political nature of the Movement ran counter to the papal teachings on the distinctions between official support for Catholic Action and the actions of Catholics engaging in political activity.

Although the furore ignited by the anti-communist activities of the Australian Catholic Church led to a serious split in the ALP and visited scandal upon the Australian Church, it barely touched the New Zealand Church. New Zealand Catholicism was, in the immediate post war years, facing a major change to how education was to be delivered and was required to deal with the impact these reforms would have upon the religious who staffed the schools and the existing school infrastructure. Education was to demand a great deal of Catholic resource in New Zealand. While anti-communism was a focus of the New Zealand Church, it never loomed as being anywhere near as significant as the need to have the state provide aid to the Catholic school system.

At heart, this Australian Catholic activism sought to bring a Catholic version of social justice into the policies of major political parties by having Catholics trained for political action moved into positions of influence. It sought to make Catholic social justice the bulwark against communism, overriding the policy making process within the ALP. For these activists, and many Catholic clergy, communism, totalitarianism and the threat to a free society justified their actions. If, in defeating communism, democracy received a bruising then so be it.

The Australian Catholic anti-communist campaign did not have any material impact upon the New Zealand Church nor upon New Zealand's political system. But that is not to say that New Zealand was not in the sights of Santamaria and the Movement as they planned to expand their particular brand of activism to the wider Pacific and Asia. Santamaria's relationship with the hierarchy in New Zealand was cordial. He had corresponded with Bishop McKeefry since 1948, had been invited to the 1950 Canterbury Centenary celebrations by Bishop Joyce, and the New Zealand Catholic Rural Movement, an offshoot of Santamaria's National Catholic Rural Movement in

Australia, had enjoyed some hierarchical support. McKeefry attended a 1955 conference in Australia where strategies for expansion of the Movement outside of Australia were agreed upon.

Planned expansion outside Australia never eventuated because the political forces both within the ALP and the Australian Church forced the hand of the activists. The Church then removed its sponsorship, denying the campaign the authority it had used in furthering its cause. However the fact that the activities of the Movement reached to the very top of Australian politics argues that were the campaign to expand into New Zealand, there was a risk of provoking a serious political and religious backlash.

From a New Zealand perspective the political and religious mix that was at the heart of the Australian anti-communist campaign was best viewed from the sideline. It was also an object lesson in how the conventions of the church-state relationship could be treated with disdain. In both countries the Catholic Church faced a major issue that involved its relationship with the state. Pre-war Europe had provided examples of Catholic political parties whose direction and alliances were often decidedly undemocratic. Aside from the complete failure in 1920 of a Democratic Party, which had been set up by the Catholic Federation of New South Wales, there was little appetite amongst Australian Catholics for a Catholic political party. In both countries the labour parties tended to represent the socio-political interest of the majority of Catholics. The attraction of a Catholic political party was minimal. However both Santamaria and his powerful sponsor and protector, Archbishop Daniel Mannix, wanted a strong Catholic political voice. But any prospect of Catholics being mobilized as a discrete political force was finished, somewhat ironically, when the old alignment between the Labor Party and Catholics was sundered in the mid-1950s by the activities of the Movement.

Yet it was the scale of the damage done that is remarkable. Attempting to turn the ALP into a vehicle for a particular version of Catholic social justice was not only highly ambitious but threatened the viability of the Australian political process. The manner in which Santamaria and his allies went about positioning the Movement within the ALP illustrated how, in a democracy, a determined group could, through the use of subterfuge and discipline, gain some measure of political control bypassing the electoral process. Similarities with communist tactics did not go unnoticed.

Although Catholic leaders in New Zealand did not criticize events in Australia publically, they would have been aware of the tension growing within that Church. New Zealand union leaders and politicians began to use the language of the affair to warn against something similar happening. Combating communism was one thing but attempting to control politics was quite another and the New Zealand hierarchy seemed to have little appetite for it.

Would Santamaria's campaign to expand the Movement have succeeded in New Zealand and elsewhere if political forces in Australia had not erupted in 1956? As an anti-communist organisation, Santamaria's methodology of challenging communists within the union movement was in fact being undertaken in Auckland under the auspices of Archbishop Liston. However the more dubious tactic of infiltrating the Labour Party with Movement-like activism would have been much more difficult to achieve. The New Zealand Labour Party was, in comparison with its Australian counterpart, a much smaller entity and did not have to deal with State branches who wielded considerable power in their bailiwicks. But, simply put, the smallness and disposition of New Zealand's Catholic population precluded any realistic campaign within Labour, either nationally or as a regional bloc. Australia's Catholics made up approximately 30% of the population while the New Zealand figure remained around 13%.

Yet a Santamarian Movement in New Zealand might have attracted sufficient support from the right of the political spectrum to extract concessions from the main political parties. Still the anti-communist field was reasonably well covered. The National Government's handling of the 1951 Waterfront Strike helped engender popular support against communist activities in the trade union movement, while the FOL had its own strong anti-communist policy. At the same time the Catholic Church repeatedly spoke out against communism, backed up by often sensational coverage of the persecutions in Europe and Asia.

If an effective political alliance had been formed, problems would have most likely occurred when issues beyond anti-communism arose. Santamaria had always heavily stressed the primary importance of Christian social justice as an antidote to communism and this social justice had a distinctive Catholic pedigree. It would be highly unlikely that non-Catholics in such an alliance would have been comfortable with such a direction, let alone promoting it at party political level. In any event support from within the two main parties would have been limited. Catholics were

reasonably well represented in the Labour Party, to the extent that the Protestant journal *The Nation* warned of Romanist intrigues within Labour, and although Catholics were less evident in National ranks, the incentive for involvement with a quasi-confessional political grouping was minimal.<sup>4</sup>

Possibly the greatest obstacle might have been the opposition of the New Zealand Catholic hierarchy. They would have been wary of an organisation whose status within the Church was ambiguous and the prospect of a potentially powerful and influential layman would not, in all probability, have been well received. Although frequently frustrated with the attitude of the National Governments during the 1950s, there was never any suggestion of supporting a new political movement. Anti-communism was not the major issue facing the Church in New Zealand. Catholic authorities did not need the distraction of a campaign that would have drawn away resources urgently needed for the education fight.

Although the Santamarian Movement never came to New Zealand, the events across the Tasman provide an important background to the issues facing the New Zealand church. Amongst the major denominations in New Zealand, the Catholic Church's grievance over education might have been seen as a reason to hold the country to ransom. But instead, it chose a much more transparent path, one that embraced working within the existing political process. The following is an extended background and overview of the events in Australia which show how the same Church with a similar Irish and Anglo-Saxon heritage could get it so wrong.

There is a considerable volume of work relating to 'The Split.' This is not an attempt to argue about the events surrounding the twenty plus years that the Australian Catholic Church and B A Santamaria actively challenged communism, nor dispute the outcomes. Rather this overview aims to present the period in a context against which the stand taken by the New Zealand bishops can be set. (see Appendix Five for a brief historiography relating to 'the Split'.)

### *The spread of communism in Australia and the reaction of the Catholic Church.*

State aid was not the dominant concern of the Australian Catholic Church in its dealings with the secular world during the 1940s and 50s. Communism was. State

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<sup>4</sup> "The Labour Party and State Aid/ Infiltrating the Labour Party." *The Nation: A Journal devoted to Protestantism and Loyalty* XLVII, no. 9 (1956): pp1,3,4.

aid was a relatively minor issue when compared with the overwhelming concern about the communist spread into Eastern Europe and China, the Cold War, communist domination of the trade union movement and the infiltration of political institutions in Australia. The Church had energy for only one wholehearted crusade and it was not state aid.<sup>5</sup>

The infiltration of Australian political and trade unions by communists began during the 1930s, resulting from a change of policy by Soviet Russia as regards the response to fascism and how Communist Parties in other countries could help provide Soviet Russia with a defensive relationship with Britain. But to achieve this, the communist infiltration needed to work within the democratic process, to bring about a change in foreign policy and at the same time further wider communist aspirations. The Catholic Church in Australia began the struggle with the communists in the late 1930s, inspired by the papal encyclicals on social justice and a very real fear of communism usurping Australia's democracy. A strong, intellectually vigorous campaign against communism, based upon Catholic Action, began prior to WWII and picked up significant momentum after the war as the reality of Soviet and Chinese expansionism began to be realized. This momentum saw the Catholic campaign take the fight against communism not only in the Unions, but into the heart of the Labor Party. The Church, in spite of itself, became deeply involved in party politics. Papal pronouncements warned against such activity, but factions within both the Labor Party and the Church saw the issues as too significant to resile from. The result was a major split in the ALP, the formation of a rival political party and papal intervention to bring about a degree of harmony in a divided Church.

During 1934-5 the Comintern, the international Communist organisation based in Soviet Russia, declared that to defeat fascism, it was necessary to form a popular front of all workers, regardless of their political stance. This Popular Front broadened the base from which support would be drawn, not simply limited to parties of the working class. Earlier Comintern directives had sought the destruction of the moderate left. Moderate left wing parties had been described as 'social fascists', but the advent of the 'Popular Front' saw alliances with social democratic and anti-fascist parties. In Australia this change of direction gave the Communist Party the mandate to begin a programme of infiltrating the ALP, by building a Communist presence. The

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<sup>5</sup> Hogan. *The Catholic Campaign for State Aid. A study of a Pressure Group Campaign in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory 1950-1972.* p28-29.

Communist Party Australia (CPA) wanted not only joint trade union activity, but also sought to penetrate ALP leadership. Communist party members were to join the Labor Party 'to work in such a way that all leftward elements in the Labor Party are brought to the leadership in order to ensure the acceptance of the proposals of the united front.'<sup>6</sup> During 1935-36, results were encouraging as communists won leadership of unions in the railways, mining, maritime and metal industries, and CPA membership was growing. Of particular satisfaction was the number of ALP activists who were joining the CPA.

Internationally the Comintern advocated collective security and wanted Britain linked to the Soviet Union through such a pact. Having Labour administrations in the British Empire was crucial as they had the potential to affect British foreign policy, or so it was believed. Senior Comintern officials argued Australia needed to work for a change in British policy and they considered 'the British Government is sensitive to Dominion pressure'.<sup>7</sup> This pressure could help bring about change and advance the cause of collective security. The CPA used its secret members in the ALP to move to change the isolationist policy and the chances were increasing as they sought control of the trade union movement and potential control of ALP conferences. A major barrier was the right wing of the ALP which was 'dominated by the Catholic element.'<sup>8</sup>

In August 1939 control of the ALP shifted to the left wing, where undercover CPA members served in key roles on the executive. But the influence of the CPA was to be undone by the shifting lines they took as regards to WWII. Moscow had determined that the war was between various imperialistic powers and any distinction between democracy and fascism in capitalist countries had no meaning. This change effectively dissolved the Comintern. Consequences for the CPA were significant. The struggle against fascism had been a major reason for the growth in support, but as it changed its line to attacking British imperialism instead, supporters were bewildered. This very public change in policy also meant those supporters of the CPA in the Labor Party were reckoned to be dogmatic adherents of the CPA.

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<sup>6</sup> McKnight, David. "The Comintern's Seventh Congress and the Australian Labor Party." *Journal of Contemporary History* 32, no. 3 (1997): 395-407 p397.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* p399.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* p400.



The struggle between the CPA and the Catholic Church was inherent in the struggle for control of the Labor party. Catholics in Australia had become increasingly involved in the Labor Party from the early years of the twentieth century. Cardinal Moran had identified a common aim in seeking to improve the lot of the masses of the people, and declared it unfair and unjust to claim that the maxims of the Labor Party were consistent with Communism.<sup>9</sup> Notwithstanding Moran's approval, some clerics were convinced that Labor was socialist in the sense condemned by the papacy or that the party was in danger of becoming socialist. There was a high level of ambivalence about what Labor offered the Catholic community, especially in terms of education and regardless of the real prominence of Catholics in Labor's ranks, the Party remained impervious to Catholic policies. In 1920 this led to the Catholic Federation of New South Wales founding the Democratic Party which they hoped could secure a balance of power. Its policies were a balance of Catholic social principles and in particular education. But despite strong endorsements from Catholic newspapers and the Federation, the Party polled very poorly in the New South Wales State election, which it had targeted, with only 1 in every 6 Catholics voting for it. Labor gained the majority of Catholic votes and was returned. No changes were forthcoming.

The adventure into party politics, although a complete failure, did, however, lead to a 'spectacular eruption of Protestant bigotry'. Protestant political activity became organized on an unparalleled scale, with the aim of not only preventing the election of Catholic governments but ensuring the election of Protestant governments. The New South Wales Protestant Federation and similar bodies in other states sought influence by backing Protestant candidates in existing parties and running anti-Catholic slogans.<sup>10</sup>

The alliance between Catholics and Labor had a pragmatic context. Aside from a number of shared values, Catholics realized that the political situation left them with little choice. Non-Labor parties were generally more hostile to Catholics than Labor. There were very few Catholic politicians in non-Labor parties until the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>11</sup> As O'Farrell argues, what mattered were not the theoretical niceties or the possible reflection as regards Catholic principles, but the Party's immediate

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<sup>9</sup> O'Farrell. *The Catholic Church and Community. An Australian History.* p290.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* pp346-47.

<sup>11</sup> Melleuish. "Religion And Politics In Australia." p911.

programme of practical policies and its basic Australian common sense. 'Catholics tended to channel their socio-political aspirations through the Labor Movement and the Australian Labor party'.<sup>12</sup> Thus by the 1920s the Catholic tradition in the Labor Party had become firmly unreflective and non-theoretical. Most of the established Catholic politicians had the view that religion, and that included their own, should play no part in politics.<sup>13</sup>

### *Catholic Action*

The Church was aware of the encroaching communist influence in the trade unions and in 1937 the Australian National Secretariat of Catholic Action (ANSCA) was formed in Melbourne. It was a lay secretariat that together with bishops formed the Episcopal Committee on Catholic Action. Its objective was to encourage workers at a parish level to take an active part in their union, although it was not intending to undertake direct action amongst workers, but rather to provide support. ANSCA came out of the Young Christian Workers' Movements (YCW) formed by Joseph Cardijn in 1924 and its role reflected Jacques Maritain's thinking about the limits of formal Church action in the civic sphere.<sup>14</sup> However ANSCA did not take hold in Sydney as Church authorities there were concerned about Archbishop Mannix's influence and set up their own anti-communist group of unionists known as the Kettler Guild.

Catholic Action, initiated by Pope Pius XI in 1927, was envisaged as the involvement by the laity in the work of the Church, particularly in lay evangelism. The Pope's definition was 'the participation of the laity in the apostolate of the church's hierarchy.'<sup>15</sup> Although the majority of the Australian hierarchy had little understanding of the special social emphasis given by the Pope, the new Catholic lay movement was dynamic, intellectual and had a 'deep, indeed, passionate social commitment'.<sup>16</sup> It was part of a wider social movement which, for young idealists outside of the Church, made communism attractive. The centre of Catholic Action

<sup>12</sup> Duncan, Bruce. "Santamaria and the Legacy of the Split." *The Australasian Catholic Record* 83, no. 2 (2006). pp142-3.

<sup>13</sup> O'Farrell. *The Catholic Church and Community. An Australian History*. pp394-6.

<sup>14</sup> Mathews. "Collateral Damage: B.A. Santamaria and the Marginalising of Social Catholicism." p96.

<sup>15</sup> Chadwick, Owen. "Great Britain and Europe." In *The Oxford Illustrated History of Christianity*, edited by John McManners. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990. p365.

<sup>16</sup> O'Farrell. *The Catholic Church and Community. An Australian History*. p385.

was in Melbourne, as by 1937 a conflict had developed between Sydney and Melbourne on the structure of the organisation. Sydney insisted on a parish based organisation closely controlled by the clergy, while Melbourne, as did Perth and Adelaide favoured the Belgian model which opted for more lay initiative and autonomy.<sup>17</sup> Sydney also retained close links to local Labor and, at the same time, mistrusted Mannix's political judgment. They chose not to join the Melbourne-based ANSCA because of Mannix's purported influence, and wanted to maintain complete control of their own organisations.<sup>18</sup> Catholic Action in NSW chose instead to set up the Sydney Secretariat for Catholic Action which had the support of Archbishop (later Cardinal) Gilroy. It was quite a different organisation from the Melbourne based ANSCA, whose deputy director was B.A. Santamaria.

In Melbourne, during the early 1930s, the Champion Society, a grouping of Catholic students aiming to provide a forum in which laymen could debate and learn more about their religion, championed the arrival of Catholic Action in Australia. The Champions were concerned about the relevance of Catholicism and revelled in the intellectual approach to the issues.<sup>19</sup> Sanctioned by Mannix, they met and planned methods for developing an informed Catholic lay voice on socio-political matters. Champions argued the twin evils of communism and capitalism, advocating distributism,<sup>20</sup> and the principle of subsidiarity (the principle that higher levels of an organisation should not undertake on behalf of lower levels functions that the lower levels could perform themselves). Santamaria had joined them in 1931 and was appointed editor of the Society's newsheet. In 1936 he launched the newspaper *Catholic Worker*, based on Dorothy Day's paper of the same name in the United States, and it was immediately successful. The early editions reflected the

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<sup>17</sup> In NSW organisations such as the Knights of the Southern Cross, the Holy Name Society and the Legion of Mary, which allowed for piety under strict clerical control, were much stronger than in Victoria.

<sup>18</sup> Duncan. *Crusade or Conspiracy? Catholics and the Anti-Communist Struggle in Australia*. pp25-29. O'Farrell. *The Catholic Church and Community. An Australian History*. p386.

<sup>19</sup> The encyclicals '*Rerum Novarum*' and '*Quadragesimo Anno*' as well as works by Hilaire Belloc (*The Servile State*) and G.K. Chesterton's *History of England* were used as the basis for study. Massam. *Sacred Threads. Catholic Spirituality In Australia 1922-1962*. p200.

<sup>20</sup> Distributism emerged from the horrors over poverty and dispossession in late Victorian and Edwardian England together with the social teaching derived from Leo XIII's encyclical '*Rerum Novarum*'. Distributism favours a society of owners, where property belongs to the many rather than the few, and correspondingly opposes the concentration of property on the hands of either the rich, as under capitalism, or of the state, as advocated by socialists. In particular, ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange must be widespread. Cardinal Manning instigated the translation of the encyclical and disciples such as Belloc and the Chesterton brothers helped develop the doctrine. Mathews. "Collateral Damage: B.A. Santamaria and the Marginalising of Social Catholicism." pp90-91.

'revolutionary language of European social movements of the right', but lacked the 'rabid anti-Semitism, violence or extreme nationalism of the right, common in Europe.'<sup>21</sup> At this time Santamaria viewed capitalism as the 'Public Enemy no.1'. Both capitalism and communism were both equally false and the task of the Church was to revolutionise mankind, not to patch up capitalism.<sup>22</sup>

But Catholic Action had no consistency of approach. Sydney had a very different approach from Melbourne. Some senior clergy wanted Catholic Action to be anchored to piety of both the individual and the family with no room for lay initiative, while in other centres the Joicist method of 'See Judge and Act' was supported.<sup>23</sup> In defining Catholic Action one bishop said it was 'Catholics living exemplary lives, joining together in hearing the word of God and keeping it', or, as another would have it 'perfecting domestic virtues, viz. Piety, Chastity, Obedience and Love.'<sup>24</sup> The Melbourne emphasis on study and the intellectual basis for Catholic Action was not universally approved.

By 1939 communists held possibly 25% of union positions in Australia.<sup>25</sup> Santamaria, as deputy director of ANSCA, became involved with a number of Victorian Labor politicians and union officials alarmed by this growth. He began to draw together people who opposed communism, many of whom had links into the ALP. The 'Freedom Movement' was formed amongst interested Catholics in early 1942 specifically to fight communism in the ALP and the unions by winning influence amongst the executives of both organisations.<sup>26</sup>

Alarminglly, CPA numbers grew during the war, with around 20,000 members by late 1943. Although the Communist Party was declared an illegal organisation by the Menzies Government in 1940 because of their active hindering of the war effort, this

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<sup>21</sup> Duncan. *Crusade or Conspiracy? Catholics and the Anti-Communist Struggle in Australia*. p18. The *Catholic Worker* achieved the highest circulation per capita of any Catholic publication in the world. Doig. "National Catholic Rural Movement and a 'New Deal' for Australia. The Rise and Fall of an Agrarian Movement 1931-58." p107.

<sup>22</sup> Doig. "National Catholic Rural Movement and a 'New Deal' for Australia. The Rise and Fall of an Agrarian Movement 1931-58." p100.

<sup>23</sup> O'Farrell. *The Catholic Church and Community. An Australian History*. p386.

<sup>24</sup> Doig. "National Catholic Rural Movement and a 'New Deal' for Australia. The Rise and Fall of an Agrarian Movement 1931-58." p109,212.

<sup>25</sup> Duncan. *Crusade or Conspiracy? Catholics and the Anti-Communist Struggle in Australia*. p2;. Clarke, F.G. "Labour and the Catholic Social Studies Movement." *Labour History*, no. 20 (1971): 46-59. p47.

<sup>26</sup> Approaches were made to the leaders of other denominations for support in the anti-communist struggle, but met little success. Duncan. *Crusade or Conspiracy? Catholics and the Anti-Communist Struggle in Australia*. p59.

was rescinded by the Curtin Government in December 1942, as Soviet Russia was now an ally. A Soviet embassy was established in Canberra in 1943 which began to build a spy network by utilising the CPA and getting access into influential government departments. Catholic leaders though were highly mistrustful of new-found communist loyalty to the allied cause. During the course of the war the power of the communist trade union officials was such that the Government dealt with them directly as leaders in the trade union movement. By the war's end, communists had consolidated their successes in the trade unions to the extent they were considered to have won control of the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU).<sup>27</sup>

From 1939 onwards Santamaria began to develop an anti-communist organisation within ANSCA. He drew together people with links into both the ALP and unions who were alarmed at the progress of communism within their organisations. Santamaria's intense anti-communism was formed by his understanding of the Spanish Civil War as a massive struggle between the Church and communism, a bi-polar view of the historic conflict between good versus evil.<sup>28</sup>

### *Social Justice*

Santamaria endorsed the main themes of papal social teaching and sought to adapt them to the Australian environment. Though only in his early twenties, he had the support of a number of bishops, most importantly Archbishop Daniel Mannix, and was able to use that support to further develop his social and political activities. These were not confined to his anti-communism, but reflected other aspects of Catholic socio-political thought. The National Catholic Rural Movement was formed in 1940 as part of the agrarian distributist vision, furthering smallholder farming and rural communities with support structures such as co-operatives and credit unions.<sup>29</sup> It was an officially mandated Catholic Action Movement and came under ANSCA's direction. Santamaria was to remain at the helm until 1960.

In 1940 the Australian bishops began the practice of releasing a Social Justice Statement on a contemporary issue and, at the suggestion of the deputy leader of the Victorian Labor party, set aside a particular Sunday for its release. The first

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<sup>27</sup> Clarke. "Labour and the Catholic Social Studies Movement." p48.

<sup>28</sup> Duncan. "Santamaria and the Legacy of the Split." p141.

<sup>29</sup> Mathews. "Collateral Damage: B.A. Santamaria and the Marginalising of Social Catholicism." p99.

Social Justice Sunday statement articulated papal social thought and spoke of the principles of social morality. The statements sold well and were taken seriously in political circles.<sup>30</sup> Authorship of these statements became another role for Santamaria, and he wrote most of the social justice statements between 1941 and 1955.<sup>31</sup> Social Justice Sunday statements were well received in New Zealand, with both *Tablet* and *Zealandia* regularly printing the statements and commenting on their significance.

Social Justice Statements were also, not surprisingly, reflecting a greater concern with communism and the 1947 '*Peace In Industry*' was quite clear that:

the imminent danger facing this country is that the Communist Party will use the power which it has gained over a large part of the trade union movement to overthrow the machinery of the Government, to seize political power for itself, and to achieve the ends of Communism – the destruction of political, social and religious freedom.<sup>32</sup>

*Nationalisation* was the 1948 Statement, in which Santamaria attempted to interpret socialization in a way acceptable to Catholics as well as forging an alliance with non-communist socialist movements within the broader Labour movement. The 1950 and 1951 statements emphasized the internal and external communist threats.<sup>33</sup>

These Statements were, however, more than important warnings about the perils of communism. Catholic bishops were claiming the right to debate the post war re-shaping of Australian values and institutions and the Statements provided outlines of a plan for the provision of a more just and equitable society. What they proposed, as an alternative ideology to that of the main political parties, was that of an 'idealised pre-industrial, culturally cohesive, medieval Christendom'.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Duncan. *Crusade or Conspiracy? Catholics and the Anti-Communist Struggle in Australia*. pp 34-35. This first statement spoke of right to life, to self-defence for citizens and nations, Catholic education and that the State violated justice when it denied any section of the community a proportionate share of public revenue, that a man's earnings must be sufficient to support a family, that home ownership should be more available and superfluous wealth be used for the benefit of others.

<sup>31</sup> ———. "Santamaria and the Legacy of the Split." p144.

<sup>32</sup> Doig. "National Catholic Rural Movement and a 'New Deal' for Australia. The Rise and Fall of an Agrarian Movement 1931-58." p273.

<sup>33</sup> Duncan. "Santamaria and the Legacy of the Split."p146 The 1951 statement *The Future of Australia* had a dramatic cover, depicting a map with a huge arrow pointing down from communist China to Australia.

<sup>34</sup> Hogan, Michael, ed. *Justice Now! Social Justice Statements of the Australian Catholic Bishops First Series: 1940-1966*. Sydney: Department of Government and Public Administration University of Sydney, 2006. p2.

### *The Movement*

Anti-communism was becoming more of a focal point for Santamaria. He proposed and the bishops eventually accepted his plan for a national movement and the Catholic Social Studies Movement (CSSM) was born in 1943. Known as the 'Movement', Santamaria sought to have it accepted as a legitimate function of Catholic Action.<sup>35</sup> Unless a disciplined group of Catholics led the fight, there was no other body able to do so, especially, as Santamaria saw it, Labor politicians might well come to terms with the communists.<sup>36</sup> But having the CSSM operate as a direct function of Catholic Action was rejected as being inconsistent with papal teaching on Catholic Action. However the bishops did approve its general principles and appointed a committee of bishops to oversee and fund the organisation.

The status of CSSM remained ambiguous, as it was neither Catholic Action nor was it an independent lay organisation. It made for a compromise, a hybrid with powerful clerical support and this status was to become the principal issue of contention in later years. Members were required to take a pledge not to disclose the existence or the activities of the Movement. This secrecy made working within the unions easier, but was to lead to sectarian animosity and accusations of Church mischief, especially the allegation of Vatican domination of the country.<sup>37</sup> Secrecy also meant the activities of the Movement could not be broadcast from the pulpit. Consequently any official Church statements seeking support for the Movement had to be coded so as to preserve this anonymity. Social justice statements were one means of letting Catholics know about the socio-political themes and, in a somewhat cumbersome way, provide the careful reader or listener with that the broad agenda of the anti-communist thrust. Papal encyclicals tended to be rather broader in their sweep and the social justice statements interpreted them for an Australian audience.

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<sup>35</sup> Santamaria considered that its work was more important than many other movements Catholic Action was organising around Australia and that all other movements should defer to its primacy. Morgan, Patrick, ed. *B.A. Santamaria: Running The Show*. Melbourne: The Miegunyah Press; State Library of Victoria, 2008. pp141-42.

<sup>36</sup> Duncan. *Crusade or Conspiracy? Catholics and the Anti-Communist Struggle in Australia*. p81.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.* p153. The Anglican Bishop Burgmann of Canberra claimed 'Rome was a totalitarian power struggling with Moscow for the soul of the world'. Rev. Dr. Leslie Rumble, who was a well-known Catholic apologist on Radio 2SM in Sydney and a former Anglican, charged such opposition as being political and sectarian.

Despite the papal warnings about the Church as an institution actively participating in politics and the vindication of Maritain's views on the independence of the laity in politics, the hierarchy sided with Santamaria. In the early days of Catholic Action, University based Catholic groups such as the Champion Society in Melbourne and the Newman Society in Perth argued about the nature of Catholic Action, and the relationship between Church and state in a liberal society. Hilaire Belloc, G.K. Chesterton, Christopher Dawson, Paul Claudel and Jacques Maritain were prominent among the thinkers from whom they drew inspiration. Maritain firmly advocated the principle of separation of Church and state and condemned all attempts to do otherwise. His reputation as a neo-scholastic scholar was particularly important for those who sought to maintain that separation. He considered it 'perilous' to demand unity among Catholics at a political level and they were free to support political parties of the right or left as they judged fit.<sup>38</sup> Maritain made it clear that there was a distinction between the activity of Catholics acting officially in the name of the Church, and the activity of individual Catholics who might bring their Christian ideas and influences to bear upon a secular institution, but who did not commit the Church in any way.<sup>39</sup>

As the communist threat loomed larger both internationally, in Europe and Asia, and nationally with a series of damaging strikes, the bishops reasoned desperate times required desperate measures. In a report to the Vatican the bishops declared they had 'no alternative but to assume full responsibility for the struggle as no other force was determined enough to defeat the communist plan'. The communists, by 1945, controlled half a million workers and possessed a stranglehold over the industrial life of Australia. Accordingly the bishops were determined 'smash communist power and restore control not to Catholics of course, but to moderate labour leaders'. Secrecy was also important because of the dangers of sectarian reaction.<sup>40</sup>

### *Anti-communism in the Trade Unions and the Labor Party*

Ridding the trade union movement of communists was a formidable task. Many communist union officials had earned considerable popularity for their competency,

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid. p41.

<sup>39</sup> Mathews. "Collateral Damage: B.A. Santamaria and the Marginalising of Social Catholicism." p96.

<sup>40</sup> Duncan. *Crusade or Conspiracy? Catholics and the Anti-Communist Struggle in Australia*. pp156-57.



strong leadership and the gains they had made for their members. Union officials could wield considerable power over how the union was run and how its resources were employed. Such men were hard to shift. However the Movement was organized into secret cells, not dissimilar to the communist practice, and the exclusivity of having only Catholics in the cells meant they avoided communist infiltration. Their tactics of contesting trade union elections with dedicated and trained men met with a degree of success. By 1950 Santamaria was able to show that the balance of power in Australian trade unions had altered, with anti-communist majorities on the ACTU, on most metropolitan Trades Halls and in many individual trade unions.<sup>41</sup>

In 1945 and 1946 the Victorian and NSW State branches of the ALP formed their own anti-communist organisations, known as the ALP Industrial Groups. Not every union had an Industrial Group and in these smaller unions the Movement continued its fight. But where they were established, the presence of these groups allowed for greater choice in trade union elections; that is between ALP, Communist or Independent. At election time Industrial Group candidates had the advantage of having the ALP discourage other ALP members from standing against them. While in theory the Industrial Groups were independent organisations within the ALP, in practice it meant ALP endorsement for the presence of the Movement in the trade unions. In reality the Movement cells provided the 'hard core' of the Industrial Group membership, "the brains and the backbone" as Dr. Evatt later denounced them', although by how much remains disputed.<sup>42</sup> Members were known as Groupers, a derogatory term which caused further confusion by telescoping together two different organisations. Since the ALP had virtually approved the Industrial Group approach to union politics, the Movement enjoyed *de facto* if not *de jure* ALP support.<sup>43</sup>

But the Industrial Groups were not universally popular within the ALP, and were denied national status. They remained under the auspices of the State party machine but they had become a force. There was concern within the wider ALP and amongst anti-Movement Catholics over the Movement's control of the Industrial Groups. Traditionally unions had tended to see the ALP as the political organisation

<sup>41</sup> Morgan, ed. *B.A. Santamaria: Running The Show*. pp174-76.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.p146.see also Webster, Barbara. "To Fight against the Horrible Evil of Communism!: Catholics, Community and the Movement in Rockhampton, 1943-57." *Labour History*, no. 81 (2001): 155-173.

<sup>43</sup> Clarke. "Labour and the Catholic Social Studies Movement."pp53-55. In Victoria there were seven Industrial Groups while NSW had some twenty two. South Australia and Queensland set up Industrial Groups in 1947 and 1948, although South Australian ALP withdrew official recognition in 1951.

through which they were able to pressure State and Federal Governments, the ALP being the political wing of the trade unions.<sup>44</sup> But the campaign to defeat communist trade union officials resulted in those officials being replaced with Movement people, whose agendas owed more to the CSSM and Catholic social policies rather than ALP and trade union policies. Non-communist trade unionists were also attacked, because they didn't side with the Groupers and this sort of behaviour increased resentment.<sup>45</sup> Within the union dominated ruling bodies of the ALP the balance of power was upset by the influence of the Movement.<sup>46</sup> Santamaria's vision went beyond anti-communism. In a letter to Mannix in December 1952 he set out a much broader agenda:

For the last three years, however, it has been recognized that the possibilities of the Catholic Social Studies Movement are far wider than the defensive battle against communism...The Social Studies Movement should within a period of five or six years be able to completely transform the leadership of the Labor Movement and to introduce into Federal and State spheres large numbers of members who... should be able to implement a Christian social program in both the State and Federal spheres... This is the first time that such a work has become possible in Australia and, as far as I can see, in the Anglo-Saxon world since the advent of Protestantism.<sup>47</sup>

This vision went beyond post-war teachings on social justice. But Santamaria had participated in the intense discussions amongst Catholic clergy and bishops during the 1930s about the shape of Catholic Action for Australia, so knew where the majority of bishops stood on the various issues. He drafted many of the Social Justice Statements issued by the Australian bishops. Part of the process of drafting the Statements was the extensive consultations with the bishops before a Statement was approved, so he was not only important in the development of Australian Catholic social justice but in a position to apply his own idiosyncratic view.

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid. p55.

<sup>45</sup> Santamaria's list of opponents other than communists was extensive and included old school Catholic Labor politicians; a number of moderate trade union leaders; the Sydney press; freemasonry; Communist fellow-travellers; left wing Labor men; well-meaning idealists and anti-Catholic sectarians. Mathews. "Collateral Damage: B.A. Santamaria and the Marginalising of Social Catholicism." p110.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid. p103.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid. pp102-03. Mathews describes this letter as the 'Watergate-style smoking gun of the Labor Split saga'.

Dissatisfaction was growing within the ALP. The new ALP leader, H. V. Evatt, was initially an ally of the Groupers and had a 'tactical' alliance with Santamaria, but the Movement's actions were upsetting the political machinery. Movement members tried to influence pre-selection for State and Federal electoral candidates and in Victoria their tactics were causing friction in the Labor ranks. Public opposition began to appear, with claims that the Industrial Groups were helping to destroy unionism. Sectarian reaction condemned the Catholic political activity since it was heading towards gaining control of the Labor Party. The Presbyterian paper *Messenger* attacked the Groups as spearheads for Catholic Action, although non-Catholic Groupers rejected such charges. The NSW Council of Churches voiced concern about Catholics trying to control the unions and promised an 'outburst of Protestant action' against a 'carefully camouflaged pressure group.'<sup>48</sup> It was becoming clear that one of Evatt's major problems was to keep the Party together in the face of a potential split over Catholic Action and Communism.

Criticism was not confined to non-Catholics. One prominent Catholic journalist, Jim Ormonde, wrote in the *Sydney Morning Herald* that the Groups were overreaching themselves and endangering the Labor machine by putting too much emphasis on the anti-communist drive. The left leaning Catholic paper, the *Catholic Worker*, declared that the emphasis on Christian social teaching had switched from a positive programme of reform to a negative programme of opposition. Even the inveterate anti-communist Douglas Hyde warned against an 'hysterical witch-hunt'.<sup>49</sup> Many of Santamaria's harshest critics were his former *Campion* colleagues.

Opposition to the Movement from within the Church had increased as the overtly political agenda had become more evident. Archbishop Simonds of Melbourne was Mannix's Coadjutor and Episcopal chair of a committee that oversaw national lay movements. Simonds was of the view, echoing Cardinal Newman, that what was needed most was an educated laity exercising personal influence, not the political mobilization of Catholic Action.<sup>50</sup> But Santamaria never really accepted the Maritain distinction.<sup>51</sup> By the 1950s Santamaria had resisted the thinking around the

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<sup>48</sup> Duncan. *Crusade or Conspiracy? Catholics and the Anti-Communist Struggle in Australia*. p195.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.* p186.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.* p129. J.D. Simonds was made Coadjutor to Mannix in 1942 with right of succession. He was not to succeed until Mannix's death in 1963. As a clerical quip had it: Long time, no See.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.* p22. At the time of his appointment as Assistant Secretary of ANSCA in January 1938, there was concern that he might not have the 'ability to appreciate the finer distinctions affecting the frontiers of Church-State relationships'.

relationship between religious and political activity that had been articulated by the international secretariat of Catholic Action and other key thinkers such as John Courtenay Murray and Yves Simon. They simply did not support the type of political mobilization of Catholics in which he was engaged. For Santamaria the Movement was a genuine apostolate, officially acting directly in politics on behalf of the bishops. Because moral issues were involved, the reasoning went, the Church had to intervene directly in politics. Catholic moral and social principles were directly at issue and as they underlay all political discourse, the scope of the Movement needed to be widened to consider anything that had a moral dimension.<sup>52</sup>

### *Situation in Sydney*

The Sydney view of Catholic Action emphasised clerical rather than lay leadership. Supervision of the Movement in Sydney had been in the hands of Father Paddy Ryan. He was critical of the Melbourne style, which was highly prescriptive to the point of directing its members how to vote. In 1950 Cardinal Gilroy appointed his new auxiliary bishop, Patrick Lyons, formerly bishop of Christchurch, to supervise the Movement in NSW. Lyons had been Mannix's secretary and had strong links to Melbourne. In a manner reminiscent of his time in Christchurch, he quickly became unpopular over his treatment of Fr. Ryan and a number of key Movement supporters and trade union members left the Movement in protest. By late 1953 the Sydney Movement was under the control of Santamaria's supporters.

Gilroy, who had supported Lyons, replaced him with another auxiliary bishop, James Carroll in early 1954. Carroll was linked, through family, to the NSW ALP and was a friend of the Premier. Carroll was anti-Movement and once in charge set about separating Sydney from Melbourne. He announced Sydney would not be bound by any decisions of the Movement's National Executive and in political matters would make its own decisions. Carroll wanted the Movement to concentrate on education, on influence rather than control, and not to dictate, in the name of the Church, policy to specialists in industrial and political fields.<sup>53</sup> This very real difference in views illustrated the fault line between Sydney and Melbourne. What the senior Movement

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid. p192-3.

<sup>53</sup> Morgan, ed. *B.A. Santamaria: Running The Show*.p191; Duncan. *Crusade or Conspiracy? Catholics and the Anti-Communist Struggle in Australia*. p219.

people in Melbourne didn't understand was the close link between the ALP and the Sydney Church.

### *Expansion*

The 1951 Australian Bishops' Social Justice Statement, drafted by Santamaria, addressed the possibility of Australia coping without the protection of Western colonial powers in Asia, the likely impact from militant communism and the issue of widespread poverty in that region. Santamaria was anxious that the intent of the Statement be followed up by practical action, and to that end established an Asian Department within the National Secretariat of Catholic Action. Catholic Action, he envisaged, would (a) attempt to influence as many as possible of the Asian students studying in Australia with basic Christian sociology, (b) help develop the emerging Asian trade union movement along Christian lines and (c) encourage the government to channel some Colombo Plan funds into helping the Missions develop works of social reform. This particular work could only be done by the Catholic Church, since, in Santamaria's opinion, there was a general apathy regarding these issues amongst wider Australian population.<sup>54</sup> While Asia posed the most immediate threat with the 'southward march of Asiatic Communism', Santamaria viewed the South and South West Pacific as being at risk, particularly in terms of a strategic interest by China.<sup>55</sup>

Santamaria's plan to extend his anti-communist organisation into Asia and the Pacific initially had support from the Indian Cardinal Valerian Gracias.<sup>56</sup> Gracias had been in Australia for the 1953 National Eucharistic Congress, had heard Santamaria speak, and was interested in the possible adaption of the ideas for India. Santamaria also gave Gracias his paper '*Religious Apostolate and Political Action*'. Gracias agreed with Santamaria's assessment of the Asian communist threat and agreed with the call for a 'Social Action Conference' for 1955 with delegates from India/Pakistan, Ceylon, Malaya, Indonesia, Burma, the Philippines, Japan, the United States, New Zealand and Australia.

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<sup>54</sup> Morgan, Patrick, ed. *B. A. Santamaria Your Most Obedient Servant Selected Letters: 1938-1996*. Melbourne The Miegunyah Press with the State Library of Victoria, 2007. p53-55.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.* pp33, 157.

<sup>56</sup> Gracias attended the 1953 National Eucharistic Congress in Sydney. Santamaria addressed the Congress on the communist threat from Asia and later presented the Cardinal with his paper '*Religious Apostolate and Political Action*'.

The Pan-Pacific Social Conference was held in Melbourne in June 1955 with Archbishop McKeefry attending from New Zealand. At the Conference, Santamaria portrayed the Australian Catholic Social Movement as the model needed in Asia and the Pacific to fight communism, that is, a lay movement under the control of the hierarchy. Delegates spoke against many of the issues that they associated with the problems in Asia and the Pacific, such as colonialism and anti social capitalism, while endorsing the notions of family farms, co-operatives and decentralised industrial development. They recommended the bishops of the various countries set up national bodies of social action and hold another conference in May 1956. The network of social action groups would, for the meantime, be co-ordinated from Melbourne for which a Pan-Pacific Secretariat was planned. Not unnaturally these plans reflected the Australian Movement, including the ambiguities over the role and independence of the laity, the control of the bishops and the blurring of boundaries between religious and political action.<sup>57</sup>

In June 1955 the *Bombay Examiner*, an Indian Catholic newspaper, published '*Religious Apostolate and Political Action*'.<sup>58</sup> This was to have significant consequences for Santamaria and the Movement. '*Religious Apostolate and Political Action*' was, in essence, Santamaria's attempt to provide justification for the plan to reshape Australian politics and society. Initially the *Examiner* articles (there were two) received no publicity in Australia, but did reach Rome where concerns were raised by those concerned with the distinction between 'Catholic Action' and 'Christian inspired action.' This was to have a consequence when an influential Italian cleric gave a keynote address to the first Asian Meeting of the Apostolate of the Laity, held in December 1955 in Manila.<sup>59</sup> Monsignor Pietro Pavan,<sup>60</sup> who had been briefed on the *Examiner* articles, fully supported the views of Jacques Maritain,

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<sup>57</sup> Duncan. *Crusade or Conspiracy? Catholics and the Anti-Communist Struggle in Australia*. pp266-67.

<sup>58</sup> Gracias had obtained Santamaria's permission to do so.

<sup>59</sup> This meeting was to prepare for the 1957 Second World Conference of the Lay Apostolate in Rome. As such issues of lay involvement in the Church, including the role of Catholic Action, were central to its agenda. Disputes both in Australia and the Philippines over the politics of Catholic Action helped set the agenda for this meeting. By this stage Cardinal Gilroy was increasingly opposed to the Santamaria version of Catholic Action and its political role and sent two of his officials to Manila to challenge Santamaria's interpretation of Catholic political action. Because of illness, Santamaria did not travel to Manila and sent a priest supporter in his place. Duncan. *Crusade or Conspiracy? Catholics and the Anti-Communist Struggle in Australia*. pp274-276.

<sup>60</sup> Pavan was Professor in Theology and Sociology at the Pontifical Lateran University. The distinction between 'Catholic Action' and 'Christian inspired action' was one of his special concerns regarding the lay apostolate.

emphasising how an organised action of Catholics in the economic, industrial or political field did not involve the responsibility of bishops. Once such organised action reached a maturity, any dependence on the hierarchy was doctrinal rather than organisational. His speech rejected the Movement's *modus operandi* and was a significant blow to the Movement, just as Santamaria was beginning his expansion into Asia and the Pacific.

### *The Split*

In the Victorian elections of 1952, a Labor Government was returned, but within their ranks a more politically right-wing group emerged. They were mainly Catholic and made up about one third of the Cabinet. By 1953 Movement supporters had gained positions of influence in the ALP, especially in the key Victorian and NSW branches, and began to promote their Christian social principles. The Movement sensed it was now in the position to impose its vision of Christianity on the Labor Party.

Resentment over this level of influence brought protests from within the Party. Union and Labor Party officials, whom the Movement considered weak on communism or corrupt or simply time servers, were targeted. Those who supported the Industrial Groups for pragmatic rather than ideological reasons began to change sides and these former supporters looked to the left to create a new majority coalition.

Catholics and anti-communists were not spared if they didn't support Movement policies.<sup>61</sup> The friction was between right wing Catholic actionists and moderate and left wing socialists.

Labor lost the 1954 federal elections narrowly. Even though the ALP adopted a strong anti-communist position during the campaign, Evatt performed poorly. He had been hurt by the fallout over the Petrov affair. Evatt, desperate to resuscitate his political career, released a statement in October 1954 putting the blame for the election defeat on disloyal Victorians and claiming Santamaria was trying to take over the Victorian Labor Party. Vengeance followed. A series of events saw the ALP implode. The Industrial Groups were annihilated within the Party, both the Victorian and Queensland Labor governments fell, ALP State executives and their Grouper members in NSW and Victoria dissolved and a rival political party, the Democratic Labor Party (DLP), emerged. In the Victorian elections of 1955, the Liberals won, the

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<sup>61</sup> Morgan, ed. *B.A. Santamaria: Running The Show*. pp187-89.

ALP lost seats and new Anti-Communist Labor Party, which grew out of the bitter political infighting and was the forerunner of DLP, won only 12.5% of the vote. However the Anti-Communist Labor Party successfully employed the tactic of having their supporters give their electoral preferences to the Liberals.<sup>62</sup> This tactic of denying the ALP political office kept the Liberal coalitions in power for many years.

The political fallout was to effectively deny an ALP federal election victory until 1972.<sup>63</sup> Yet the other casualty was the Catholic Church, where the divisions and animosities, particularly between Sydney and Melbourne, were to leave the Church in turmoil. Opposition to the Movement, especially as regards its political dimensions had been evident in the Church for a number of years. Maritain's views on the separation of Church from direct involvement in politics were the basis of such opposition. But opposition was a mixture of concern over the reputation of the Church, a loyalty to the Labor Party and trade union, overreaction to the communist threat, and antipathy to Santamaria's power.

Patrick Morgan considers that Evatt's exposé was not simply the work of anti-Catholic forces but 'instigated by one faction in an internal Catholic civil war'. Jim Ormonde, the Sydney journalist, had campaigned for years against the Movement. Ormonde, whose brother was a priest, charged that the Movement was replacing the communists in attempting to take over the ALP.<sup>64</sup> As a political activist and member of the NSW ALP executive, that is until his removal for an anti-Movement attitude, he kept urging Evatt and others to expose the Movement and its actions in the ALP. In this he had been encouraged by senior Sydney church personnel, particularly Archbishop Carroll.<sup>65</sup> Evatt accepted the enticement to bring down the Movement.

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<sup>62</sup> The Anti-communist Labor Party came about when members of the Victorian Parliament, loyal to the old executive that had strong Grouper membership, crossed the floor of the House and brought down the Cain Labor government. At the same time seven federal members expelled from the ALP crossed the floor of the House of Representatives and sat on the cross benches as a new political formation. These groups eventually became the DLP. Ibid. pp248-49

<sup>63</sup> On two occasions, the 1961 and 1966 federal elections, Labor won a majority of the two party vote, but DLP preferences resulted in Labor coming up short. :see

<http://www.aph.gov.au/library/pubs/rb/2004-05/05RB11-1b.HTM>

<sup>64</sup> Duncan. *Crusade or Conspiracy? Catholics and the Anti-Communist Struggle in Australia*. p186.

<sup>65</sup> Morgan, ed. *B.A. Santamaria: Running The Show*.p246-47; Doig. "National Catholic Rural Movement and a 'New Deal' for Australia. The Rise and Fall of an Agrarian Movement 1931-58." p287.



### *Repercussions*

For the Catholic Church, profound division developed in the ranks of the hierarchy. The Movement had originated in Victoria and had, in Mannix, its strongest ecclesiastical supporter. The Melbourne position was that communism was a nationally organised menace and should be opposed by a national organisation, such as the Movement, and not by uncoordinated state organisations. Individual bishops could not veto a decision made by the Movement even though they may have disagreed with it. For many, it was unfortunate that a political party should be destroyed in the course of the anti-communist crusade, but the cause was too important to be halted. Gilroy's Sydney position was that each individual bishop was the absolute master of his own diocese and, in contrast to the Melbourne view, could veto any course of action by Catholic organisations which he considered against the interests of the Church.<sup>66</sup>

The unprecedented dispute over the Movement was tearing the Catholic community apart, especially in Victoria where the antagonism between the Movement and ALP supporters was most intense. Never before had Australian Catholics been so bitterly polarised on political issues. There were even scuffles in the aisles of churches and bitter exchanges after masses. The families of leading figures on both sides suffered.....The strain was especially painful for prominent ALP supporters in Victoria, because of widespread use of Church authority against them and charges that they were disloyal to their faith...<sup>67</sup>

During 1956 and 1957 the ramifications of the split continued. Archbishop Carboni, the Apostolic Delegate, had earlier praised the Movement for its anti-communist work. But he could not now get agreement between the bishops of Victoria and NSW. Rulings made by the annual hierarchy meeting in 1956 were a victory for the Sydney faction. The Movement was to confine itself to industrial action and the traditional authority of the bishops as masters of their dioceses was reinforced. These decisions made by the hierarchy effectively forced all Movement national officers to resign and a new body, the Catholic Social Movement (CSM) was formed, led by Santamaria. Gilroy opposed this move, but the CSM was supported by about

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<sup>66</sup> Clarke. "Labour and the Catholic Social Studies Movement." pp57-58.

<sup>67</sup> Duncan. *Crusade or Conspiracy? Catholics and the Anti-Communist Struggle in Australia.* p258.

half the Catholic hierarchy, mainly in Victoria, Queensland, West Australia and Tasmania. The CSM did not officially operate in NSW and South Australia, although front organisations were set up in those States.

In November 1956 Gilroy led a delegation to the Vatican asking for a ruling. The key points of the submission were:

- The Movement had attempted to control the Labor Party;
- By invoking the authority of the bishops too freely, it gave the impression the Church was directing the industrial and political life of the country;
- The Movement's activities within the ALP were of legitimate concern, since the Movement was conducted as a lay apostolate and was headed by the same man who headed Catholic Action;
- The Sydney bishops were concerned that Movement laity had usurped the right of the hierarchy to pronounce about the morality of remaining with the Labor Party.<sup>68</sup>

The first ruling was wordy and unspecific and gave Melbourne a way out. A second ruling in July 1957 was much more specific, confirming the bishop's supervision in these matters and explicitly ruling out union or political party activity. Although Mannix appealed, the ruling was upheld. Again Santamaria and his officials resigned from the CSM en masse and formed a new organisation the National Civic Council (NCC). It claimed to be a private, secular body, with Santamaria as president, independent of the Church but with the same aims as the Movement. Individual bishops could support it if they wished.<sup>69</sup>

The July '59 issue of the *Catholic Worker* critiqued the Movement dispute. Of real concern for the paper was the confusion amongst Catholics as to the Movement's raison d'être, exacerbated by the secrecy surrounding its activities. Many Catholics still thought the activities of the Movement expressed the highest form of Catholic Action and that the DLP was in fact a Catholic political party. Confusion was further compounded by Santamaria's dual role as leader of Catholic Action and the Movement, apparently under the direction and control of the hierarchy. So after the split and the publicity given to the Movement, 'many Catholics were shocked that previous public statements by the Movement spokesmen, including bishops, were

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid. p311

<sup>69</sup> Morgan, ed. *B.A. Santamaria: Running The Show*. pp280-281.

now revealed as untrue'. It was not only Catholics but other citizens who thought they had a right to know what was being done, apparently, in the name of the Church, especially in a democracy where the aspirations of the Movement went well beyond fighting communism in the unions. Adding to the dilemma was the moral dimension, especially the moral theology around lying and equivocation which had definite teachings. Truth telling became an awkward balancing act for Movement leaders, as they sought to preserve Movement secrets. As one long-time observer of the Movement wrote, secrecy in the short term 'was a vitamin pill, but in the long term a slow acting poison opposed to the norms of a democratic society.'<sup>70</sup>

### *Conclusion*

'What have politics to do with Catholics? The fate of Australia in a world in which the forces of evil are ranged with all their might and cunning against the Kingdom of God will depend in part on the formation of strong policies in these matters. If Australia falls, so must New Zealand.'<sup>71</sup> These sentiments typified the almost apocalyptic outlook of Santamaria and his followers. The Cold War was at its height and the threat to Christianity and civilization from communism was a recurring theme in the ongoing propaganda war.

The events in Australia revealed the extent to which an unelected institution could intervene in national politics. Its anti-communist mandate may well have accorded with a broad national sympathy, but the subterfuge involved alienated Catholic and non-Catholic alike. Criticism from outside the Church could be passed off as sectarian reaction, but the Movement found dissension within the Church difficult to comprehend. It never concerned itself with criticisms that the Church had no place in supporting a programme that overrode the traditional democratic structures and was distorting the papal teachings on political involvement by the Church. By failing to confront the critics, other than by appealing to the traditional obligation whereby Catholics had to obey their bishops, the Movement and its supporters were prepared to allow the Labor Party, the party most Catholics would have supported, to split and at the same time have the Church in Australia succumb to its own split.

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<sup>70</sup> Duncan. *Crusade or Conspiracy? Catholics and the Anti-Communist Struggle in Australia*. p408.

<sup>71</sup> Jordan, William. "The Australian Scene." *Zealandia*, 25 August 1955.

This divide was not doctrinal, but rather over how Church and state were to regard one another. The combination of the Cold War, Catholic hostility to communism and senior clerics whose understanding of the Church's role in a post-war liberal democracy was limited at best, made for a heady brew. Support for anti-communist activity in the trade unions came from both political and public spheres, but once communist activity had been contained, the impulse was not to consolidate those gains, rather to try and impose Catholic social teaching as the policy of the Labor Party. Santamaria saw his growing influence in the ALP as an opportunity to force his idiosyncratic interpretation of Catholic social teaching as party policy without public support. If such policies had been openly debated and efforts made to persuade public opinion, the outcome may have followed a different pattern.

The Australian Catholic Church was 'deeply factionalised' by the legacy of the Movement and the split in the ALP.<sup>72</sup> By invoking the authority of the Church to push the Catholic community towards a radical and militant political option, the Movement triggered a rebound that fractured the Catholic community. However the failure of competent episcopal and clerical guidance and oversight not only revealed a naivety within the Church as to possible consequences, but a lack of ethical concern over the Movement's business. Santamaria and his clerical supporters chose to ignore the views of key Catholic thinkers such as Maritain and John Courtney Murray and the contemporary thinking on religious and political activity. In the end Santamaria badly misjudged the new direction of Church thinking, especially as the Vatican rejected his position. Although Vatican II would provide a definitive restatement of relations with the communist world, the phenomenon of the Movement was cast aside by a growing understanding in the Church of a new relationship between the religious apostolate and political action.

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<sup>72</sup> Duncan. "Santamaria and the Legacy of the Split."p12

## Chapter Six The anti-communist campaign in New Zealand

### Introduction

While state aid to private schools and the problems of the Catholic education system were a source of dispute with successive Governments, the Church's opposition to communism was completely in tune with the attitudes of both major political parties. This chapter will consider how the Catholic Church confronted communism in the trade unions in New Zealand and why it differed so markedly from the anti-communist activities of the Australian Catholic Church.

A distinctive feature of the Australasian Catholic Church was the high proportion of working class members in its ranks and the political parties who best represented their interests were those which actively supported the Labour Movement. The Communist Party saw itself as the natural leader of the working class, while the Catholic Church taught that socialism, shorn of its radicalism and recognizing private property rights, was an acceptable political doctrine. Both the Church and the communists sought to 'appeal to, and provide moral leadership for, the same social stratum'.<sup>73</sup>

'Bolshevistic and atheistic Communism, which aims at upsetting the social order and at undermining the very foundations of Christian civilization' was the warning given by Pope Pius XI in his encyclical *Divini Redemptoris* of March 1937. Communist doctrine, he wrote, concealed itself in a pseudo-ideal of justice, of equality and fraternity which through 'deceptive mysticism' entraps the multitudes by delusive promises. Pius XI reached back to Pius IX, who in 1846 declared communism to be contrary to Natural Law and Pius XI also reiterated Leo XIII's 1878 condemnation of it as 'the fatal plague which insinuated itself into the very built marrow of human society only to bring about its ruin'. *Divini Redemptoris* identified the intellectual pull of partial truths and the ability to win over the 'better minded members of the community', linking the attraction to the religious and moral destitution left by liberal

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<sup>73</sup> Reid, Nicholas. "Struggle for souls -Catholicism and communism in twentieth-century New Zealand." *Australian Historical Studies* 37, no. 128 (2006): 72-88. p76.

economics.<sup>74</sup> This encyclical was a definitive statement of the Church's antithesis towards communism and the impact it was having in Europe. But the struggle for the 'better minds' was hampered by what Arthur Koestler, the Hungarian Jewish intellectual, describes as '(What) an enormous longing for a new human order there was in the era between the wars, and what a miserable failure to live up to it.'<sup>75</sup>

Opposition by the Catholic Church to communism, vigorous as it was, often gave a mixed message as to its stance on totalitarianism. The major events of the 1930s – the world economic depression, the emergence of the extreme fascist right and the Spanish Civil War – impacted upon the autonomy of the Church in Europe and directly threatened Catholic social organisations.<sup>76</sup> The reaction of the Church to the excesses of both Nazism and Communism prior to WWII was sometimes uneven and led to suspicions that the Vatican was prepared to be more tolerant to the Hitler regime, while at the same time furiously denouncing any Communist activity in Europe. However the excesses of Hitler bought an increased sense of outrage that Christianity itself was under attack.<sup>77</sup> By the end of WWII Soviet Communism and the Iron Curtain were a major global political entity and the Church, especially in Eastern Europe, began to feel the impact of Communist regimes which began to control Church governance and finances in the affected countries. Religious education was suppressed, Church schools, newspapers and civic organisations banned, Church property confiscated, institutions such as orphanages and hospitals taken over, monasteries abolished and dissenters, including the clergy, imprisoned and murdered. All of the East European churches – Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox – suffered under the Communist regimes.<sup>78</sup>

New Zealand and Australia had functioning communist parties by the 1920s.<sup>79</sup> By virtue of being part of the British Commonwealth, the Communist Party New Zealand

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<sup>74</sup> [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/pius\\_xi/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-xi\\_enc\\_19031937\\_divini-redemptoris\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_19031937_divini-redemptoris_en.html). This encyclical was issued within weeks of his anti-Nazi encyclical *Mit Brennender Sorge*

<sup>75</sup> Judt, Tony. *Reappraisals. Reflections On The Forgotten Twentieth Century*. London: William Heinemann, 2008. pp30-31.

<sup>76</sup> Conway. *Catholic Politics in Europe 1918-1945*. p47.

<sup>77</sup> Buckley. "Bringing Faith to the Front: Catholic Chaplains with the Second New Zealand Expeditionary Force 1939-1945." pp19-20.

<sup>78</sup> Philpott, Daniel. "Christianity and Democracy: The Catholic Wave." *Journal of Democracy* 15, no. 2 (2004): 32-46. p38.

<sup>79</sup> Although the Communist Party New Zealand (CPNZ) was formed in 1921, internal difficulties meant that during the period 1923- 1928 the New Zealand Party was a section of the Communist Party of Australia. In 1928 the CPNZ became a self-contained body affiliated with the Comintern. Trapeznik,

(CPNZ) had an enhanced profile and position within the Comintern, the communist International based in Moscow. Britain was important to the Comintern and so by association was New Zealand. In 1929 the Comintern demanded that all foreign communist parties sever all ties with moderate socialist parties and prepare for revolution. Comintern directives were obeyed implicitly, so for the CPNZ it meant fighting the Labour Party.<sup>80</sup>

During the mid-thirties, this particular policy was abandoned by the Comintern. Rising concerns about Nazism led it to seek alliances with socialist and liberal parties to establish anti-fascist alliances, the 'popular fronts'. In both New Zealand and Australia, emphasis was placed on working with the socialist parties to form a workers' united front. In 1935 the first New Zealand Labour administration had been formed and although the CPNZ attempted to gain affiliation, the Labour Party rejected the communists.<sup>81</sup> The New Zealand Labour Party had, since 1925, refused membership of the Party to communists and this policy, following that of Labour in Great Britain, did not change. Even after the German invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941, the Labour Party and the FOL continued to reject overtures from the CPNZ.<sup>82</sup> In Australia, the Communist Party Australia (CPA) undertook a strategy of infiltrating the Australian Labor Party (ALP) in order to have enough representation within the leadership to help achieve CPA goals.<sup>83</sup>

However the domestic environment in each country differed markedly. Australia was a huge land mass, had a federal political system and from the religious perspective, possessed a greater percentage of Catholics in the general population. But the key difference was in how the Catholic Church in each country sought to deal with communism. The extent to which the Australian Church allowed itself to get involved in domestic politics was to have ramifications well beyond the demise of communism as a force in their trade union movement. By contrast in New Zealand the path the Church followed was much more low-key and restrained. It sought to defend its own interests, to promote Catholic values and rather than antagonizing other churches

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Alexander. "'Agents of Moscow' at the Dawn of the Cold War." *Journal of Cold War Studies* 11, no. 1 (2009): 124-149. pp129,142.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid. p143.

<sup>81</sup> Sid Scott was in Moscow during 1939 and was given several interviews with Georgi Dimitrov, the head of the Comintern. Scott believed the access to Dimitrov was due to New Zealand having the only Labour government in the Commonwealth. Ibid. p136.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid. p146, 148. Taylor. *The New Zealand People at War: The Home Front* p588. The New Zealand Federation of Labour was formed in 1937.

<sup>83</sup> McKnight. "The Comintern's Seventh Congress and the Australian Labor Party." p397.

and non-Catholics, was very much in tune with both general public opinion and government attitudes as regards the threat communism posed. In Australia the eventual outcome resulted in the splitting of the Labor Party and turmoil within the Church. In New Zealand the anti-communist work done by the Church remained unheralded, yet was a factor in denying communist domination of the trade union movement.

The Catholic press in both countries had, since the early 1930s, attacked communism. *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno* were the two principal papal encyclicals that articulated the Catholic position. They raised moral and ethical issues about the existing social and economic order and were repeatedly quoted as foundation documents for a re-defining of Christian social justice. Catholics were urged to recognize the social conflict that had arisen from industrialisation and the very real need to remedy 'the misery and wretchedness pressing so unjustly on the majority of the working class'.<sup>84</sup>

The Catholic press campaign against communism and the rhetoric surrounding the Cold War helped keep the issue very much alive in the post-war period and during the 1950s. Communism and Catholicism were seen as ideologically irreconcilable and, in 1949, Catholics were threatened with excommunication for supporting a communist party or propagating communist ideas. But by the end of that next decade, a new Pope was reflecting on the need for 'a new Pentecost to blow through the Church', the result being an Ecumenical Council and major reform for the Catholic Church.<sup>85</sup> John XXIII's encyclical *Pacem in Terris* spoke of a qualified co-operation with communists which began a new phase of practical co-existence with communists and communist governments.<sup>86</sup>

Catholic opposition to communism was encouraged by both the Catholic press and the pulpit. Parishioners were urged to educate themselves about communism and its pernicious doctrine. Catholic trade unionists were encouraged to become active in their trade union and undermine communist attempts at control. In New Zealand this latter approach required secrecy as allegations of Church involvement in trade union affairs could rebound, especially as sectarianism was still in evidence and the Church

<sup>84</sup> see [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/leo\\_xiii/encyclicals/documents](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents) section 3.

<sup>85</sup> Hebblethwaite, Peter. "John XXIII." In *Modern Catholicism*, edited by Adrian Hastings. London: SPCK, 1991. p28.

<sup>86</sup> Sikorska, Grazyna. "Eastern Europe." In *Modern Catholicism*, edited by Adrian Hastings. London: SPCK, 1991. pp345-46.



was already campaigning against the state as regards aid to private schools. Anti-communism in the trade unions became a low-key and unheralded mission for a small and dedicated group of Catholic men whose rewards were frustrating communist control and, by doing so, helping to maintain a robust and effective trade union movement.

### The situation in New Zealand

'Communism is the foremost social and political problem in the world today'. For the Catholic Church communism was not only an historical, economic and social theory; it was also a political system. But more importantly for an institution which understood the deep emotions and instincts that create and foster belief, it recognized Communism as a faith, a rival faith whose atheistic philosophy provided an alternative and secular version of the Sermon on the Mount.<sup>87</sup>

Prior to the Second World War, the Catholic Church in New Zealand maintained a vigorous challenge to the growth of Communism. Socialism had made much use of religious language and ideals, and the Church was aware of the persuasive nature of the quasi-religious nature of much of the discourse on socialism in late nineteenth and early twentieth century's.<sup>88</sup> Archbishop Redwood had, from the 1890s, issued a number of pastoral letters criticizing socialism, written articles on the dangers of Bolshevism and in his 1933 Lenten Pastoral condemned communism.

*Quadragesimo Anno* (1931) gave authority to his teachings and helped mould Catholic social teaching, especially in terms of a commitment to justice for the working man.<sup>89</sup> During the depression the Catholic Church was able to make some constructive suggestions at a time when there were no real answers. The author of a study of the role of the churches during the depression wrote 'Only the Catholic Church had sufficient unity, tradition and authority to establish a genuinely independent social doctrine. Whatever else may be said against it, Catholic social science was at least the real thing.'<sup>90</sup>

<sup>87</sup> "Communism And The Catholic," *Tablet*, 2 February 1955.

<sup>88</sup> Troughton. "Jesus in New Zealand: 1900-1940." p240.

<sup>89</sup> Simmons. "Archbishop Francis Redwood: His Contribution To Catholicism In New Zealand." pp45-50.

<sup>90</sup> Reid, A.J.S. "Church and State in New Zealand 1930-1935 – A Study of the Social Thought and Influence of the Christian Church in a period of Economic Crisis", (M.A., Victoria, 1961) quoted by Simmons, p50-51.

At the same time distinctions were made between the radical socialism abhorred by the Vatican and the much milder type of socialism of the Labour party. This had significant and positive electoral repercussions for Labour, as many Catholics came to support the more moderate socialism of Labour, rejecting any temptation posed by communism. Redwood and his bishops maintained that economics could not be separated from the moral law and that a return to Christian principles was needed in order to find a solution.<sup>91</sup>

During the 1930s, warnings were given by the Catholic press about the persecution of other Christians in Russia, Mexico and Spain and how the same thing could happen in New Zealand if communism was not stopped. Locally some Catholics were troubled by the possibility that some Labour MPs might flirt with communism, especially given the support they gave the communist-inspired Spanish Medical Aid Committee. The rejection of communist applications to join the Labour Party was welcomed by the Catholic press.<sup>92</sup>

During the war as the Soviet Union became a crucial ally and bore much of the bitter fighting, criticism of communism and the Soviet Union was officially muted amongst the Allies. As a result of the Non-Aggression Pact between the Soviet government and Nazi Germany in August 1939, the Comintern directed that anti-fascist fronts were no longer relevant and the CPNZ was to attack the imperialist aggressors led by Britain.<sup>93</sup> The German invasion of Russia meant she became an ally of New Zealand in 1941, and the CPNZ quickly dropped the peace programme and called for a broad national united front for the defeat of Hitler. Although there was increasing support for the Soviet Union, New Zealand's admiration was not universal. The establishment tended to view the various committees of support, such as the Society for Closer Relations with Russia, with caution. New Zealand's government was reasonably cautious in its praise of the Soviet Union and it was the last of the Allies to establish a diplomatic post in Moscow.

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<sup>91</sup> Simmons, "Archbishop Francis Redwood: His Contribution To Catholicism In New Zealand". pp49-50; van der Krogt. "More a Part than Apart: the Catholic Community in New Zealand Society 1918-1940." pp386-87.

<sup>92</sup> van der Krogt, "More a Part than Apart: the Catholic Community in New Zealand Society 1918-1940". p391.

<sup>93</sup> The Comintern directed the CPNZ to 'encourage antiwar sentiment within trade unions, increase the circulation of the party newspaper, attack all anti-Soviet campaigns and show that the Soviet Union is the main and most active peace factor in the world today'. Trapeznik, "'Agents of Moscow' at the Dawn of the Cold War." p148.

*Zealandia* and *Tablet* felt no compunction to tone down their hostility to communism. Local communists were ridiculed for their loyalty to the Comintern rather than their country and *Zealandia* attacked the Society for Closer Relations with Russia as being a communist front. *Tablet* was scornful of the press and politicians for whitewashing the tyranny that prevailed in Russia. This view prompted a number of groups in the Labour Movement to complain to the Government that the laws applying to subversive and seditious statements were not being applied evenly and that some men were serving lengthy prison sentences for saying or printing less. The Director of Publicity did admonish both papers and their tone subsequently became somewhat milder. Some Catholic leaders overseas did make the point that in accepting the alliance they were compromising neither their Christianity nor their Church. Distinctions had to be made between the people of Russia, the opposition to communism and the likely outcome from a Nazi victory.<sup>94</sup>

In the immediate aftermath of the war, the Churches were busy adjusting themselves and their people to the reality of peacetime. Anti-communism was, for the Catholic press, a regular item but somewhat low key. Many of these articles were generic warnings about the evil of communism and the need to promote Catholic values as the answer. Reports of speakers addressing various Catholic groups, the Holy Name Society, Catholic returned servicemen, Guild of the Holy Spirit, on communism began to appear. In 1947 the Australian born Bishop of Christchurch, Patrick Lyons was warning of the domination of trade unions in Australia by communists and the need for New Zealanders to take heed.<sup>95</sup> At the same time the papers began to carry items on the suppression of the Catholic Church in newly communist European countries.<sup>96</sup> Atrocities, martyrdom, tales of resoluteness in the face of oppression and unremitting hostility towards the Church started to become a regular feature and from 1952 many were sourced from the N.C.W.C News Service Centre, based in Washington USA.<sup>97</sup> Other news sources were the *Catholic Herald*, London and *Osservatore Romano*, Vatican City. Douglas Hyde, the former news editor of the

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<sup>94</sup> Taylor, *The New Zealand People at War: The Home Front*. pp594-97.

<sup>95</sup> "Communism in New Zealand. Warning by His Lordship Bishop Lyons," *Tablet*, 30 April 1947.

<sup>96</sup> "War against the Church," *Tablet*, 17 December 1947.

<sup>97</sup> "News of the World; Communist Persecution Continues Unabated," *Tablet*, 7 May 1952.

London *Daily Worker*, was frequently featured as an authoritative voice on the workings of communism.<sup>98</sup>

It was not as though there was a paucity of information about the perils of communism and Catholics were urged to avail themselves of the literature available. Church porches always had a range of pamphlets available, ranging from apologetics, devotional readings through to tracts on the major issues of the day, including communism. Catholic booksellers regularly advertised books either demonstrating the fallacy of communism or the error of the ways in a story of a former communist. An advertisement in the *Tablet* in May 1950, for Catholic Literature Distributors of Wanganui, had four books on communism for sale, all from the USA. Two were by the Catholic evangelist Fulton Sheen and one was by Louis Budenz, the former editor of the New York *Daily Worker*, who 'could no longer deceive himself as to the true nature and aim of the communists'. Sheen was credited with Budenz's return to the Catholic Church in 1945.<sup>99</sup>

Locally, Catholics were urged to read Sid Scott's book '*Rebel in a Wrong Cause.*' Scott, a former general secretary of the CPNZ, and his wife Nellie resigned from the Party over the Soviet Union's invasion of Hungary in 1956.<sup>100</sup> In reviewing Scott's book for the *Tablet*, John Reid considered it an illuminating book because of its historical detail and personal insights and one which no Catholic could ignore. Catholics had been told that it was important to distinguish between the ideas and systems of communism and the people involved, because no one was exempt from the duty of charity towards persons.<sup>101</sup> Reid emphasized this by pointing out Scott's laudable personal qualities as against the 'wild-eyed, fanatical, hating communist of

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<sup>98</sup> In 1948 Hyde resigned from the Communist Party in Britain and together with his wife, began to receive instruction with a view to becoming a Catholic. Douglas Hyde, "Communism in Britain Now," *Tablet*, 12 May 1948.

<sup>99</sup> "Topical Reading - an advertisement from Catholic Literature Distributors of Wanganui," *Tablet*, 31 May 1950.

<sup>100</sup> Taylor, Kerry. "Scott, Sidney Wilfred- Biography." In *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*. Wellington, 2010.

<sup>101</sup> "Catholics and Communists," *Tablet*, 8 December 1948. Yet the suspicion of 'communist leanings' could be damaging politically. During 1955 the Labour M.P. Warren Freer had visited China. Ironically his visit, one of the first by a western politician, was contrary to the wishes of Walter Nash but had the blessing of National prime minister Holland. Upon his return to New Zealand, the chairman of his electorate committee visited Freer, wanting to know if it was correct that he (Freer) was a communist. The electorate chair was a 'keen' Catholic and if what was being said in church was true, he would have to resign. Freer was not a communist, but that reputation stayed with him for some time. Freer, Warren. *A Lifetime in Politics. The Memoirs of Warren Freer*. Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2004. pp92,95.

Catholic imagination'. Converting communists from Marxism required the exercise of Christian charity.<sup>102</sup>

### The International Communist menace

The two Catholic newspapers were the main source of information about the Church for the majority of Catholics in New Zealand. Yet they would have learnt little about the local communist party, the CPNZ. The injunction to exercise Christian charity meant the two newspapers simply ignored the Party, although exceptions were made if a prominent member was expelled.<sup>103</sup> Rather, condemnation was aimed at international communism. The numerically small New Zealand party was irrelevant.

By the early 1950s readers of *Zealandia* and the *Tablet* were becoming used to seeing articles on communism. There was a steady diet of articles on persecution of the Church in Europe and China, sometimes accompanied by illustrations of menacing officials and guards standing over browbeaten prisoners, identified as Christians by a cross or clerical garb.<sup>104</sup> The trial and sentencing of Hungary's Cardinal Mindszenty received considerable attention in both the Catholic and secular press, moving New Zealand's hierarchy to say that the 'cruelties in this mockery of justice have brought tears to our eyes'.<sup>105</sup> While some of these articles highlighted physical abuse and torture, most emphasized the harassment the Church and Catholics were experiencing.<sup>106</sup> Mindszenty's trial showed that even justice was denied under communism.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Reid, John C. "Communists Amongst Us." *Tablet*, 8 June 1960. Veritas, "Communist Examines Conscience," *Tablet*, 5 December 1956.

<sup>103</sup> Veritas, "Watching Local Communism," *Tablet*, 27 February 1957. A small item about the expulsion of Connie Birchfield from the Party in 1956 and how the Party might be casting off allegiance to Moscow. Sid Scott left the Party also in 1956 and received considerable publicity in doing so. Elsie Locke's departure the Party in 1959 was cause for another small item.

<sup>104</sup> "Blood Flows For Christ," *Tablet*, 22 October 1952.

<sup>105</sup> "Life Imprisonment; Long Martyrdom for Hungary's Cardinal," *Tablet*, 16 February 1949. Reid, "Struggle for souls -Catholicism and communism in twentieth-century New Zealand." p78.

<sup>106</sup> "Executed by Firing Squad - Heroic Bishop's Death in 1946," *Tablet*, 21 November 1951. "The Diabolical Persecution of the Church," *Tablet*, 14 May 1952; Thomas Bauer, Rev., "Inhuman Torture Exposed. How Chinese Reds Win 'Confessions'." *Tablet*, 14 September 1952. "Cross Over The Kremlin," *Tablet*, 13 January 1954.

<sup>107</sup> Mindszenty's treatment prompted the hierarchy to have parish sodalities and parochial groups send telegrams to their local MPs 'expressing their horror and dismay at the treatment of the Cardinal' and demanding the Government to protest to the United Nations and Hungarian authorities 'against an unprecedented, shocking and wholly unjustified treatment of a great Prelate.' Lyons, Bishop Patrick. "Circular to Parish Priests re Cardinal Mindszenty." In *ACDA, Lis 58/2*. Auckland, 1949.

However both newspapers sought to provide much more perspective on communism than stories of persecution. Their aim was to educate readers by setting Catholic values and teachings against the perfidy of atheistic communism. For example, an editorial in May 1952 made it clear that there could be no compromise between communism and Christianity, and warned against any notion of 'Christian Communism'. The need to teach was supplemented by other articles which gave a 'current affairs' perspective, usually emphasising the inherent instability of communist governments. Joseph Stalin's death and Khrushchev's succession, the Hungarian uprising, the German elections were topics which provided some editorial analysis.<sup>108</sup> But all of the anti-communist material must be seen in the context of the Cold War.

The Cold War (1945-1989) was a global rivalry between Western capitalism and communism. While Stalin's policies in Eastern Europe played a major part in setting the Cold War underway, nuclear weapons, ideology and the great power conflict in the third world were also highly significant factors.<sup>109</sup> Ideological rivalry was not only about power, but the shape of modern society and the politics it practises. How a society was organised and the beliefs that underpin that society were at stake. This was of intense interest to the Church. Since the end of WWII, Pope Pius XII had been repeating the basis of the Church's programme of social reform. Aside from the condemnation of atheistic communism of *Divini Redemptoris*, papal social justice teachings were urging improvement for the conditions of the working man by placing the common good above personal gain and balancing the rights of employer and worker.<sup>110</sup>

The Catholic press was unremittingly anti-communist, as was the mood of most of the country and the mainstream press. Yet it was not entirely uncritical of Western capitalism. Social justice doctrine was evolving. *Quadragesimo Anno* had addressed the reconstruction of the social order by applying a broad theological and philosophical framework to social analysis. Issues that encyclical addressed were the role of government in a society and in the economy, the right of workers to organise, the principle of a just wage and a Christian critique of both capitalism and communism. In the aftermath of WWII the themes of *Quadragesimo Anno* remained

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<sup>108</sup> "Christianity and Communism," *Tablet*, 28 May 1952; "Communism v. Religion," *Tablet*, 12 December 1956. "Communism and Religion in 1956," *Tablet*, 23 January 1957.

<sup>109</sup> Halliday, Fred. "The Cold War: Lessons and Legacies." *Government and Opposition* 45, no. 1 (2010): 1-28. p4.

<sup>110</sup> "The Pope and Social Reform," *Tablet*, 17 September 1947; "Employers and Workers - Pope on Economic Problems," *Tablet*, 17 August 1949.

but there was now a need to provide a moral context for the political and economic issues facing the world at large.<sup>111</sup> Critiquing both capitalism and communism was popular in Catholic Action circles and the Social Justice statements from the Australian bishops elaborated on issues such as the 'Economic Policy of a Christian State' and monopoly capitalism.<sup>112</sup>

The Australian bishops' Social Justice Statements, which began in 1941, were reported in New Zealand and helped to provide an Australasian analysis for the evolving social justice theology. This critiquing of social policy by the Catholic press in New Zealand was robust, but in no way radical. The *Tablet* lambasted a 1952 decision by the Arbitration Court on wages, not so much for the decision per se, but because the principles governing these matters were not in accordance with papal teaching.<sup>113</sup> In 1954, another Arbitration Court decision was examined in light of an Australian social justice statement and again found wanting.<sup>114</sup> These, and similar articles, did not condemn capitalism in all its forms, but argued that incorporating Catholic social teaching into the economic and social order was the only way to achieve the proper balance between the individual's dignity and the common good.

### Fighting communism in the trade unions

Douglas Hyde described why communists were successful in their trade unions.

...It is no exaggeration to say that they are among the keenest, most intelligent and most promising in their various spheres. The success of the Communists in the factories and unions has its basis in the fact that they are recognized as such by their fellow members. They have a

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<sup>111</sup> McBrien. *Catholicism*. p913. In *Quadragesimo Anno*, Pius XI advocated a new structure of disciplined corporations in which representatives of employers, managers and the workers within an individual factory of industrial sector would resolve conflicts and learn to respect each other's needs. This corporatist ideal was seen as a Catholic solution to the economic issues of the Depression. Where these corporations were introduced (Portugal, Italy) they proved ineffective as they rapidly became large bureaucratic structures where the employers predominated. For some unionists, the reputation of *Quadragesimo Anno* was damaged by identification with Mussolini's Corporate State, while others saw organised co-operation as the antithesis of free, competitive enterprise. In 1949 Pius XII castigated those who deliberately misconstrued the intent of the disciplined corporations and maintained that the original prescription would work. "Employers and Workers - Pope on Economic Problems." Conway, *Catholic Politics in Europe 1918-1945*. p63.

<sup>112</sup> Hogan, ed. *Justice Now! Social Justice Statements of the Australian Catholic Bishops First Series: 1940-1966*. pp102-03.

<sup>113</sup> "Determining a Just Wage," *Tablet*, 23 July 1952.

<sup>114</sup> "Wages and Family Income," *Tablet*, 22 September 1954.

record of service and willingness and ability to fight which has put them where they are.<sup>115</sup>

Both the National and Labour parties denounced communism. The parties publicized their anti-communist credentials in election advertisements in the *Tablet*. Although National aggressively linked communism with socialism and Labour, and Labour claimed 'Toryism breeds Communism', communism was attacked by both parties.<sup>116</sup> When Bishop Lyons spoke at the 1948 St. Patrick's day concert in Christchurch, he acknowledged the relief that 'our Parliamentary representatives, whether in Government or in Opposition, have pledged to us their determination to stay the hand of the wreckers who would abuse the freedom of this Dominion....'<sup>117</sup> Prime Minister Fraser and Robert Semple, the Minister of Works, had both been passionately campaigning against communism in the weeks before the 1948 FOL conference, where the radicals (including communists) were decisively defeated. Full employment was a major factor as to why Labour had continued as the government in the immediate post war period.<sup>118</sup> That, in itself, was a potent weapon against domestic communism obtaining some leverage.

Nevertheless Cold War politics meant that anything that could be vaguely identified with communism was regarded with deep suspicion.<sup>119</sup> New Zealand's anti-communist reputation was endorsed by the wide-circulation US magazine *The Saturday Evening Post* in an editorial applauding the election of the 'anti-socialist National Party into power'.<sup>120</sup>

In Australia, the Catholic Church had, prior to WWII, been involved in combating communist influence in the trade union movement. New Zealand bishops would have been aware of the anti-communist moves in Australia as they met with the

<sup>115</sup> Hyde, "Communism in Britain Now."

<sup>116</sup> "Electioneering Advertisements for National," *Tablet*, 16 November 1949; "Electioneering Advertisements for Labour," *Tablet*, 16 November 1949. "Electoral advertisement for Labour," *Tablet*, 22 August 1951; "Electoral advertisement for National," *Tablet*, 22 August 1951. Advertisements in the *Tablet* for National in the 1946 election made no mention of communism as such, although 'state socialism' and 'freedom' were paired as opposites. "Advertisement for the National Party," *Tablet*, 6 November 1946. During the 1938 election National accused Labour of having an agenda which aimed to nationalize the means of production, distribution and exchange which was a precursor for establishing communism. van der Krogt, "More a Part than Apart: the Catholic Community in New Zealand Society 1918-1940". p390.

<sup>117</sup> "Communism Policy of Destruction, is Bishop Lyons view," *Star-Sun*, 18 March 1948.

<sup>118</sup> McLennan, Roy. "The Last Years Of The First Labour Government, 1945-1949." Master of Arts, Auckland, 1963. p180.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid. pp236-7, 283.

<sup>120</sup> "Two "Reactionary" Years Pass, and New Zealand Still Rejects Statism," *The Saturday Evening Post*, 20 October 1951.



Australian hierarchy on a regular basis. Bishop Lyons, the Australian bishop of Christchurch, was a protégé of Archbishop Mannix and kept in contact with him.<sup>121</sup> Mannix was a strong supporter of the Secretariat and its anti-communist activities, so Lyons would have been reasonably well informed.<sup>122</sup>

But the New Zealand Catholic Church's approach to fighting communism in the unions did not emulate the methods employed by the Australian Church. Instead they adopted a much more low-key tactic that retained the spirit of combating communism in the trade union movement, but recognized the distinctly different circumstances that existed in New Zealand. The National Government was interested. In August 1952 two members of the Information Section in the Prime Minister's Department called on McKeefry to 'discuss ways and means of checking Communistic activities in New Zealand.'<sup>123</sup>

In 1948 McKeefry wrote to B.A. Santamaria in Australia asking for any material that would be useful in getting a group started to undertake 'union work.'<sup>124</sup> Some ten years earlier McKeefry had, as editor of the *Zealandia*, warned of communist activity in the trade unions and appealed to Catholics to take an active part in their trade unions to counter such influence.<sup>125</sup> Santamaria sent him a 'Memorandum on the Movement' in which were set out the key issues for organizing a small group of loyal Catholic men with trade union experience between the ages of 25 and 45 years. The suggested aims of the group were (a) to eradicate every vestige of communist influence in the trade union movement, (b) to fill the vacuum by a new trade union

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<sup>121</sup> Lyons wrote to Liston regarding advice given to him by Mannix '... a good piece of advice given to me by His Grace of Melbourne, which I have tried always to follow. It was: "When you are carrying a controversy by letter (for example, in the newspapers) never let your antagonist shift one iota from the point. If he shifts, don't follow him, but bring him back to the point." His Grace used to add "this is particularly necessary when dealing with Protestants, as they are brought up on illogical reasoning." Lyons, Bishop Patrick. "Letter to Liston re advice from Mannix." In *ACDA, Lis 58/2*. Auckland, 1949.

<sup>122</sup> B. A. Santamaria became assistant secretary of the Australian National Secretariat of Catholic Action (ANSCA) in 1938 and assumed control in 1946. He then had responsibility for ANSCA, the Rural Movement and the Catholic Social Studies Movement (the Movement). ANSCA was a focal point for some of the opposition to the political/industrial activities undertaken in the name of the Church, especially concerning the proper role of Catholic Action. During 1954, Catholic Action was separated from the Industrial activities of the Movement and ANSCA abolished. The funding it received for its activities was redirected to the Movement. Duncan. *Crusade or Conspiracy? Catholics and the Anti-Communist Struggle in Australia*. pp22-23, 221.

<sup>123</sup> Unknown. "Note in file." In *WAA, Social Justice: Study Groups, #095* Wellington, 1952.

<sup>124</sup> McKeefry, Archbishop Peter. "Letter to B.A. Santamaria." In *WAA, Social Justice; Study Groups 1948-1973 #095*. Wellington, 1948. Santamaria warned McKeefry about mail tampering and suggested he get another post office box under a different name. McKeefry arranged to have all material from Santamaria sent to his secretary's home address.

<sup>125</sup> van der Krogt, "More a Part than Apart: the Catholic Community in New Zealand Society 1918-1940". p386.

leadership of men thoroughly grounded in Christian social principles and (c) to extend the fight from the trade unions to every organ of public and civic life – political parties, ex-servicemen’s organisations, cultural and educational bodies and the like. The memo outlined a process needed to meet the aims, including intellectual and spiritual formation, the use of propaganda and how expansion can occur.<sup>126</sup> This was strong stuff and parts (b) and (c) would in all likelihood have given McKeefry pause for thought. Catholics were a much smaller grouping in the general population than in Australia and the chances of a sectarian reaction to Church-mandated interference in trade union affairs were significant. As for extending the fight from the trade unions, McKeefry would have recognized that that role properly belonged to Catholic Action, already established in New Zealand, and the way in which individual Catholics chose to represent their spiritual values in their workplaces.

Santamaria wrote to McKeefry again in 1951 asking about the progress made in terms of the ‘industrial work’ in New Zealand, pointing out repercussions from the New Zealand ‘waterfront trouble’ in Australia and warning of the ‘Pan–Pacific’ plans of the communist party.<sup>127</sup> McKeefry’s reply was somewhat non-committal, although he did say that some progress had been made, although hampered by a shortage of priests.<sup>128</sup>

McKeefry was also corresponding with Father P Ryan who headed the Movement in the Sydney Archdiocese. The suggestion was made that a New Zealand priest be sent to Sydney to learn about the Movement, but none were available and McKeefry was reluctant to send a layman.<sup>129</sup> Unlike in Melbourne where the Movement had its headquarters, the Sydney bishops insisted on clerical oversight of the NSW Movement. Archbishop Mannix in Melbourne was willing to allow Santamaria effective control while a special committee of bishops, meant to control both policy and finance of the Movement, chose to limit their oversight to a ‘negative watch over

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<sup>126</sup> Morgan, ed. *B.A. Santamaria: Running The Show*. pp154-159.

<sup>127</sup> Santamaria, B A "Letter to McKeefry asking about progress as regards 'industrial work, repercussions in Australia from the waterfront disturbances and the pan-pacific plans of the communist party." In *WAA, Social Justice, Rev. J A Higgins, #100.3*. Wellington, 1951.

<sup>128</sup> McKeefry, Archbishop Peter. "Letter to B A Santamaria regarding the 'industrial work'." In *WAA, Social Justice, Rev. J A Higgins, #100.3*. Wellington, 1951.

<sup>129</sup> ———, "Letter to P. Ryan (Sydney Movement)," in *Social Justice; Study Groups 1948-1973* (Wellington: WDA, 1948).

faith and morals.<sup>130</sup> McKeefry would have warmed to the Sydney direction, especially as the New Zealand bishops interpreted any form of Catholic Action as being under the direction of the bishops.

McKeefry also had connections with the FOL and was pleased about the Federation's attitude to the agitation on the waterfront. In 1951 he wrote to the secretary/treasurer of the Wellington District Council of the FOL, discussing the most recent industrial news from Australia and saying how pleased he was with their attitude.<sup>131</sup> Although its president, Fintan Patrick Walsh, had had a Catholic upbringing, he had no time for the Church. But McKeefry was willing to express confidence in Walsh's leadership. This confidence was strengthened by knowing that Catholics such as Peter Butler were on the FOL executive.<sup>132</sup> Butler was a prominent Wellington trade union official who had once been a communist but had returned to Catholicism.<sup>133</sup>

McKeefry received reports from within the trade union movement and followed the situation closely. These contacts would have made him very aware of how different the situation as regards communism in the union movement was in New Zealand to that of Australia. Besides during the late 1940s and early 1950s the FOL, its president Walsh and the National Party Prime Minister Sid Holland did not need any special Catholic assistance as regards promoting anti-communism in trade union politics.<sup>134</sup>

### The Catholic Workers Study Circle

By late 1948 McKeefry asked the Vicar General for names of reliable men and a list of some 39 names was furnished and sent to Peter Butler, who became the initial convener of the Catholic Workers Study Circle. By 1950 the Circle was active in Wellington. There were 12 parishes involved with some 260 members. The Circle

<sup>130</sup> Fitzgerald, Ross, and with the assistance of Adam Carr and William J Dealy. *The Pope's Battalions. Santamaria, Catholicism and the Labor Split*. St. Lucia, Queensland 4067: University of Queensland Press, 2003. pp75-76.

<sup>131</sup> McKeefry, Archbishop Peter. "Letter to Ray Scott re Australian Union troubles and the NZ FOL." In *WAA, Social Justice Rev. J.A. Higgins #100.3*. Wellington, 1951.

<sup>132</sup> ———. "Letter to Peter Butler about the situation on the waterfront and expressing confidence in F.P. Walsh." In *WAA, Social Justice, Rev. J A Higgins, #100.3*. Wellington, 1951.

<sup>133</sup> Franks, Peter. "'Butler, Peter Michael 1901-1995'." In *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*. Wellington: Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2007.

<sup>134</sup> Reid, "Struggle for souls -Catholicism and communism in twentieth-century New Zealand." p85.

was seen as means of rectifying the 'minor influence which clearly Catholic workers had on the major issues of social relations'.<sup>135</sup> Catholic trade unionists were encouraged to explore the Church's teaching on social justice. It was envisaged that members would be placed into their respective industrial groupings to study the issues at hand, which, at this time was communism and its impact on the trade union movement.

Father John Higgins SM was the chaplain and mainstay of the Circle. Prior to WWII, he had founded the Catholic Social Guild in Wellington and developed a programme of extension classes and study groups based on Catholic sociology. These were delivered throughout the larger towns of the diocese. *Quadragesimo Anno* provided Higgins with encouragement by stressing the balance between justice and charity. Catholic Action arrived in the mid-1930s and it gave Catholic sodalities the opportunity to raise amongst Catholics the importance of Christian principles in applying social justice.<sup>136</sup> Higgins' vision for the Circle was the notion of fighting communism through an educated laity who would recognize the shallowness of communism for what it was. His organisation was not aimed at confronting communism within the realms of trade union politics.

Even though the Circle was not actively involving itself in trade union affairs, there were tensions. Some members were unhappy with a decision to make a public submission to the 1950 Royal Commission on the Waterfront. Such a public submission, it was felt, could have serious repercussions for those Circle members who worked on the Waterfront, especially since the watersiders were boycotting the Commission.<sup>137</sup> Members of the Circle were willing to engage in social justice discussion, but were less enthusiastic about being involved in trade union politics at such a sensitive time.

Perhaps the lasting legacy of the Circle was the journal '*Manifest*'. It was the official publication of the Wellington Catholic Workers Study Circle and ran for most of the 1950s. *Manifest* made regular comment and critique on communism and trade unions, but its overall tone had a much broader social justice scope than simply an

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<sup>135</sup> Unknown. "Catholic Workers' Study Circle: Report to Annual Meeting." In *WAA, Social Justice Rev. J A Higgins #100.3*. Wellington, 1950.

<sup>136</sup> O'Meeghan. *Steadfast in hope. The Story of the Catholic Archdiocese of Wellington 1850-2000*. pp228-9.

<sup>137</sup> Scott, J F. "Letter from Wellington Catholic Workers' Circles to McKeefry re submissions to Royal Commission on the Waterfront Industry." In *WAA, Social Justice Rev. J A Higgins, #100.3*. Wellington, 1950.

anti-communist mouthpiece. It did not attack any particular instance of trade union activity, rather using teachings about the moral and practical basis for effective participation in trade unions.<sup>138</sup> Although the Study Group declined in membership during the 1950s, social justice remained an important theme for many Catholics. But in the Wellington diocese, fighting communism in the trade union movement never moved beyond involvement in the Circle for Catholic workers. They were encouraged to remain active in their respective unions. But the Archbishop saw no reason to emulate the Movement's tactics, especially as the anti-communist strength in the FOL was sufficiently robust to keep communism from gaining any distinct advantage.<sup>139</sup>

### The CIG

By 1955 a 'Catholic Industrial Group' (CIG) was active in Auckland. It was, in part, modelled on the Australian 'Movement', and had, as its *raison d'être*, countering communist activity, especially at the executive level, in the trade union movement in Auckland. But any comparison was limited. The CIG, unlike the Movement, was not a national movement and its bailiwick was restricted to the Auckland diocese, although in reality that meant the Auckland metropolitan area, not by design but rather the level of support it could attract. Early in 1955 it reported an active membership of 85 but by August it had dropped to 71. Support, in the shape of Catholic trade unionists who were willing to become active in their trade union, was of on-going concern for the organisers, in particular the chaplain, Franciscan Father Hilary Turner OFM.

A key difference between the Australian Movement and the CIG was the extent of clerical control. Santamaria described the Movement as a 'lay organisation' whereby purely temporal decisions were made by laymen without involving the hierarchy, although subject to the 'general directives of the Bishops on moral and religious

<sup>138</sup> "Manifest: The Official Organ of the Wellington Catholic Workers Study Circle." In *WAA, Social Justice: Manifest #097*. Wellington, 1953.

<sup>139</sup> Dick Scott describes infiltrating a 'Catholic Workers Study Circle' in the 1950s. He credits Catholic Action for disrupting 'popular' Friday night street corner meetings held by the communist party. The Study Circle was one of fifteen set up in Wellington to give members 'sufficient grasp of the Pope's teachings on strikes and wages, inspired by the call of Pius XI that they could not be inactive. Regular meetings were held to plan and develop strategies for 'influencing, better still controlling trade unions'. He tells of one member who was able to search army records regarding communist ex-servicemen 'prominent in the public eye'. That person later lost his job. Scott, Dick. *Dick Scott. A Radical Writer's Life*. Auckland: Reed Publishing (NZ) Ltd., 2004. pp123-124.

issues'. Movement chaplains were only for the spiritual formation of lay leaders.<sup>140</sup> This state of affairs would not occur in New Zealand. For bishops such as James Liston, the 'apostolate of the laity' was subject to the discipline of hierarchical governance and as such the laity was duty bound to accept the directives of their bishops. No group could establish itself in any parish in the diocese without the consent of the bishop, and, as such, was bound by the direction of the bishop. Accordingly the CIG was only in the diocese at the discretion of Liston, whose own anti-communism in the decade after WWII was taking on 'an apocalyptic tone'.<sup>141</sup> Father Ernest Simmons served under Liston for 17 years, including time as editor of the *Zealandia* (1962-69), and characterized him as being 'implacably, and almost unreasonably, opposed to communism'.<sup>142</sup>

Structurally the CIG was divided into what was known as regional groups (Mt. Roskill, Ponsonby-Grey Lynn, Ellerslie-Tamaki, Otahuhu and Avondale.) Each regional held a weekly meeting with a fixed agenda which included prayer and a gospel discussion.<sup>143</sup> At the regional meetings, delegates were chosen to attend the city wide delegates' meeting where a report was received from each regional group. At the delegates' meeting, each delegate provided a report from their regional group and any contentious issues discussed. Interestingly a letter in *The Nation* describes a delegates CIG meeting.<sup>144</sup> The letter writer had a friend who went to a

meeting at which a Franciscan monk met the representatives of unions and the various L.R.C's<sup>145</sup> in Auckland. For half an hour only they had a religious discussion, then the monk produced a large book and asked for the reports of the various 'delegates' present. In turn, executive members of the various unions got to their feet and reported in great detail on the private affairs and domestic lives, moral and otherwise, of prominent officials. The reports were recorded by the monk and further questions were asked as reports were made by priests present. The Franciscan would every now and then say "Watch that chap. He may not be a Comm., but he has Comm. friends."..... When the meeting at

<sup>140</sup> Morgan, ed. *B.A. Santamaria: Running The Show*. p286.

<sup>141</sup> Reid. *James Michael Liston A Life*. p227.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid. p17.

<sup>143</sup> The set agenda was: an opening prayer, roll call, the pledge, Gospel discussion, delegates meeting discussion, trade union meeting reports, general business, a collection if needed and a closing prayer.

<sup>144</sup> *The Nation* described itself as a 'Journal devoted to Protestantism and Loyalty'.

<sup>145</sup> Labour Representation Committee.

Mt. Albert came to a conclusion those present were all asked to take a solemn oath that the business transacted would be treated as confidential...<sup>146</sup>

Although this account was part of an article purporting to show that the Catholic Church, and particularly Catholic Action, had undue influence in the Labour Party, the description of the meeting was not entirely inaccurate. The Franciscan monk was Father Hilary Turner. Although the minutes of the delegates' meetings did not record the private affairs and domestic lives of prominent officials, it would be stretching credibility to suggest that these discussions were not held. In fact the gathering of information about those trade unionists who were either communist or were considered communist supporters, was crucial to the work of the CIG. For example the secretary of the Tramways Union was identified as 'an undercover communist and a very capable secretary', the secretary of the Drivers Union, a known communist, was acknowledged as 'extremely capable and popular and had a firm grip on the Union', and one of the organisers in the Auckland Carpenters was 'a rabid communist, a real member of the Party and not a mere fellow-traveller'.<sup>147</sup> These pen-portraits contributed to the information being gathered on 'the struggle', which in many cases came down to 'a two cornered contest between Catholics and Communists – between the Group and the Party'. In this particular case, CIG members persuaded non-Catholic unionists to stand for the executive as there was no other interested party, but in general the CIG saw itself as the only organised opposition to the communists .<sup>148</sup>

*The Nation's* reference to the 'LRCs' was not out of place although the linkage was not as conspiratorial as implied in the 'letter'. All CIG members were obliged to be active trade unionists and their involvement in the Labour Party was not unsurprising. Since Labour had a strong anti-communist stance, was the traditional political home of the trade union movement, and had a warm relationship with the Catholic Church,

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<sup>146</sup> "The Labour Party and State Aid/ Infiltrating the Labour Party."

<sup>147</sup> Hilary, Rev Father, OFM. "Report - Catholic Industrial Groups." In *ACDA, Lis 217*. Auckland, 1955. ———. "Delegates Meeting-Catholic Industrial Group." In *ACDA, Lis 217*. Auckland, 1957. The archival record refers to Father or F. Hilary and the various reports and minutes are signed or countersigned as 'F. Hilary OFM'. Consequently the narrative will continue to refer to Hilary rather than Turner.

<sup>148</sup> This related to the election of officers for the Auckland Carpenters' Union. This union had been deregistered by the Labour Government in 1949 over a series of industrial disputes that hampered post-war recovery. By the mid-1950s it was working towards re-affiliation with the national association of Carpenters' Union.

some members would have belonged to both. In August 1956 a resolution was passed by the CIG delegates supporting the upcoming Labour election campaign. At that same meeting a CIG delegate reported attending an Auckland LRC meeting as a bona fide member and debating a remit on state aid for private schools.<sup>149</sup> Links to Labour gave the CIG access to the politics of the Party and another source of information about union activities.<sup>150</sup> Although some Catholics were concerned about the company some Labour people kept, the Party was open to the spirit of the social justice messages the Church championed.

But the 'religious discussion' was an important element. Catholic Action was based on enabling workers to analyse and reflect on their working and domestic worlds in light of Christian principles and then act on the conclusions reached, the 'see, judge and act' formula.<sup>151</sup> This spiritual formation of workers was an important ingredient of lay apostolate work, enabling the members to recognize the theological and spiritual underpinnings of their work. Liston would have been distressed if the 'religious discussion' was not a significant agenda item and the chaplains were usually resolute in seeing it carried out.

Members were expected to keep the existence of the CIG secret. The rationale was that, as an open organisation, members could be at risk from intimidation if their activities were widely known. But more importantly too strong a link with the Church might deter anti-communist non-Catholics from working with the CIG members. Clearly the activities of the CIG were not entirely secret, but administering the oath at the end of a meeting was designed to ensure a reasonable degree of confidentiality. This secrecy was a hallmark of the Movement. The Australian hierarchy was unwilling to be publicly associated with what many, including Catholics, regarded as an undue interference in politics. Likewise the New Zealand hierarchy was wary of being openly associated with trade union activity and courting the type of controversy being generated in Australia. Although the Communist Party accused the Catholic hierarchy of working in league with the National Party and the Chambers of Commerce against the interests of the working class in the 1951 waterfront dispute, the bishops and the two Catholic newspapers refrained from public comment.<sup>152</sup> If

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<sup>149</sup> Hilary, Rev Father, OFM. "Delegates meeting-Catholic Industrial Group." In *ACDA, Lis 217*. Auckland, 1956.

<sup>150</sup> ———. "Industrial Newsletter -Catholic Industrial Group." In *ACDA, Lis 217*. Auckland, 1960.

<sup>151</sup> Massam. *Sacred Threads. Catholic Spirituality In Australia 1922-1962*. p195.

<sup>152</sup> Reid, Nicholas. "Struggle for Souls." *Australian Historical Studies* 37 (2006): 72-88. p85.



newspaper comment was made, it was likely to be in reference to communist trade union activity outside of New Zealand.<sup>153</sup>

The CIG was known to those who needed to know. But it also needed a public name. Fund raising by way of raffles, stalls and the like, was important as the Group had no independent funding and at the best of times carried a very modest surplus.<sup>154</sup> But any *nom de guerre* should not divulge their true purpose, so they chose the 'Social Justice League' as their public, or cover name. It was not entirely misleading but, similar to the Movement and its cover title of the 'Catholic Social Studies Movement', was sufficient to deter the inquisitive.

By August 1955, Father Hilary was able to claim that seventeen members, or Groupers as he referred to them, of the CIG held executive positions on their respective unions. The larger unions included the Auckland Carpenters, Railway Tradesmen's Association, Auckland Timber Workers, Auckland Electrical Workers, Shop Assistants, Auckland Brewery Workers and Auckland Tramways.<sup>155</sup> In some unions Hilary found it hard to get Catholic members to co-operate with the CIG. These tended to be the low or unskilled occupations where the CIG mission was not understood and from which it was difficult to train leaders.

However for CIG members, it was a constant round of union meetings and this pressure took its toll. Hilary reported how meetings were 'killing the seven or eight members of the Carpenters Union'. Communist unionists and their supporters were, for example, often able to change the rules as regards the increased frequency of meetings which meant CIG members had to attend all meetings to ensure their voice was heard. There was constant pressure on CIG members to match the manpower the communist unionists could muster. Hilary reported that some members were suffering medical complaints and, as a result, and having to withdraw from or reduce their union work.

Although numbers remained small, the CIG were constantly endeavouring to counter communist activities in the Auckland trade union movement, principally by having non-communist unionists elected to executive positions. At times the sense that they were the only opposition to communism in the unions did make the task seem overwhelming, but they were not alone. The anti-communism of the FOL in the mid-

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<sup>153</sup> "Communists As Strike Fomenters." *Tablet*, 20 October 1954.

<sup>154</sup> Hilary, "Delegates meeting-Catholic Industrial Group."

<sup>155</sup> .———, "Report - Catholic Industrial Groups."

1950s remained vigorous. The Federation's May Day Manifesto of 1957 praised the International Federation of Free Trade Unions and excoriated the 'Communist forces of oppression'.<sup>156</sup> Ray Nunes, then the Wellington District Secretary of CPNZ, was disturbed by F.P. Walsh wanting to prevent communists from holding official positions in trade unions.<sup>157</sup> Anti-communists outside the CIG were standing against communists for executive positions and the other Christian denominations, by and large, shared the Catholic distaste for communism and spoke against it from the pulpit.

In May 1955 Arnold Nordmeyer, in a speech to the Labour Party annual conference, warned that action against communism in the trade union movement should not be left to 'the representatives of one Church'. Unless there was a united approach

there would arise a suspicion that a group sought to exercise an influence out of proportion to its numbers, with the consequence of counter-action resulting in religious bitterness....No sectional religious group should ever be permitted to dominate the party. What had happened in Australia could not be disregarded in New Zealand.<sup>158</sup>

Despite the Auckland diocese having a group dedicated to confronting communism in the trade union movement, other New Zealand Catholic dioceses chose not to do so. Liston's strong anti-communism aside, the other dioceses did not have the relative population concentration of Auckland and the trade union potential to seriously damage the country's well-being. State aid was a much greater priority. Nordmeyer's warning spoke of the wider political issues where Church and state met and the extent to which a Church can impose its values on others in a democratic society.

By 1960 a group called the New Zealand Democratic League was functioning in the Auckland diocese.<sup>159</sup> Its aims were similar to the CIG, although there appears to be no record of the formal closing of the CIG. Father Hilary had departed. Since the name 'Industrial Group' was associated with the scandal surrounding the Movement

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<sup>156</sup> Federation of Labour. "May Day Manifesto 1957." In *ATL, 94-106-52/03 New Zealand Federation of Labour, Record & Research Note, 1957*. Wellington, 1957.

<sup>157</sup> Nunes, R. "Letter from Nunes (Secretary) to the National Secretariat of the Communist Party claiming F.P. Walsh has made accusations aligning the Party with corruption." In *ATL, 94-106-52/03, New Zealand Federation of Labour, Record & Research Note 1957*. Wellington, 1957.

<sup>158</sup> "Unity against Communism," *Zealandia*, 19 May 1955.

<sup>159</sup> O'Connor, C. "Annual Report- New Zealand Democratic League." In *ACDA, Lis 217*. Auckland, 1960.

in Australia, continuing to use it would have been unhelpful. But the *modus operandi* was similar. The League's key objective was to get members elected onto the Auckland Trades Council and the executive of various unions and reported a fair degree of success in 1960.

But maintaining membership was clearly a problem. Numbers kept dropping.<sup>160</sup> By 1963 the League's objectives were being challenged by some members, and a suggestion made that they link with the National Civic Council of Australia.<sup>161</sup>

Santamaria had set up this lay body, after the demise of the Movement, to carry on the struggle against communist forces and their supporters in the Australian union movement. It is not known if this linkage was ever achieved as after 1963 the Democratic League disappears from the record.

The League was the last manifestation of direct Catholic activity to counter communism in the trade unions. In New Zealand this activity had always been below the radar of the average Catholic. Its relevance dwindled as the publicity given to communism lost the vehemence of the 1950s. By the early 1960s, the campaign against communism was becoming more subdued in both the *Tablet* and *Zealandia*. There was a new liberalism and the Cold War and American foreign policy was now subjected to criticism, a scrutiny absent in the 1950s.

### **Catholic press coverage of the Movement in New Zealand**

Support for the CIG faded as the need for aggressive anti-communist action lost its urgency. By the early 1960s the Movement had long fallen into disfavour and the Australian Catholic Church had to deal with the aftermath of the friction between those who supported the Movement and those who opposed it. This affected both clergy and laity and it took directions from Rome and time for the breaches to begin to heal.

Yet the years 1955 to 1957 saw extensive coverage of the dispute between the Movement and the Australian Labor Party by both the Catholic newspapers in New Zealand. John Kennedy was a New Zealand journalist working for the *Melbourne Herald* and had been contributing to the *Tablet* since 1943. William Jordan was a

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<sup>160</sup> NZ Democratic League. "Minutes of Executive Meeting." In *ACDA, Lis 217*. Auckland, 1963.

<sup>161</sup> Dowling, T.E. "Letter to Archbishop Liston from the New Zealand Democratic League " In *ACDA, Lis 217*. Auckland, 1963.

New Zealander who had settled in Melbourne after WWII and became a writer for the Movement's newspaper the *News-Weekly*. He had previously contributed articles to *Zealandia* while he was with the New Zealand forces fighting in North Africa. Aside from North Africa, Jordan spent time in both Greece and France fighting with partisans against the Germans. During his time in Greece he witnessed the internecine conflict between communist controlled resistance forces and non-communist partisans and it was from this experience he became an ardent anti-communist.

Both correspondents were writing from Melbourne, the headquarters of the Movement and the powerbase of B. A. Santamaria. Their consistent theme was the matrix of communism, the trade union movement, the Australian Labor Party and the Catholic Church. Jordan made it quite clear that his column was for 'interpreting the news', not reporting it.<sup>162</sup>

By their very nature these columns were partisan accounts of Australian domestic political events that occurred during these years. The Australian hierarchy had endorsed Santamaria's Movement and its actions in tackling communism across the trade union movement. From 1945 Industrial Groups had been formed within the ALP and these became the chief weapon against communism. The Movement provided much of the backbone of the Groups as they fought for clean ballot legislation to combat communist officials manipulating the rules.

But as the ALP began to feel the stresses and strains of internal ructions brought about by the growing resentment of the influence of the Industrial Groups and what many saw as a cover for Catholic anti-communist activity, political infighting damaged the Party.<sup>163</sup> Although the hierarchy continued to justify the work of the Movement as a bulwark against communism, the political dynamics within the ALP were increasingly rejecting the role of the Movement as being in the best interests of the Party.

As the ALP split in 1954-55 and the rump of the pro-Industrial Group parliamentarians formed the Democratic Labor Party, so there was increasing antagonism and polarization in the Catholic community over the Movement and the

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<sup>162</sup> Jordan. "The Australian Scene."

<sup>163</sup> Fitzgerald, and Dealy. *The Pope's Battalions. Santamaria, Catholicism and the Labor Split*. pp72-73.

ALP Party. Divided loyalties led to physical altercations at the parish church level.<sup>164</sup> Division was also evident at the most senior level in the Church, as Cardinal Gilroy and his bishop James Carroll effectively de-powered the Movement in NSW, opting to have Catholic political activity channelled through the Labor Party. This was a major break with the Melbourne powerbase of the Movement and eventually required papal intervention to resolve the dispute.

Yet the reports from the Australian columnists did not try and explain that the politics within the Australian episcopate were complex. The New Zealand readers would have known that sectarianism was on the rise and manipulated by Dr. Evatt; that the Bishops regarded this cleavage in Australian political life, particularly in the Labor Party, as a price worth paying; that more strikes had occurred since the Industrial Groups were disbanded; and that communist support was endemic in the ALP.<sup>165</sup>

There was no analysis of the Sydney-Melbourne breach or the actions of the NSW hierarchy in siding with the ALP. However both columnists attacked Catholics who supported Dr. Evatt and the ALP. Jordan considered

the majority of Catholic members of Parliament remaining in the Australian Labor Party are those who so dearly cling to plums of office that they would rather remain active members of a pro-communist party than stand up for principle and risk their political futures.<sup>166</sup>

Catholic support for Evatt was equated with assisting communism and Jordan 'invoked Church authority to condemn Catholics opposed to the Movement line.'<sup>167</sup>

Both columnists were unequivocal in their complete opposition to communism and its influence. They whole-heartedly backed the Melbourne position in the dispute and clearly felt their articles would help New Zealand Catholics keep communism at bay. In Kennedy's view what was happening in Australia did matter to New Zealand

....The threat may not be so immediate in New Zealand, but it is sufficiently advanced here in Australia to serve as a graphic warning to

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<sup>164</sup> Ibid. pp152-53.

<sup>165</sup> Kennedy, J.P. "Sectarianism In Australia." *Tablet*, 19 October 1955.; ———, "Bishops' Warning Justified," *Tablet*, 10 August 1955; Jordan, "The Australian Scene." These themes were consistent in the articles of both columnists during 1955 through to 1957.

<sup>166</sup> Jordan, William. "The Australian Scene." *Zealandia*, 9 August 1956. Kennedy, J.P. "Are Catholics Forbidden to Support It? Position of the Evatt Labour Party." *Tablet*, 28 May 1958.

<sup>167</sup> Duncan. *Crusade or Conspiracy? Catholics and the Anti-Communist Struggle in Australia*. p245.

New Zealand that communist control of the unions would lead to their being in a position to 'hamstring' the economy.<sup>168</sup>

The reporting of the events from Australia was one-sided, but given the features appeared in Catholic newspapers, criticism of the Church or senior clergy was out of the question. Editorially, both *Zealandia* and the *Tablet* were pro-Movement and anti-Evatt. But despite the bias, it is doubtful if these articles did any more than show the relative stability of the New Zealand situation. In the editorial section of the *Tablet* of May 4 1955, the feature article was 'Grave Choice Confronts A.L.P.' while a secondary article congratulated the New Zealand FOL on its call to repudiate the Communist Party and its trade union activities.<sup>169</sup> These articles illustrated that while New Zealanders needed to be vigilant, the state of affairs in Australia was very different to that in New Zealand.

## Groupers

Hilary had used the term Groupers to describe members of the CIG. In Australia this term referred to members of the anti-communist alliance, i.e. the Industrial Groups of the ALP and the Movement and had been in use since 1945. Although the linkage between the two groups was informal, it was very real. So the term was used by their opponents, usually in a derogatory fashion, but did cause some confusion as it telescoped together two different organisations.<sup>170</sup>

By the late 1950s and early 1960s some prominent New Zealand Catholics in the trade union movement were under fire from the FOL President. Walsh had for some time considered the centre of all evil alternated between Rome and Moscow, and his relationship with both Catholics and communists fluctuated accordingly.<sup>171</sup> When he conceived a conspiracy by Catholic trade union officials to unseat him, he believed the Groupers had 'struck on New Zealand soil'. He had been a pugnacious anti-communist, but in his quarrel with the Catholic trade unionists, men such as Peter Butler, Tony Neary, Jack Kelleher and Des Nolan, he courted support from and gained support from left wing unions. The *People's Voice*, which had, in the past,

<sup>168</sup> Kennedy, J.P. "Disturbing Increase In Communist Influence In Australia." *Tablet*, 3 October 1956.

<sup>169</sup> "N.Z. Labour And Communism," *Tablet*, 4 May 1955.

<sup>170</sup> Morgan, ed. *B.A. Santamaria: Running The Show*. p146.

<sup>171</sup> Nolan, Melanie. "The tyranny of averages and the politics of indexing: The Walsh Years, 1937-63." In *Unions in Common Cause: The New Federation of Labour 1937-88*, edited by Peter Franks and Melanie Nolan. Wellington: Steele Roberts Aotearoa, 2011. p117-120.

reckoned him a 'reactionary bully', now supported his fight against his Catholic opponents.<sup>172</sup>

Walsh had followed the events in Australia closely and was convinced that Catholics in Australia had wrecked the ALP both at state and federal level. This Catholic group in the labour movement, was, he believed, part of Catholic Action, and revealed 'the black hand of the Vatican' at work.<sup>173</sup> Walsh had been president of the Wellington Clerical Workers Union since 1936. In 1959 Des Nolan and Peter Butler's son-in law, Bill Anton, led a ticket contesting the annual election to the management committee of that union. They were unsuccessful, so challenged the conduct of the election. The Arbitration Court ordered new election by way of postal ballot and two of the Nolan ticket were elected. A few months later Walsh was defeated in a postal ballot for the presidency of the Wellington Clerical Workers Union.<sup>174</sup> This put a dent in his power base.

Walsh's sense that a Catholic group was plotting his downfall was heightened as both Neary and Butler successfully sued Walsh separately for defamation and won. At the hearing of Neary's claim, Walsh's counsel tried unsuccessfully to establish that a Butler-Neary-Nolan group was acting in concert against Walsh.<sup>175</sup> But these men were not acting as part of Catholic Action. Neary was opposed to communism, and, like Butler, Nolan and others who took that stand, the issue was one of personal conviction.<sup>176</sup> Aside from the CIG, Catholic trade unionists who opposed communism were not mandated as part of any official Catholic organisation. Their opposition was the action of Catholics, acting on the values and teachings of the Church. They were quite open about where they stood and in the heady, and at times bruising, atmosphere of trade union politics, especially at the FOL level, had to be adroit in using the armoury of procedural weapons available to them to hold their positions. As Walsh demonstrated, anti-communism was one of the means to sustain power in the trade union movement. As Catholics, Butler, Neary and their colleagues could

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<sup>172</sup> Reid. "Struggle for souls -Catholicism and communism in twentieth-century New Zealand."p86.

<sup>173</sup> Moynihan, Carolyn. *On Your Side: A History of the Northern Clerical, Administrative and Related Workers' Union 1936-1986*. Auckland: Northern Clerical Union, 1986. p52.

<sup>174</sup> Hunt, Graeme. *Black Prince. The biography of Fintan Patrick Walsh*. Auckland: Penguin Group (NZ), 2004. p184.

<sup>175</sup> Neary, Tony and Jack Kelleher. *Neary- The Price of Principle*. Auckland: Harlen Publishing Co.Ltd, 1986. p71.

<sup>176</sup> Nicholas Reid makes the point that nowhere in Neary's book (above), does he use the word 'Catholic' or make any mention of a Catholic 'group. Reid, "Struggle for souls -Catholicism and communism in twentieth-century New Zealand." p86.

not forfeit their opposition unless they wished to surrender their personal and religious principles.

Accused of belonging to an industrial group or being called a Grouper was clearly a form of abuse within the trade union movement. Patrick O'Sullivan of the Auckland Maritime Cargo Workers' Union was incensed that a union official had alleged he belonged to 'some sinister group'. O'Sullivan was an anti-communist as well as a 'renegade Catholic' and had started a rival Cargo workers news-sheet, much to the displeasure of the communist element in the union. 'In Australia and N.Zealand (sic), to be branded as a member of an industrial group is tantamount to being termed a grouper'.<sup>177</sup>

But in New Zealand these terms appeared to be rarely used outside trade union and political circles, as the terms grouper and industrial group had no real meaning for the public. Importantly the issue of anti-communist activity in the trade unions did not have the same Church related connotations as in Australia. However anyone following the situation in Australia, such as New Zealand trade union officials, would have been familiar with the terms Grouper and Industrial Group and the implications associated with them. Left leaning unionists would have shared Walsh's fears of a Catholic inspired conspiracy against the trade union movement, given the damage to the labour movement in Australia. Hilary's use of the word Grouper was clearly one of positive identification, whereas for Walsh and others in the trade union movement, it had quite the opposite meaning.

## Conclusion.

Anti-communism in the New Zealand trade union movement involved the Government, the FOL, individual trade unionists, and, to a lesser extent, the Catholic Church. Anti-communist feeling was high in the community at large, and given extra depth by the often exaggerated Cold War rhetoric. All the same, Catholics were urged to exercise charity and recognize the difference between the person and the

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<sup>177</sup> O'Sullivan, Patrick J. "Letter to Secretary Auckland Maritime Cargo Worker's Union from O'Sullivan complaining about the walking delegate." In *ATL, 94-106-42/22, Notes & Clippings, Waterside Unions, Auckland Maritime Cargo Worker's Industrial Union, 1955-56*. Wellington, 1960. O'Sullivan's anti-communism was motivated by a strong dislike of some in the union executive rather than based on any real ideology. Hilary, "Industrial Newsletter- Catholic Industrial Group".



party. As Douglas Hyde observed 'Most, beyond doubt, had come to communism because of the good that was in them.'<sup>178</sup>

The obvious comparison was with what was happening in Australia. It was not so much the Communist Party itself that concerned the Church, as the membership in either country never achieved an electorally significant number, but rather what control communists could exert over the trade union movement and by extension over the economic and political affairs of the country. Press reports from Europe and China spoke of both the state and the Church being overwhelmed by a totalitarian regime, where democracy was crushed and subservience paid to Moscow or Peking. The Christian Churches in Australia and New Zealand relied upon a sound functioning democracy and its attendant freedoms in order to flourish.

During the 1930s the Catholic Church had been warning her people of the dangers of communism. Catholics were forbidden to belong to or support the Party. Persecutions in Russia and Mexico and a civil war in Spain gave the Catholic and secular press plenty of material as to the depravity of communism. Although criticism was tempered during WWII while Russia was an ally, the end of hostilities quickly led to a Cold War where anti-communist rhetoric meant anything associated or aligned with communism was regarded with deep suspicion.

Catholic clergy had, since the late 1930s, been urging Catholic trade unionists to become active in their unions so as to prevent communists from taking control. After WWII, Catholics were increasingly urged to embrace the Church's social justice teachings and become fully engaged with their society in all its facets, political, economic and cultural. Such engagement included bringing Christian values to the workplace and having those values accepted. This, papal teachings claimed, would halt the propagation of communist activity in the workplace. However some bishops, especially in Australia, felt the situation required a more aggressive approach and the anti-communist Movement was born.

In New Zealand, Archbishop McKeefry was initially interested in the Movement, but recognized that the situation as regards communism in the trade union movement was different for each country. Instead he encouraged Catholic trade unionists to

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<sup>178</sup> Hyde, Douglas. *I Believed. The Autobiography of a former British Communist*. London: William Heinmann Ltd, 1951. p274.

meet and study issues relating to social justice and, through that process, understand why communism was wrong.

A more direct form of tackling communism in the trade unions, the Catholic Industrial Group (CIG), was formed in Auckland. Each bishop had the right to decide what Catholic organisations were allowed in his particular diocese, and Liston had a strong anti-communist outlook. The CIG modelled itself to a certain extent on the Movement, collecting information on the state of various unions with a view to having CIG members or at least anti-communist unionists elected onto the executive. It had some success.

The link between the Catholic Church and the Labour Party was important. Active Catholic unionists were likely to be associated with the Labour Party which meant that they had access to the political machinery and additional information relating to issues in the Trade Union movement, very useful in the case of disentangling genuine union affairs from communist inspired action.

But the overwhelming concern for the New Zealand Catholic Church was state aid to private schools and it was to this that the hierarchy concentrated upon. Catholics were busy supporting their parochial schools financially and encouraged to support the campaign to change the state's attitude to financial support. Anti-communism was, at best, of secondary concern, relying upon individual Catholics who felt strongly enough about the issue or those Catholics who were professionally involved in the trade union movement.

Rather than being at the forefront of anti-communism in the trade union movement, the Catholic effort was that of an important but minor player. The ebb and flow of communist success in the trade unions tended to reflect a number of personal characteristics, such as the ability of individual officials, or the success in negotiating wages and conditions. The Catholic strategy was to have an educated trade union membership which could refute the Communist ideology, while supporting efforts to have committed laymen challenge communism within the unions.

## Conclusion

Any consideration of the relationship between the Catholic Church in New Zealand and the state must recognise the difficulty in providing a straightforward answer. This thesis has asked how both Church and state worked with one another across three areas of mutual concern, and it would be fair to conclude that they were, in their own ways, moderately successful. But that does not adequately convey the combination of ecclesiology, ideology and pragmatism which underpinned the interaction between the parties. Nor does it identify the perceptions held by the Church as an institution and by the laity. Ordinary Catholics, like other Christians, were influenced by both secular and spiritual concerns, and there were a variety of viewpoints within the Church on those issues where the state was involved.

In asking how the relationship performed during the twenty years from 1945 to 1965, it would be fair to say that for the Catholic Church it varied, being at the same time confrontational and highly supportive. Education had been the point of conflict since 1877, while the anti-communist activity sponsored by the Church actively supported successive governments. The state, on the other hand, listened to the Church hierarchy, as they did to the leaders of the other main denominations. In essence that was all the state was ever willing to do, as New Zealand has never had an established church and, as such, no constitutional obligation to support any denominational or religious demands.

This relationship and the tensions within it were able to be mitigated through a mutual respect for one another. That is not to say the Catholic Church and the state understood one another, as the long campaign for state aid would validate, but there was never any action by either party to push the issue beyond the point where one party or other was forced to act against its own best interests. If the Church authorities had closed schools in an attempt to force the government to change education policy, the consequences were likely to have been damaging to both Church and government. Catholic parents would have been resentful of the disruption to their children's education, while any government action such as taking over the closed schools could well have been seen as high handed. The Church accepted and supported the fundamentals of the constitution. Respect for lawful authority had been inherent in the papal teachings on social justice and by the end of

the Second World War democracy was being increasingly recognised by the papacy as the most suitable form of government.

Deliberately undermining the democratic process to achieve their ends was never contemplated by the Catholic Church in New Zealand. Yet that was a tactic that many in the Australian hierarchy endorsed when backing the powerful layman B A Santamaria and the Movement in their anti-communist crusade. Aside from the total lack of support for any radical action, the New Zealand hierarchy was not prepared to alter the balance of power in the Church by giving a layman even implied authority over the clergy.

The lesson for the Church authorities was the need to understand how the political landscape had changed especially as the state was expanding and becoming more prominent in the lives of its citizens. Resolution of the campaign for state aid appeared possible in the years after the Second World War, due to a warm relationship with the Labour government, a relationship founded upon early support given to the Labour Party by senior clerics such as Bishop James Liston. When the National government assumed power in 1949, the relationship became somewhat strained. Prime Minister Sid Holland and his party did not owe the Catholic Church any particular recognition and none was given. It took the best part of a decade and a well-publicized but ultimately failed petition to parliament before the Church began to regain some political traction. Ironically it was the involvement of the laity into the process which enabled the government to begin to deal with the question of state aid to private schools in a more generous manner.

Perhaps an even more sobering reality was how little the issue seemed to matter to the community at large. Persuading the non-Catholic public of the merits of state aid was one of the desired outcomes of the petition, yet public indifference to it suggested 'the de facto irrelevance of ideology in New Zealand politics'.<sup>1</sup> W.H. Oliver mused about a 'Santamaria or two' who would 'diversify a colourless political scene', but the reality was New Zealand Catholics had not been effective in taking political action.<sup>2</sup> There was no confessional political party primarily because their political interests had been subsumed by the Labour Party during the 1930s, and, with the possible exception of the West Coast, were numerically and geographically well

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<sup>1</sup> Spencer. *The Organisation of Catholic Education in New Zealand, Interim Report*. p291.

<sup>2</sup> Oliver. "Christianity among the New Zealanders." pp9-11.

spread. Underlying it all was the inherent conservatism of a Church whose hierarchy had no interest in encouraging notions of radical politics. There was no form of proportional representation which might have given the Catholic education issue a voice in parliament. The moderate success of the Democratic Labor Party in Australia illustrated how proportionate representation could effectively block the Labor Party from gaining office for many years.

As was made clear by the outcome of the 1956 petition presented to Parliament by the Holy Name Society, the solution to the state aid was not in loud protest by a minority. But Catholics as a political entity were not electorally impotent. The demise of sectarianism had rather nullified any call to arms and Catholic opinion and loyalty was becoming more diversified across the political spectrum. During the 1950s, Labour, National and Social Credit did pay their respects, but not close attention. It was the gradual growth of lay organisations concerned with education which began to challenge the political parties on the state aid issue. The state was to become more at ease dealing with lay Church representatives and political parties were to begin the long process of developing policies that recognised the plight of private schools. This was not to bear fruit for another decade after 1965.

Yet the change in political fortune was only one of the factors in the relationship between the Church and the state at this time. A strong stand against communism allied the Church with the government, whose own anti-communist rhetoric was at times fiery. Catholic newspapers routinely excoriated communism and highlighted the atrocities committed against Christians overseas. Although much was made by government members linking Catholic schools with defending a New Zealand Christian heritage, it blunted the opportunity to force the government to make any realistic commitment. Dissatisfaction with the government over state aid would have been mollified by the perception of a government which was as committed to anti-communism as the Church.

In many respects the Catholic Church in New Zealand continued to receive more attention from the state than its status as a minority denomination might have warranted. It never commanded the allegiance of more than 15% of the population, yet was accorded equal status with the main Protestant denominations. The most obvious examples were in the chaplaincies which expanded into other areas of state activity. Precedent had been set during the two world wars when Catholic chaplains had been able to minister exclusively to Catholic servicemen and women, while

Protestant denominations were expected to behave in a more ecumenical fashion. As chaplaincies began to be developed for state institutions, such as prisons and hospitals, in the 1950s Catholic separateness was again permitted as a condition for Catholic participation. By allowing a separate Catholic structure for chaplaincy, the state was not prepared to encourage any denominational grievance over what might be perceived as the state siding with the Protestant churches over the management of these services.

The transition for the Catholic Church of their charity based framework of welfare delivery, prior to World War II, to one of increasing state involvement, was not without concerns. An expanding state was viewed with some disquiet, while some state sponsored initiatives in the area of family relationships raised ethical fears. But the changes across the welfare sector did bring about a new dimension in the relationship between the Catholic Church and the state. Rather than the independent charity of the inter-war years, the post-war period saw the Church having to reorganize its charitable structure to meet the state's expectations. The state, often through the incentive and drive of senior public servants, initiated reform which was seeking partnership with the churches, but at the same time enabling more choice. Secular organisations, with government support but without any specific Christian ethos, were providing a range of welfare services. Subsidies and grants became more conditional upon meeting government criteria. While the Catholic Church sought to maintain its distinctiveness in the changing environment, increasing co-operation with Protestant denominations marked the expansion of welfare work involving the churches.

### **A methodological explanation**

In attempting to provide analysis to themes that form the substance of this work, I have been searching for a suitable framework in which to place the significant or distinctive events. The three themes portray a relationship between the Catholic Church and the state which has a strong relevance for the Church in New Zealand. Yet their wider significance could be reckoned as being limited. However each of the themes can also be seen as part of a wider and bigger picture. As Max Weber said, 'events are not just there and happen, but they have a meaning and happen because

of that meaning.<sup>3</sup> The post-World War II era gave rise to widespread social, economic and religious change, changes that redefined how modern social democracies functioned. Events can transform structure and those structures govern human conduct, then understanding and explaining an event requires identifying what structural changes occurred and how that change was effected. This thesis does not examine the structures nor the changes that occurred. Rather it identifies themes that, in themselves, were not transformational but contributed to outcomes that only became clear at a later point in time.

Structure has been described as 'one of the most important and elusive terms in the vocabulary of social science' as it empowers what it designates.<sup>4</sup> It is difficult to define as it operates in social discourse 'as a powerful metonymic device, identifying some parts of a complex social reality as explaining the whole.'<sup>5</sup> Structure, for sociologists, is often thought of as 'hard' or 'material' and as a primary determinant, while culture is regarded as 'soft' and is therefore secondary or derived. In the social sciences and in Marxist discourse, structure sometimes operated as virtually immutable, unbending in the face of human agency, events or natural disasters.

Anthony Giddens, the English sociologist, wanted to reconceptualise structure by introducing a theory of human action, where human agency and structure do not oppose one another, rather they presuppose each other. He coined the term 'structuration' to identify the duality of structure. This duality recognises that agency and social structure are in relationship with one another and it is the repetition of the acts by individual agents which reproduces the structure.<sup>6</sup> Structures are not the patterned social practices that make up social systems, but the principles that pattern these structures.<sup>7</sup>

Another to advance the notion that structures empower and constrain was Marshall Sahlins, the structuralist anthropologist. He was concerned with large socio-cultural changes that occur because of an event, in this case the arrival of James Cook into

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<sup>3</sup> Olssen. *An Accidental Utopia? Social mobility & the foundations of an egalitarian society, 1880-1940*. p229.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p228.

<sup>5</sup> Sewell Jr, William H. *Logics of History: Social Theory and Social Transformation*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005. p125.

<sup>6</sup> Giddens's formal definition of structure: 'Structure: Rules and resources recursively implicated in the reproduction of social systems. Structure exists only as memory traces, the organic basis of human knowledgeability, and as instantiated in action.' This is taken from his book *The Constitution of Society* (University of California Press 1984) and quoted by Ibid. p128.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. p129.

Polynesia and with it the transformation of cultural structures. His theory has events, although shaped by structures, transforming the structures that shape them. For Sahlins structure is the outcome as well as the source of social conduct, in that it enables as well as constrains and can be transformed by human social practice.<sup>8</sup> Sahlins's writings introduced the relationship between structure and event as a 'possible theory of history', and that to meaningfully relate an event, 'the historian not only must recount happenings in time, but must also break from narration-that is, temporarily suspend time in order to analyse ....There can be no adequate...narrative of an event without a ....understanding of the structures that the event transforms.'<sup>9</sup>

William Sewell Jr., in taking Sahlins's work further, determines that an historical event is '(1) a ramified sequence of occurrences that (2) is recognised as notable by contemporaries, and that (3) results in a durable transformation of structures'.<sup>10</sup> Although most disruptions of routine behaviour are neutralized or absorbed back into the existing structure without much damage, such as being pointedly ignored or explained away as an exception, when the event initiates a chain of occurrences that 'durably transforms previous structures and practices', it then becomes an historical event.<sup>11</sup> Given that structures do not exist in time and space, rather that they have a virtual existence, memory traces, and only as ideas or schemas lodged in human brains, there was always the potential to transform, disrupt or simply weaken existing structures. What people had in their minds, memories and behaviours may well have triggered a chain reaction that 'disarticulates the previous structural network, makes repair difficult, and makes a novel re-articulation possible.'<sup>12</sup>

Structures which shape and constrain a religion such as authoritarian, prophetic, ritual and theoretical modes, can lead to harmony but also to sharply conflicting claims and empowerments.<sup>13</sup> This multiplicity of structures allows agency to exert

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid. pp197-205. Sewell acknowledges that Sahlins's concept of structure is firmly in the tradition of Saussurian linguistics and Lévi-Straussian anthropology, but takes the concept further by emphasizing the 'duality' of structure, in that it is more than agency that imposes social behaviour on hapless actors from the outside.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. p219.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. p228.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. p227.

<sup>12</sup> Olssen. *An Accidental Utopia? Social mobility & the foundations of an egalitarian society, 1880-1940*. p228. Sewell Jr. *Logics of History: Social Theory and Social Transformation*. p228.

<sup>13</sup> Sewell Jr, William H. "A Theory of Structure. Duality, agency and transformation." In *Practicing History: New Directions in Historical Writing after the Linguistic Turn*, edited by Gabrielle M. Spiegel. New York: Routledge, 2005. p155.



some degree of control. Agency, a constituent of structure, arises from the agent's knowledge of schemas and control of resources, giving the capacity to reinterpret or mobilise an array of resources, and to act with and against others through the use of that knowledge.<sup>14</sup>

Transformation of the Catholic Church did occur with the Second Vatican Council. From the outset, the logics and dynamics of the Church's structures gave the conservative Vatican bureaucracy an expectation that it would control the agenda. But knowledge of the rules or schemas by other agents meant an implied ability to transpose or extend them, making the consequences unpredictable. During Vatican II agency was often exercised by senior bishops and cardinals whose status and authority helped bind a collectivity by their actions. Their willingness to promote and endorse new and controversial theology across many of the structures which had shaped and constrained the Church, were implicit in the transformational outcome of the Council.

Events, according to Sewell, are not causally independent through time, but are 'path dependent'. He provided one of the more influential definitions arguing path dependence means 'that what has happened at an earlier point in time will affect the possible outcomes of a sequence of events occurring at a late point in time'.<sup>15</sup> Path dependency has involved the disciplines of economics, political science and sociology, generated by an interest in the application of history and temporality to the understanding of social and political phenomena. Scholarly debate as to the definition of path dependence involves a debate as to *how* history matters and that path dependence is especially suited in the field of historical sociology.

Path dependence can also be seen as involving 'a sequence in which a particular outcome happens to occur and then this outcome is subject to self-reproducing mechanisms, causing the outcome to endure across time'.<sup>16</sup> Given that events are

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid. p158.

<sup>15</sup> Mahoney, James. "Path Dependence in Historical Sociology." *Theory and Society* 29, no. 4 (Aug 2000) (2000): 507-548. p510.

<sup>16</sup> Mahoney, James and Daniel Schensul "Historical Context and Path Dependence." In *The Oxford Handbook of Contextual Political Analysis*, edited by Charles Tilly and Robert Goodin, 454-469. Oxford: Oxford University Press, Oxford Handbooks Online: September 2009, 2006. Path dependence was initially formalized as a tool for economists, when some economic historians asserted the analysis of path dependence opened whole new frontiers of research in economics. Its relevance for research across the social science spectrum became increasingly significant as more scholars argued that history mattered in more profound ways that was acknowledged in most social science work. See also Mahoney. "Path Dependence in Historical Sociology."

located in the past, a distinctive feature of path dependence is the idea that the most important effects of a given event may be 'temporally lagged' where those effects are not immediately felt, but clearly visible at a later point in time.<sup>17</sup>

Path dependence is somewhat more problematic. It is a theory laden process.<sup>18</sup> Taking Sewell's observation that the past affects the future, such a minimalist concept clearly suffers from fact that virtually every outcome in the social world is preceded by a series of historical events. To be analytically useful it needs complementary tools. This need for a form of trade off illustrates the difficulties. Some definitions of path dependence stress only the role of antecedent events in shaping subsequent events making path dependence rather banal. By contrast other definitions offer more intriguing features, such as contingency, that run the risk of being identified as being quite rare in the social and political world.<sup>19</sup>

Because of its theoretical status, path dependency and the other social science forms can mean competition, to an extent, between them as to the most valid form of authorising theory. Paths in history are, prima face, suspect because the demands of theory could well inhibit the pragmatism of full and open inquiry. Avoiding these forms can allow historians to get on with a wide range of interesting empirical work, which may well account for their lack of use.

The themes of this thesis do not suggest direct transformative events, but because not all disruptions of routine behaviour, such as the crisis in the Catholic school system, were neutralized or absorbed back into the existing structure without much damage, the chain of occurrences was significant. Time and sequence are integral to the theory of path dependence and the unsettling and reshaping of older cultural views helped create a somewhat more volatile context and new possibilities.

Transformation did occur with the Second Vatican Council and although quantifying the particularities at the micro level are beyond this thesis, it is not unreasonable to suggest that the New Zealand experiences did play a part.

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<sup>17</sup>Mahoney. "Historical Context and Path Dependence." p456. Schensul and Mahoney also argue that many leading methodologies, such as mainstream statistical methods and rational choice analysis, can deflect attention away from particular historical events and thereby mischaracterize the causes of important outcomes.

<sup>18</sup>———. "Path Dependence in Historical Sociology." p508. For Mahoney the identification of path dependence involves both tracing a given outcome back to a particular set of historical events, and showing these events are themselves contingent occurrences that cannot be explained on the basis of prior historical conditions.

<sup>19</sup>———. "Historical Context and Path Dependence." pp5-26. Contingency is a way of speaking about the unpredictable nature of final outcomes given some set of initial conditions.

## Final reflection

'Organised Christianity came into existence, and exists, to preserve a treasure, a command to be executed, a promise to be repeated, a mission to be fulfilled. This treasure belongs to past, present, and future; it is potential yet active; an object of contemplation, yet the inspiration of right conduct. An unfathomable mystery, it must be related to all knowledge. And in their endeavours to guard and transmit their trust, its guardians have raised the most perplexing issues. They have caused endless destruction of life in the name of universal peace. They have built up the most realistic of political systems in the effort to establish a kingdom not of this world. In the exploration of the recesses of the soul, they have developed the arts and sciences, and constructed theories of the universe. And in their desire to satisfy the deepest needs of mankind, they have raised up against themselves the visions, prophecies, and extravagances of excitable and obstinate men, and the dislike of many sensible men.'<sup>20</sup>

This elegant précis of the conundrum that organised Christianity has delivered provides a vivid backdrop when considering the relationship between church and state. Church and state were awkward allies, the Catholic Church proving to be particularly obdurate in terms of insisting upon exercising its own traditional authority that forced the state to make concessions. Yet the Church had an evolving understanding of the state and its functions which strongly linked the ethos of good government with social justice. As such, the state recognised the moral language used, but found the Church's concerns and aspirations often lacked a political dimension with which to deal with issues. Successive governments found, for example, the Catholic demands with respect to education 'perplexing', as the Church sought to 'guard and transmit' its mission. Yet, in the desire to 'satisfy the deepest needs of mankind', the Church had successfully established a relationship with the state, functional and at times warm but not always well understood.

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<sup>20</sup> Powicke, Sir Maurice. *The Christian Life in the Middle Ages and other essays*. London: Oxford University Press, 1935.p1.

## Appendix 1

### To the Contrary! An open letter to the People of N.Z.

A reply to the demands of the Roman Catholic Holy Name Society for a State Subsidy for Roman Catholics Schools.

Abraham Lincoln said ...'The essence of Democracy is equal rights for all - Special Privileges For None'. This statement expresses aptly one of the main principles of our way of life. It is particularly pertinent when applied to today's demand by a minority group for a subsidy on its own private religious system of education. The Holy Name Society has made known its intention to petition Parliament for the appointment of a Committee of Enquiry to enquire into the National Education system as it affects Roman Catholic schools.

Our Government provides a comprehensive and free secular education for all, leaving religious instruction to the Churches. Those who do not choose to avail themselves of this excellent system, but who wish their children to receive special education as, for example, tuition by the religious in Roman Catholic schools, must expect to pay for the particular type of education they require and for the duplication of services involved.

ANY STATE SUBSIDY FOR ROMAN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WOULD MEAN THE GRANTING OF SPECIAL PRIVILEGES TO A VOCAL MINORITY OF OUR PEOPLE.

Ask yourself! Do you deem it fair and democratic that Roman Catholic Schools should be State-endowed!

In light of this, and following authoritative information -**Make your decision on the Case!**

Do you know that the Canon Law of the Roman Catholic Church requires Parish Priests in Protestant Countries to open primary schools to teach religion and guard the faith against the influence of our 'Godless' schools.

Do you know that a prominent Roman Catholic has said, ....'We demand a million (£1,000,000) pounds per year and we're going to get it.' (A million now and an unceasing demand for more once the door is opened if the experience of other countries, such as Belgium, can be taken as a guide.)

Do you know that Roman Catholic Canon Law 1374 reads....'parents who neglect to give this (R.C.) necessary Christian training and instruction to their children, or who permit them to go to schools in which the ruin of their souls is inevitable, or, finally who send them to public schools without sufficient cause and without taking the necessary precautions to render the danger of perversion remote....cannot be absolved, as it is evident from the moral teaching of the Church'. In lay language this is a warning of excommunication.

Do you know that the above Canon Law is the reason behind the present demand by the Holy Name Society for a State Subsidy for Roman Catholic Schools. They must have these schools, yet they find, in their own words, the cost of their maintenance an 'intolerable burden' which they now want the State to bear.

Do you know that the PAPAL ENCYCLICAL issued on Dec. 31<sup>st</sup>, 1929 declared that 'STATE CONTROL OF PUBLIC EDUCATION IS THE GREAT CAUSE OF EVIL. The educative mission of the Church (of Rome) extends to all peoples without limitation and no right exists in any civil power to oppose or prevent it. The Church is independent of all earthly power in the exercise of its educative mission. Every system of education must be subject to the rules of divine law, of which the Church of Rome is the exclusive, infallible, custodian, interpreter, and teacher.

Do you know that in Roman Catholic countries - Spain, Portugal, Italy etc., numerous restrictions are placed on Protestant Schools and Churches which, where they are permitted at all, receive no benefits comparable with the following list of those extended to Roman Catholic Schools in New Zealand. **HARDLY AN ILLUSTRATION OF 'EQUAL RIGHTS FOR ALL - SPECIAL PRIVILEGES FOR NONE'**

Do you know that Roman Catholic Schools are NOW treated MOST GENEROUSLY in New Zealand through:

FREE Conveyance to School of Children in outlying areas.

FREE distribution of the 'Journal of National Education'.

FREE Manual instruction where available.

Boarding allowance as for State School children.

FREE supplies of School Journals

FREE supplies of the 'Education Gazette'.

FREE Departmental Text books, Bulletins & Registers

FREE use of films and film strips

FREE advice and assistance from Physical Culture Organisers

FREE milk and apples when available

State Post-Primary and War Bursaries are made tenable at Private Schools

Maori Scholarships are also tenable at Private Schools.

No specific legislative authority exists for the supply of many of these favours, (and they are favours), the total cost of which cannot be ascertained.

Do you know that large numbers of Roman Catholic teachers receive FREE instruction through the State Correspondence School's Course for Teachers, since their Church does not provide a satisfactory training curriculum.

Do you know that the great majority of other Churches in N.Z. oppose the principle of State Subsidy for private schools.

This advertisement is sponsored and financed by the Public Relations Committee of the Loyal Orange Lodge. Contributions toward the cost of this campaign are invited and may be sent to the Secretary, P.O. Box 1564, Wellington.

## Appendix 2

### **An abridged version of the 'Submissions to a Committee of the House of Representatives by Walter Stewart Otto in support of the Petition of the National Council of the Catholic Holy Name Society of New Zealand in behalf of Catholic Parents who send their children to Private Schools'**

The submission begins with a Review of the Course of Action adopted by the Holy Name Society, setting out the representations made to the Government prior to initiating the Petition.

Education Disbursements within the Framework of Public Finance - the argument was that while not everyone would agree on the disbursement of taxes, it is the duty of the Government to affect a compromise between conflicting interests. In addition the State must ensure that every citizen must enjoy the primary necessities of life, of which education is one of the minimums requirements for the common good, regardless of race, gender, social position or religion; [evidence from several countries is cited as to the necessity of placing education in the leading category by public authorities for financial responsibility].

The Basis of the Claim - the claim is not based on any doctrine or teaching peculiar to the Catholic Church, but on principles commonly accepted and approved by the people of New Zealand. The Case stands on respect for the natural rights of parents, respect for their religious conviction, and on the duty of the State to deal equally and without discrimination with all citizens. It addresses Parental Rights, that the right to educate the child is founded in the very nature of the parent-child relationship. It is not created by the State; it cannot be impeded or set aside by the State. Regarding the rights of the State, the submission highlights the Universal Declaration of Human Rights gave parents the right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children; it is a matter of conscience for the choice of a Catholic school. The Society contends that because parental rights, which are prior rights, exist in this matter, the State has a correlative duty to facilitate the exercise of these rights. While affirming the formal and juridical democratic right of the liberty of education, New Zealand has up to the present time penalized the use of that right by refusing the material conditions for its exercise. They claim the choice of a school is a matter of conscience, because religion must be recognized merely as not one facet of education, but the very cornerstone. Catholic parents have a solemn duty of

conscience to ensure that their children receive an education where there is a union and sympathy in religious belief between the teacher, the parent and the child, and is a matter of deep conviction.

The Petition is not asking for public funds for religious instructions, but that children whose parents wish them to be educated in a religious atmosphere should enjoy the same material advantages as other children without extra cost to their parents

Four depositions were embodied in the Petition:

1. That education to the parents of children who attend private schools is not 'free', given that the Education Act of 1877 specifies that education shall be 'free, secular and compulsory.' Private schools comply with the compulsory requirement, in that attendance at a private school has always meant compliance with the compulsory provision. Compliance with the 'secular' provision of the Legislation is assured by the provisions of the Education Amendment Act 1921 as to registration and annual inspection of private schools. The 'free' provision is not extended by the State, except to a very limited extent.

2. Since all citizens contribute to taxes on an equal basis, Catholic parents believe they should receive a just measure of financial assistance from those funds. This deposition claims that the Catholic community contributes equally with other citizens to the public revenues and the National Savings and to public loans, so they contribute equally with other citizens towards the total cost of providing secular education for those New Zealand children who attend State schools, including the provision of State school buildings, playing areas and the like. Thereby parents consider it a hardship and an injustice that private schools be refused a measure of financial assistance.

3. This deposition is concerned with the inequality and injustice of the existing Education laws, whereby public revenues are denied to those who, on grounds of conscience, cannot avail themselves of State schools. Many Catholic schools have been deterred from applying for the limited aid that is available, principally in the areas of travel to and from school, manual training and bulk buying/subsidies for film projectors. Milk is the exception. But the monetary significance is slight, and represents only a fraction of the total pupil cost of secular education. There have been claims that the assistance currently available is most generous. This is completely rejected.



4. Community well-being is affected by legislation which always respects conscientious convictions.

The submissions urge the Committee to recommend to Government to agree to a proposal to extend Christian Education to New Zealand children by-

- Amending the Education Act of 1914 and permitting religious education in all schools,
- Reserving adequate time for such instruction in State schools by Ministers of various denominations, not by State school teachers,
- Allow a 'conscience' clause in the Legislation to cover the conscientious objections of parents who do not wish their children to be given religious instruction in any faith.

The submission goes on to look at:

- The priority Catholics have always placed on education;
- The quality of the education given in Catholic Schools of New Zealand;
- Teacher Recruitment in New Zealand Catholic education;
- Teacher Training in New Zealand Catholic education and the establishment of a National Teachers Training College;
- What Catholic Schools seek to do for New Zealand;
- "Catholic Education is entitled to the gratitude of the people of New Zealand and to the Aid of its Rulers' - Sir George Grey (January 1868);
- Private Schools in other Commonwealth Countries and in Ireland;
- Private Schools 'Aid' to the Public Revenue - (It is estimated that that since 1877, Catholic parents have educated at least 150,000 New Zealand citizens, thereby saving the State some £40,000,000 which would otherwise have been incurred in providing the secular education of these children.)

The Catholic claim for payment for Secular Education.

The submission asks the Education Committee to favourably recommend to the Government that

- All special services and grants paid directly or indirectly by the Education Department for State school children, and at present provided to a limited degree

only for private school children, be provided in equal measure for all children who attend Catholic schools, without any discrimination whatsoever. They are Conveyance by bus, train or otherwise; Text books; journals, pamphlets, etc.; Visual aids; Sundry inspectorial and other services; Manual training, materials and services; Arts and Crafts and services; Physical education, materials and services, Boarding allowances for primary children; All subsidies as for State schools; Post-primary boarding allowances, bursaries, etc.; Examination of teacher trainees.

□ All lay-teachers employed in the Catholic schools are paid by the Education Department full salaries and superannuation in accordance with comparable gradings in the State schools and that all such teachers be accorded full professional status according to their qualifications.

□ The Education Department pay the Catholic Education authorities an annual capitation grant of 40% of the cost of secular education of primary and post-primary children respectively, as ascertained for the State schools, but after excluding the annual cost of the items referred to above.

□ The Education Department pay to the Catholic education authorities one half of the capital cost of (a) All new primary and secondary schools constructed by the Catholic Education authorities and (b) all necessary extensions and alterations to schools.

Capital cost justification: The justification for payment of full capital costs of new school buildings rests primarily upon the fact that if those responsible for the construction of private schools did not provide them, the State would have to meet the full cost.

The justification for the payment of half capital costs, which we seek, is equally valid, and is strengthened by ample precedent. The present administration adopted the practice of paying a 50% grant or subsidy on the capital cost of hostels for the aged and infirm, and for youth. This practice has been extended, as to the amount of the subsidy in certain cases, as has the scope. Similarly, too, 50% capital grants have long been made for pre-primary schools conducted by independent organisations.

The submission asks that the same principle apply to the construction of private schools, subject to the usual provision that if the building so subsidized should at any time in the future cease to be used for the purpose for which the subsidy is granted, then that subsidy should be refunded to the State.

The last section of the submission considers 'General Representations'

"In all its representations to the Government, in all its publicity, in the preparation of this Petition, and in the submission of evidence in its support, the Holy Name Society has endeavored in all respects to conform to the proper and constitutional procedure. It sought to be fair to all who are interested in this very important matter of education of New Zealand children, and has provided these people and institutions with copies of all the material which has been published by the Society. We have been meticulous in adopting the course of action which would as far as possible ensure that there should be no pre-judgment of this particular issue, since it is our belief that our elected Parliamentary representatives should hear not only our case, but also the case of all other interested parties.<sup>1</sup> The key points made in this section are:

- No claim is made for what has been done by the Catholic community in the field of education since 1877, i.e. land, school buildings, maintenance, teachers' salaries.
- No claim is made for religious teachers who staff the schools, who have dedicated their lives to teaching and without remuneration. This factor enables the claim for financial assistance to be limited to 40% of what it would cost the State.
- Large debt charges remain in respect of establishing the present schools and equipment. Even with the grant of the claim, Catholics would still be left with substantial financial obligations regarding the Catholic educational institutions
- The claim for financial assistance is more imperative than ever because of the fact that the ever increasing costs and prices of the modern economic system have imposed financial burdens upon Catholic people which are far too great, and are now operating as an economic sanction against the provision of additional schools which are necessary to provide for the children the education which, in conscience, must be provided.

Otto includes a passage by George K. Gardner, Professor of Law at Harvard Law School, from his article 'Liberty, the State and the School', published in 'Law and Contemporary Problems, 1955. The final paragraph quoted -"The doctrine that the

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<sup>1</sup> Otto, "Submissions to a Committee of the House of Representatives by Walter Stewart Otto in support of the Petition of the National Council of the Catholic Holy Name Society of New Zealand on behalf Catholic Parents who send their children to Private Schools." p30.

State may, and ought to, regard all school children as equally worthy of its assistance, regardless of how the schools which they attend are staffed and governed, and regardless of the religious instruction which they may offer, is not now very popular; but it is the only doctrine which wholly succeeds in reconciling the State support of compulsory education with freedom, and the arguments which can be offered against it will not bear examination in the light of the principles which we profess.' Gardner was not a Catholic.

The submission concludes by asking that Parliament redress the grievance which we have stated, and make such changes as will do justice to private schools and to the parents, who for conscience sake, send their children to those schools.

Attached to the Submission were the following Appendices:

1. Press statement of 19/5/56
2. Twelve 'Hear the Case' advertisements
3. Information Brochure
4. 'Questions and Answers' pamphlet
5. Half-page advertisement
6. Letter to Principals of all State schools
7. Letter to State School Parent/Teacher Associations
8. Letter to State School Committees
9. Supplementary Memorandum to State School Committees
10. Analysis of Resolutions of authorized Catholic groups
11. Statistics of cost of education in State schools
12. Conveyance facilities for private schools
13. Manual Instruction facilities for private schools
14. Bulk Buying facilities and subsidies for private schools
15. Tasmanian Joint Committee on assistance to non-State schools
16. British Columbia aid to private schools.

## Appendix 3

### Vatican II

For Catholics in New Zealand the calling of the Second Vatican Council in January 1959 was to lead to an immense change to their Church at all levels – theological, doctrinal, liturgical and ecumenical - with a reformation that changed so much of what ordinary Catholics knew about their Church and the part they played in it. Or as the French theologian Yves Congar opined, for Catholics, the Council marked the end of the 19th century.<sup>2</sup> Pope John XXIII, not only changed how worship was conducted but embraced the laity by giving them parallel, although not necessarily equal, status in the Church.

When the news that an Ecumenical, or General, Council was to be convoked, it caused considerable surprise throughout the world.<sup>3</sup> For New Zealand Catholics, reading the *Tablet's* editorial on the announcement of the Council, the prospect of such an event engendered little anticipation or excitement. The Church was, despite its claim to be universal, highly Eurocentric. This was no surprise to antipodean Catholics, used to a Church whose history was grounded that of Western Europe. Although the newly elevated John XXIII<sup>4</sup> had spoken of healing the divisions within

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<sup>2</sup> Congar, Yves. *My journal of the Council*. Translated by Mary John Roynayne & Mary Cecily Boulding. Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2012. p53. Yves-Marie-Joseph Cardinal Congar, a French Dominican priest who was widely recognised as one of the most important Catholic theologians of the 20th century. His work embraced ecclesiology and ecumenism, which after WWII attracted suspicion from the Vatican. From 1947 to 1956 his writings were subject to censorship, a number of his books and translations were refused permission to be published as well as being forbidden to teach. Congar's scholarship placed great emphasis on the urgent need to study history in order to recover lost or neglected dimensions of ecclesiology, while his participation in ecumenical events made him unpopular with conservative Catholics. Pope John XXIII, by calling Congar to serve on the preparatory theological commission of the Council, ended his exile (he had been forced to leave France). Congar became an influential theological expert at the Council and was involved in drafting many of the conciliar texts. He was made a Cardinal by Pope John Paul in 1994.

<sup>3</sup> "A General Council." *Tablet*, 11 February 1959.

<sup>4</sup> Pius XII died 9 October 1958 and Cardinal Angelo Roncalli was elected by the papal conclave as his successor. Roncalli took the name John XXIII. There had been a previous John XXIII (Baldassare Cossa – 1370-1419) who was one of the popes claiming legitimacy during the forty years of the Great or Western Schism (1378-1417). The issues around the schism were highly political and diplomatic, with different countries and principalities supporting rival popes. At the time of the Council of Constance (1414-1418), there were three rival popes, John XXIII having been given the title in 1410. He was responsible for calling the Council and presided over its early sessions. Eventually the Council deposed the three rivals and installed Martin V as the sole Pope, effectively ending the schism. John XXIII was subsequently declared an anti-pope.

This particular Council, according to Walter Ullman, 'was, perhaps the most impressive council of the Middle Ages'. Aside from ending the schism, it represented a defeat for the papal- hierocratic system, and the elevation of the general council as the ruling body. The pope was a servant of the council. Conciliarism was the exact opposite to papal monarchy. The pope's powers rested upon the consent and will of the Church through the general council. Ullmann, Walter. *A Short History of the Papacy in*

Christianity, the *Tablet* was pessimistic about the prospects of this being achieved through a Council.

In the three and a half years between the calling of the Council and its opening in October 1962, the Catholic press gave its readers some background and what the Council agenda might be. The Pope had set out the Council's three aims – an improved management of the Church, Christian unity and world peace. Consistent with these aims, he began to stress the pastoral nature of the upcoming Council, which provided a much different emphasis from that of the first Vatican Council (1869). Earlier councils had been summoned to refute error and 'not to learn or discover the truth of faith'. Councils tended to be called when significant matters of faith were under attack and doctrine then formulated in direct opposition to those errors.<sup>5</sup> Some had been called by popes, others called by rulers against papal wishes. Some councils had been purely doctrinal, others pastoral and a number both.<sup>6</sup> So giving the Council the clear aim of a pastoral outcome rather than merely tightening the controls on the faith of the people, sent an important signal about John's vision for its *raison d'être*.

John wanted to modernise the Church so that he could achieve those three aims. Although not apparent to the ordinary Catholic at the time, this attempt at modernisation was to be the major point of tension during the Council sessions. The presence of some 2,500 bishops and an opportunity to speak freely on a wide variety of topics alarmed the Roman Curia. The Roman Curia was the administrative and conservative heart of the entire Church and was responsible for the major offices of the Church.<sup>7</sup> It was the guardian of orthodoxy and its position as the guardian was strengthened by the decree of papal infallibility that came out of the first Vatican Council. That control was made even more powerful by Pius XII's encyclical *Humani*

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*the Middle Ages*. London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1972. pp293-305. Papal authority was to re-assert itself at the 1<sup>st</sup> Vatican Council in 1869, as the pendulum swung back towards papal monarchy, undoing conciliarism as a form of governance..

<sup>5</sup> Rafferty, O.P. "Vatican II; a retrospective." *Studies: An Irish Quarterly* 99, no. 394 (2010): 153-167. p154.

<sup>6</sup> Walsh, Michael J. "Councils in Christian History." In *Modern Catholicism Vatican II and After*, edited by Adrian Hastings. London: SPCK, 1991. p19.

<sup>7</sup> The Curia is made up of the - Secretariat of State; The Congregations (departments within the curia with a particular jurisdiction and headed by a cardinal e.g. Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith); The Tribunals; The Pontifical Councils, e.g. The Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace; The Synod of Bishops; The Offices (the Vatican's financial authorities); The Pontifical Commissions (oversee the historical and artistic patrimony of the entire Church); The Pontifical Academies (institutions of learning e.g. The Pontifical Academy for Sciences); The Swiss Guards. See [www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/)

*Generis* of 1950. *Humani Generis* rejected the 'new theology' that had been developing in Europe after WWII and its links with 'modernism'.<sup>8</sup> Evolution was condemned as it detracted from the idea of original sin, which together with 'existentialism' and 'historicism', were non-Catholic philosophies infecting Catholic theology with erroneous notions.<sup>9</sup> Modernism, 'the synthesis of all heresies', was condemned in the encyclical *Pascendi dominici gregis* by Pius X in 1907.<sup>10</sup> This enabled the Curia to exercise close control over theological teachings, by ensuring the bishops kept a strict oversight on what was taught in their dioceses. Catholic integralists were ever vigilant and there was a readiness to use the sanctions inherent in the encyclical to punish.<sup>11</sup> Consequently the atmosphere around theology in seminaries and religious houses, let alone what might be preached publicly, was exceedingly cautious. Catholic scholarship was stifled. Authoritative teachings of popes and bishops were given a degree of 'quasi infallibility because of the special grace of office the hierarchy claimed' and dissent kept to a minimum.<sup>12</sup>

John knew the sort of council he wanted and always insisted that it was his decision alone, an act of primatial responsibility. Shortly after World War II Pius XII had explored the possibility of a Council to update canon law, reassert controls over

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<sup>8</sup> Modernism was a crisis in the Church during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. It was an attempt to bridge the gap between Catholicism and modern thought, and held that there can be no real continuity between dogmas and the reality they presume to describe. Revelation was not an unchanging depository of truths but a continuously evolving perception of our relationship to God based on religious experience. Modernism, which had been strongly influenced by liberal Protestant theology, was vehemently condemned by Pius X in 1907. Pius drew a clear line between the Catholic and modernist positions, in that rather than revelation being a product of evolving human consciousness, it was an objective collection of supernatural truths that was completed with the apostles. Dogmas could not change their meaning and mean something different from that given to them by the Church in the beginning. Anti-modernist oaths were required from all future priests, from 1910 until done away with in 1967. McBrien, *Catholicism*. Thomas Bokenkotter, *Essential Catholicism* (New York: Image Books, 1986).

<sup>9</sup> Rafferty, "Vatican II; a retrospective." p155-56.

<sup>10</sup> Modernism was perceived by the Vatican as an assault on orthodoxy, on many fronts. The evolution of philosophy (especially Kantian and Bergsonian systems), biblical exegesis and the denial of the Church's authority to accurately interpret scripture, a rejection of the intellectualism of scholastic theology and denials of immutable truth were all condemned. 'The drift of Modernism, as the pope condemned it, was that religion was an essentially human phenomenon, the product of the evolving creative consciousness of the human race.' Hitchcock, James. "Postmortem on a rebirth: the Catholic intellectual renaissance." *American Scholar* 49, no. 2 Spr (1980): 211-225. p211.

<sup>11</sup> Integralists were those who were set against theological innovation and prepared to denounce those who would. *Pascendi* set out a series of censorship and punitive steps to deal with any non-compliance. All publications which required the local bishop's sanction were now subject to official censorship, 'Diocesan Watch Committees' were to be set up whose clerical membership was to watch 'most carefully' for every trace and sign of Modernism; a special diocesan Censor was to be appointed for newspapers and periodicals written by Catholics; bishops were to punish priests who wrote material infected by Modernism for any publication.

see [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/pius\\_x/encyclicals/documents/](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_x/encyclicals/documents/)

<sup>12</sup> Bokenkotter, *Essential Catholicism*. p95.

Church organisations and 'a firm condemnation of nascent ecumenism' which was seen as a new outbreak of modernism. Why Pius dropped the project is not really known, but possibly had to do with how he viewed authority in the Church. Authority flowed from himself, through the cardinals and bishops to the priests and Pius possibly saw no place for a Council, which could confuse this existing pyramid of authority where the laity were firmly set at the base. There may have also been signs and suggestions that a Council might be less easy to manipulate than anticipated.<sup>13</sup>

In order to achieve his idea of what the Council should become, John had to work with and coax the Curia. He was not a seasoned Vatican insider but he knew that working against the Curia would lead to failure. His purpose for the Council was that of the *aggiornamento*<sup>14</sup> of the Catholic Church. This would involve changes in ways of thinking, 'a change in mentalities', and dealing with prejudices of long standing. Importantly John wanted the language used in the Council to be 'serene and tranquil; it should shed light on and remove understandings; and it should dissipate error by the force of truth.'<sup>15</sup> Cardinal Alfredo Ottaviani, as Pro-prefect of the Holy Office and President of the Central Theological Commission, was opposed to the notion that error could be treated this way. Ottaviani believed 'error has no rights' and argued for repression. How to deal with error was the basis for considerable debate even before the Council began. John had appointed Cardinal Augustin Bea as President of the newly established Secretariat for Christian Unity, and Bea supported the Pope's view that 'condemning errors' was not the best way to establish dialogue with other Christians. But the tension between the conservatives and those who supported John's vision that 'Divine Providence is leading us to a new order of human relations' was to remain throughout the following three years of the Council.

When the Council opened on 11 October 1962, it had the largest attendance of any Council; it represented more countries and cultures than ever before with many of the bishops from mission countries who were themselves natives of those countries and from those cultures<sup>16</sup>; a significant increase in non-Catholic and lay observers

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<sup>13</sup> Walsh, Michael J. "Pius XII." In *Modern Catholicism*, edited by Adrian Hastings. London: SPCK, 1991. p26.

<sup>14</sup> 'A bringing up to date'

<sup>15</sup> Hebblethwaite. "John XXIII." p29.

<sup>16</sup> Each day began with a Mass celebrated in as many different rites as were represented in the Council Hall inside St. Peter's. There were some twenty-six. Walsh, Michael J. "The History Of The Council." In *Modern Catholicism*, edited by Adrian Hastings. London: SPCK, 1991.p37. Congar wrote



(including both lay and religious women) with almost every major Christian Church represented; the Council had modern technology available for communication, and was covered by international news media, including radio and television. But its greatest significance was its truly ecumenical nature.<sup>17</sup>

New Zealand Catholics could read regular articles about the Council in their newspapers. At the beginning reporters could not attend meetings and the press releases tended to be couched in generalities and favoured a conservative line. Although Council secrecy was a problem for journalists at first, within a short time language groups of bishops would brief reporters after each congregation and soon links were being made as to who said what and the general gist of the proceedings. By November the *Tablet* was reporting on the 'restless ferment' at the sessions and the obvious split between the conservatives and the 'outward looking' bishops who wanted change. Discussion was obviously much freer than anticipated and the tone of the early articles was almost expressing surprise that uninhibited discussion was taking place and Cardinals were disagreeing publicly.<sup>18</sup> Most expectations had been for a much more controlled and complaint environment.

From the beginning the Council was divided into 'traditionalists' and 'progressives'. These groupings varied depending on the issue at stake, but divisions appeared when the first major topic, the liturgy and in particular the retention of Latin, was debated. Argument, manoeuvring committee rules, appeals to the Pope, tactical absences were all used to gain ascendancy.<sup>19</sup> Prolonged applause was a feature of the meetings and an obvious sign of the wishes of the majority. The atmosphere at the sessions was much more open than had been envisaged, and as a newspaper report commented, 'the more conservative, traditional view was not the prevailing view of the council as a whole.'<sup>20</sup>

While the 'traditionalists' enjoyed the solid backing of the Curia, the Pope more often than not favoured the 'progressives', if the issue was one for his decision. He intervened only occasionally but decisively, yet was concerned that the minority

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that a senior clergyman had claimed 'some people had been invited to the Council so that they would not do what Döllinger did in 1870: peeved at not having been invited to the Council, he caused a schism.' They had been invited in order to keep them in the Church. Congar. *My journal of the Council*. p140.

<sup>17</sup> McBrien, *Catholicism*. pp655-56.

<sup>18</sup> "Progress In The Council." *Tablet*, 28 November 1962.

<sup>19</sup> Walsh, "The History Of The Council." p38.

<sup>20</sup> O'Neill, James. "Full Effects Of Pope John's Decision Still Unknown." *Tablet*, 19 January 1966.

(usually the Curia) was not humiliated.<sup>21</sup> At the outset John had determined that the Council would be under his jurisdiction and made it clear that his emphasis was on an optimistic presence of the Holy Spirit in the world, not the restatement and defence of past doctrines. He wanted to show that the Church could meet the modern age through the validity of her teachings and not by way of condemnation. This emphasis upon looking to the future rather than becoming preoccupied with errors in the past meant the 19<sup>th</sup> century thesis that 'error has no rights' lost its validity. As such, the abandonment of this thesis allowed the Council to seriously tackle ecumenism, religious liberty and non-Christian religions.<sup>22</sup>

Between the first and second sessions, John XXIII died.<sup>23</sup> His successor was Cardinal Giovanni Montini, who took the name Paul VI. This choice gave the reformers in the Council considerable encouragement as he made clear his willingness to carry on the work of John. Paul VI was not a Pope in the mould of John. He could not emulate the comfortable geniality of John, although they had been friends for many years. Montini had been a Vatican diplomat and had served directly under two popes, Pius XI and Pius XII. He was a seasoned Vatican insider. When John first announced the Council, Montini wondered if it was a wise move and said to a friend 'this holy old boy doesn't realise what a hornet's nest he's stirring up.'<sup>24</sup> However he became a strong and enlightened Italian supporter of the Council and when elevated to Pope, showed he was far sighted with a modern outlook. Paul saw the Council through to its finish. He had to withstand, at times, intransigent opposition from the conservative faction while, at the same time, not rejecting them. Their minority (traditionalist) position was given proper recognition, especially as he did not want that faction simply crushed and, in any event, would have to work with them after the Council.

Council business was principally concerned with the nature and mission of the Church. Theologically its focus was ecclesiological rather than Christological or

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<sup>21</sup> By November 1962 Congar noted that the tension between the Papa pole (the Curia) and the Ecclesia (the real Church) was on the point of coming out into the open. 'The Curia understands nothing. The Curia is full of Italians who, being kept in ignorance of the reality of things,...in a simplistic and false ecclesiology to which everything is derived from the pope, see the Church only as a vast centralised administration of which they themselves form the centre....Ultramontanism really does exist'. Congar. *My journal of the Council*. p143.

<sup>22</sup> Hebblethwaite. "John XXIII." pp30-33.

<sup>23</sup> John XXIII died on 3 June 1963.

<sup>24</sup> Hebblethwaite, Peter. "Paul VI." In *Modern Catholicism*, edited by Adrian Hastings. London SPCK, 1991. p52.

eschatological.<sup>25</sup> This embraced a wide range of major topics but two key documents emerged were considered to be the twin pillars of its ecclesiology; the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (*Lumen Gentium*) and the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et Spes*). It is worthwhile to provide some explanation of these two documents as they help inform why the Council was to have so much of an impact upon the Church itself as well as the relationship with the world in religious, social and political terms.

*Lumen Gentium* came out of much intense debate about the nature of the Church. It spoke to the mystery of the Church and its sacramental nature - the people of God including the Church and non-Catholic Christians and non-Christians; the hierarchal structure and the relationship between the bishops and the pope; the place of the laity in the Church, the nature and role of the religious; the status of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the eschatological nature of the Church. 'Collegiality', the cause of most debate was a major concern of conservative bishops as it challenged the hierarchal structure of the Church. Their fear was that some compromise over papal authority would occur with a return to the conciliarism of the 15<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>26</sup>

*Lumen Gentium* began with a chapter on the mystery that is the Church and this fundamentally altered the understanding of the reality of the Church.<sup>27</sup> The Church was not, first and foremost, a hierarchal religious institution, but rather 'centred on the presence of God who is *in* the Church.'<sup>28</sup> This ecclesiological shift meant the Church had to signify what it was. If it says it is the people of God, then it must act like the people of God. This redefining of the relationship with God gave theological impetus for renewal and reform and was considered one of the most significant points of emphasis in the whole of the Council. Out of this comes renewed understandings of the relationship with the Kingdom of God (the Church and the Kingdom of God are not one in the same thing); the enhanced role of the local Church (the local Church is a true expression of the Body of Christ in a particular place); the call for all in the Church to aspire to holiness (not just limited to the religious); the relationship with

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<sup>25</sup> Ecclesiology is concerned with the nature and functions of the Church; Christology relates to the person, nature and role of Christ; Eschatology is the study of the destiny of man and the end of things as revealed in the Bible.

<sup>26</sup> Conciliarism came out of the Council of Constance (1414-18) as a solution to the Western Schism of 1378-1417. Conciliarism effectively limits papal power and gives Church Councils an enhanced role in decision making.

<sup>27</sup> 'Mystery', as expressed by Paul VI is 'a reality imbued with the hidden presence of God'. McBrien. "The Church (*Lumen Gentium*).". p88.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. p88.

other Christian and non-Christian religions ( a fundamental bond with all other Christians and a spiritual relationship through a creator God with all non-Christians).<sup>29</sup>

Pride of place in the document is the recognition of the Church as 'the people of God'. There was a special stress on the priesthood of all the faithful, an aspect of Luther's teaching which Catholic tradition had downgraded. The Laity, used to hierarchical control, were, as people of God, placed centrally in Catholic ecclesiology. They were now to exercise a much more diversified function in the life of the Church. This shift meant the Church became the community rather than just the hierarchy and the clergy.

Of particular significance was the way in which the chapters of the document were ordered. The first chapter addressed the mystery of the Church and its nature. The second was concerned with the people of God, while the hierarchical structure of the Church was third. Throughout the drafting process (there were four drafts), sustained efforts were made to reverse the order in which chapters two and three appeared.<sup>30</sup> Placing the chapter on the hierarchy after that of the People of God spoke of the Church as being more than a hierarchical institution 'to which people belonged for the sake of certain spiritual benefits'.<sup>31</sup>

The other main document of the Council was *Gaudium et Spes*.<sup>32</sup> Its full title was the '*Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*' and this 'pastoral' document was an attempt to deal with the world at large. John XIII had conceived of the Council having a pastoral responsibility, as contrasted with the doctrinal and juridical approach to traditional Council business. As a pastoral constitution, it built on the Church's social teachings as they had developed from Leo XIII's 1891 encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, Pius's XI's *Quadragesimo Anno* of 1931 through to John XXIII's *Mater et Magistra* (1961) and *Pacem in Terris* (1963). But it became more than a synthesis of encyclical teaching. As the title indicates, this document was about the Church being *in* the world. The traditional theological approach had been to emphasise the Church as being different from the wider community, whereas

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid. pp89-93.

<sup>30</sup> As McBrien notes, the debate had to do with the doctrine of the episcopate. The drafters of the document were caught between two forces: 'the one jealous of papal prerogatives and fearful of any undermining of papal primacy, the other suspicious of papal absolutism and supportive of collegiality.' Ibid. p87.

<sup>31</sup> McBrien, *Catholicism*. p670.

<sup>32</sup> 'The joys and the hopes...'

the new understanding was that the Church was in the world and the world in the Church. In moving away from the concept of 'perfect societies' i.e. Church and state, and the ambiguities created by the terminology around that term, towards that of 'world' and its reality, the document sought to use language describing human achievements and failures that could be understood and shared by Christians and non-Christians.

*Gaudium et Spes* signified a new style of Church teaching. Central to its pastoral message was the 'duty of scrutinising the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel....We must therefore recognise and understand the world in which we live, its expectations, its longings, and its often dramatic characteristics.'<sup>33</sup> It deliberately avoided condemnations, the exception being indiscriminate nuclear warfare, and juridical imposition. The natural law<sup>34</sup> approach to social, economic and political matters, which had underpinned the earlier encyclicals of Leo and Pius XI, was overtaken by this engagement with the world. The document was evangelical, used non-technical language and was seen by many at the Council to be a Christian doctrine of humanity.<sup>35</sup>

There were other Conciliar documents which addressed the liturgy, ecumenism, religious freedom, other religions, the apostolate of the laity, religious training and life, missionary activity, education and the media. However *Lumen Gentium* and *Gaudium et Spes* provided the basis for the body of teaching that came from the Council. Overall the Council had a deep impact upon theology and practice. Church life was to be invigorated by institutional renewal affecting the Curia and Canon Law. Significantly the development of Justice and Peace Commissions throughout the Catholic world would bring a new dimension to church life, with social activism in the service of the poor, economic justice and agitation for genuine peace.

Vatican II did not revolutionize or put to one side the pre-1962 Catholic tradition. But it did provide new insights and emphases upon aspects of its tradition. Teachings on faith, for example, remained consistent, but were examined anew in terms of pluralism. The Council recognised that in the modern world a diversity of religious and non-religious convictions existed and those who do not accept the Christian faith

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<sup>33</sup> *Preface (n.4)*

<sup>34</sup> In this context, the natural law is the rule of conduct which is prescribed to us by the Creator in the constitution of the nature with which he has endowed us. See [www.newadvent.org](http://www.newadvent.org) ›.

<sup>35</sup> McDonagh. "The Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et Spes*)."  
pp96-110.

need to be respected. Accordingly those who have different convictions as regards religious matters should not be penalised. Reforms were generated by the actions of the most representative Council in the Church's history, often with fierce debate and seeded by the work of some influential theologians such as John Courtney Murray, Hans King, Karl Rahner, Congar and Edward Schillebeeckx. These men had developed new and controversial theological thinking after World War II that was to help lay the foundations for the documents of Vatican II and the possibility of renewal and reform.

### Implications for New Zealand

Possible implications for New Zealand were not entirely unknown. Despite early predictions that the 'Synod' would probably only last a few days and nothing sensational could reasonably be expected, the early agenda included the conduct and behaviour of priests and religious, liturgical life, vocations, Catholic Action and Catholic schools.<sup>36</sup>

But the New Zealand Church had been experiencing some change prior to the commencement of the Council. Liturgy had taken on some modifications under Pope Pius XII. There was the introduction of bi-lingual missals (Latin-English) allowing the laity to follow the mass, an increasing use of the 'dialogue mass', where scriptures and some texts were read in the vernacular, evening masses were permitted and Eucharistic fasting reduced to three hours. 'By 1960 the dialogue mass has already changed the face of Catholic worship'.<sup>37</sup> Overseas, nun's habits had been modernised in the late fifties<sup>38</sup> and in New Zealand, the lines of authority and rules of community life were being eased in some religious communities.<sup>39</sup> But, in Felix Donnelly's view, the New Zealand Church had tied itself to structures and attitudes that made for a narrow religious outlook, which contrasted to the more fluid attitudes of the European Church. He cited as examples the moral obligation to attend Sunday Mass and not eating meat on Fridays, matters over which European

<sup>36</sup> "The Synod In Rome," *Tablet*, 27 January 1960.

<sup>37</sup> Grayland, Joseph. "New Life, Old Churchskins. The initial implementation of Pastoral Liturgy in New Zealand, 1963 to 1970." Massey, 1996. pp19,67.

<sup>38</sup> Simmons, E R. *In Cruce Salus. A History of the Diocese of Auckland 1848-1980*. Auckland: Catholic Publications Centre, 1982. p264.

<sup>39</sup> Clisby, "History of the Marist Brothers in the New Zealand Province." Chapter 16 Post-War Challenges.

Catholics were less fastidious and tended to honour more in the breach than in the observance.<sup>40</sup>

Implementation would not be easy. As Pauline O'Regan observed, 'people could scarcely be expected to immediately to perceive that the church was in the process of rolling back 400 years of history.'<sup>41</sup> A laity that had for years been conditioned into doing what they were told, with no expectation of consultation and with little sense of responsibility for those decisions taken on their behalf, needed to understand the implications of their new stake in the ownership of the Church. The clergy, on the other hand, were trained authority figures. The 'laity, as a body, came often to be seen as the passive mob on which the Church, i.e. the clergy, operated, a docile group to be governed, or, as a cynic once called them, "honorary members of the Mystical Body." But at the same time, New Zealand Catholics had, 'through their shared sense of democracy and egalitarianism, a healthy clerical-lay relationship, and were less familiar with the vices denounced at the Council- triumphalism, clericalism, and juridicism'.<sup>42</sup>

By October 1963 the 'Mass in the language of the People' was considered a certainty and wider reforms were now being seen as inevitable.<sup>43</sup> The Council's reforms were going to be much more substantial than had earlier been anticipated. Dr. Patricia Burns warned New Zealand Catholics the Council was no longer 'comfortably distant'. It was, as Dr. Burns identified, 'right in our own churchyards....a revolution which within a few years will cause fundamental changes in our parishes.'<sup>44</sup> She was concerned as to whether Catholics would embrace the liturgical reforms, especially the use of English as the liturgical language. For many non-Catholics the latin mass was a puzzling ritual that was 'odd, outlandish and irrelevant.'<sup>45</sup>

Moving Catholic worship from a rubrical system to one of a pastoral liturgy carried some considerable risk. There was the recognition that for some laity the change to the vernacular and the way they prayed could lead to a detachment from or

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<sup>40</sup> Donnelly, Felix. *One Priest's Life*. Auckland: Australia & New Zealand Book Co. Pty. Ltd, 1982. pp80-81

<sup>41</sup> O'Regan, Pauline. *There Is Hope for a Tree*. Auckland: Auckland University Press with Bridget Williams Books, 1995.

<sup>42</sup> Reid, "A Lay Life in the Church."

<sup>43</sup> Jordan, Dom Placid. "Reforms Are Seen As Now Inevitable." *Tablet*, 13 November 1963., "Mass In The Language Of The People," *Tablet*, 30 October 1963.

<sup>44</sup> Burns, Dr Patricia. "How Will New Zealanders Respond To Council's Liturgy Reforms." *Tablet*, 19 February 1964.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid*.

disillusionment with the Church. On the other hand, the *Tablet* correspondent 'Veritas' claimed the 'state of liturgical flux' was a good thing and he thought most Catholics would welcome the new liturgy.<sup>46</sup>

The Constitution on the Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, was promulgated on 4 December 1963 and was the first of the conciliar document issued by the Council. By coming first, it set the atmosphere for the subsequent debates and documents.<sup>47</sup> When the Decree on the Appropriate Renewal of Religious Life (*Perfectae Caritatis*) was released in October 1965, it was a compromise between the conservatives and those bishops and heads of religious orders who had a much broader view of the role the Council was embracing. The traditional Roman position saw religious life as being understood in terms of a Thomist state of perfection, bound by the Code of Canon Law. The alternative vision was of a much more expanded world for religious, which stressed freedom, diversity and effective service to the world. This decree prompted a "vast rethinking of the theology of religious life" with injunctions to return to the spirit of the Gospel, to the specific charism of the order's founder and for religious to interact prophetically with the modern world. Radical reinterpretation of religious life was to have significant consequences affecting the membership of the orders, challenges to male authority, and, in many cases, redefining the work they undertook.<sup>48</sup> This was to manifest itself over the next two decades, but the process was to prove painful as their 'unquestioned, secure and much-applauded way of life was crumbling.'<sup>49</sup>

When the New Zealand hierarchy published the pastoral letter 'Directives for Ecumenical Efforts' in March 1965, they put in place the foundations for a new tradition, at least from a Catholic point of view.<sup>50</sup> The Decree on Ecumenism (*Unitatis Redintegratio*), issued by the Council in November 1964, was not based on an already developed and sanctioned ecclesiology and practice that had existed prior

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<sup>46</sup> Veritas. "Changes in the Liturgy." *Tablet*, 27 May 1964.

<sup>47</sup> Kavanagh, Aidan. "The Conciliar Documents. Liturgy (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*)." In *Modern Catholicism. Vatican II and after*, edited by Adrian Hastings. London: SPCK, 1991. p68. The reason for its precedence was that the pre-conciliar preparation proved far more satisfactory than that of the other comparable important texts.

<sup>48</sup> Schneiders, Sandra M "The Conciliar Documents. Religious Life (*Perfectae Caritatis*)." In *Modern Catholicism. Vatican II and after*, edited by Adrian Hastings. London: SPCK, 1991. pp157-161.

<sup>49</sup> O'Regan, Pauline. *A Changing Order*. Wellington: Allen & Unwin New Zealand Limited in association with Port Nicholson Press, 1986. p93.

<sup>50</sup> "Pastoral Letter from the Hierarchy. Directives for Ecumenical Efforts," *Tablet*, 3 March 1965.



to the Council.<sup>51</sup> Pre-conciliar attitudes to Church unity were those of deliberate distance and caution. The Catholic Church passed judgement on the ecumenical movement without being a participant.

A 1954 *Tablet* editorial, commenting on the World Council of Churches Assembly in Evanston near Chicago, set out the Church's position. Acknowledging that Christian disunity was a scandal, nevertheless the Catholic Church was the one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church that carried out Christ's work of salvation and would do so until the end of time. Unity existed only in the Catholic Church and the 'divisions between Christians can only be put to an end by a return to her'. There was no sense of compromise. The legacy of the 'revolt from the Church in the sixteenth' has plagued non-Catholic Christendom, leading to 'growing estrangements' and the consequent 'gulf and alienation have become so great that the voice and the language of the Holy Church are no longer understood by her separated children'.<sup>52</sup>

Caution pervaded the tone of the pastoral letter. Catholics were warned that there must be no formal acceptance of error, no danger of scandal or to the faith and no danger of indifferentism.<sup>53</sup> The directives insisted upon common or approved prayer being used on occasions, either formal or informal, civic or private, when Catholics and non-Catholics met and prayer was to be offered. Earlier restrictions on Catholics attending school assembly prayers and attending non-Catholic churches for weddings and funerals were lifted. The bishops ended the pastoral with recognising that all Catholic had a duty 'to pray for the right attitude of mind'.<sup>54</sup>

Now Catholics were fully involved in ecumenical gatherings. In June 1965 a meeting of 700 gathered to inaugurate 'Christian Unity Week' in Christchurch, where a panel of representatives from the participating churches answered questions on Church unity.<sup>55</sup> A Catholic columnist reported on his first organised inter-faith dialogue as 'moving and educational', discovering how little how both groups, one Presbyterian one Catholic, knew of each other's organisation and was somewhat envious of the Presbyterian 'committee of men meeting each week to discuss temporal affairs of the

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<sup>51</sup> Stransky, Tom. "The Conciliar Documents.Ecumenism (Unitatis Redintegratio)." In *Modern Catholicism. Vatican II and after.*, edited by Adrian Hastings. London: SPCK, 1991. p115.

<sup>52</sup> "The Assembly At Evanston," *Tablet*, 1 September 1954.

<sup>53</sup> "Pastoral Letter from the Hierarchy. Directives for Ecumenical Efforts." One of the directives urged that on 'occasions of common prayer, if feasible a prayer for unity be introduced – to show clearly that we are not yet fully united, except in charity, and to avoid the danger of indifferentism'.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> "Christian Unity Meeting in Christchurch," *Tablet*, 2 June 1965.

parish.' They agreed to increase the scope of combined pastoral work.<sup>56</sup> Catholic and Protestant Prison Chaplains gathered in September 1965, where meetings were chaired by both the Rev. E. Hoddinott, senior chaplain of the National Council of Churches and Father Leo Downey, senior Catholic prison chaplain. They resolved to form a national Prison Chaplains Association, sharing the official roles of chair, secretary and treasurer.<sup>57</sup>

The tone of a 1965 *Tablet* editorial on ecumenism was in contrast to the triumphalistic observations on the 1956 World Council of Churches assembly. While reflecting a cautious note about the restraints that still needed to apply, such as inter-communion between Catholics and non-Catholics, it spoke of the need for Catholics to observe the principle of reciprocity, as they needed to respond in kind to the invitations from their non-Catholic brethren.<sup>58</sup> Ecumenism, as with all the Council initiated reforms, was to develop much further over the coming decades. Perhaps the most potent ecumenical contact in the immediate post-conciliar period was the meeting between the Archbishop of Canterbury and Pope Paul VI in March 1966. The occasion was highly symbolic, as gestures of 'good will and ecumenical commitment are at least as important as the steps that are being taken to arrive at a doctrinal consensus'.<sup>59</sup> They met and conferred in the Sistine Chapel, exchanged gifts and the kiss of peace, and Paul gave the Archbishop his ring from his finger and fitted it onto the Archbishop's hand. Their joint statement spoke of the intention of both Churches to begin a serious dialogue that 'may' lead to 'that unity in truth for which Christ prayed'.<sup>60</sup> This meeting was naturally given much publicity, but just as interesting were the reported views of Protestant and Orthodox observers to the Council. Divergent views remained, but Protestant commentators were buoyed by the renewal within the Catholic Church that in turn could lead to further changes 'rendering possible closer contacts between us.' A greater emphasis upon scriptural studies, the enhanced role for the laity and working through common positions with the World Council of Churches were early positive achievements.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Veritas, "Meeting with Presbyterians," *Tablet*, 22 September 1965.

<sup>57</sup> "Catholic and Protestant Prison Chaplains Meet," *Tablet*, 22 September 1965.

<sup>58</sup> "Ecumenism in Practice." *Tablet*, 7 July 1965.

<sup>59</sup> Tavard, George. "Ecumenical Relations." In *Modern Catholicism. Vatican II and after*, edited by Adrian Hastings. London: SPCK, 1991.

<sup>60</sup> "Historic Meeting: Rome and Canterbury," *Tablet*, 6 April 1966.

<sup>61</sup> O'Neill, James. "Orthodox and Protestant Views on the Council." *Tablet*, 16 March 1966. Jordan, Dom Placid. "Council went beyond Protestant hopes." *Tablet*, 19 January 1966.

The implications for Catholics in New Zealand in the aftermath of the Council were unclear. After Archbishop McKeefry had said that it was 'over to the laity', as regards the pace and extent of changes for the laity in the Church, Veritas set out the reality of the lay status in the Church, criticising the tepid response of the hierarchy-

We are simply unused to taking very much action ourselves. We have been educated by experience to seek approval at every turn and we are not going to be helped by being referred to council texts which will- in the long run- produce a library full of exposition and comment. Leads will have to be given and the council texts will have to be published in a more easily understood form related to New Zealand. I believe we are entitled to more from our priests than this; after nearly a generation of chaffing at the bit, it is not good enough merely to tell us that it has been removed.<sup>62</sup>

The problem of authority remained one of the most difficult issues which effect lay participation in the life of the Church.<sup>63</sup> Council decisions were to stimulate a long and, for many Catholics, difficult path to follow. This applied to the laity, priests and religious, who could not have foreseen the magnitude of reforms they were expected to identify with and participate in.

When the Council closed in December 1965, it marked the beginning of the implementation. Over fifty years later the legacy of the Council is still being debated. Clearly some reforms, such as the liturgical move away from Latin into the vernacular, are by now too firmly established to be revoked. But questions, such as that of authority within the Church, which agitated both the traditionalists and the progressives during the years of the Council, still remain contentious.

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<sup>62</sup> Veritas, "Over to the Laity," *Tablet*, 9 March 1966.

<sup>63</sup> Veritas, "Parish Democracy," *Tablet*, 25 May 1966.

## Appendix 4

### Protestant Social Theology

Protestantism was not without serious attempts to develop social theology. The mid 19th century saw a burgeoning of a new theology that attempted to deal with the problems of class struggle and the conditions of workers. Early attempts to reconcile Christianity with Socialism began in France and Germany in the 1840s. The decline of Chartism in England still left a fear that unless the obvious problems of the industrial workers were addressed, it would re-emerge. In 1848 the English Anglican theologian Frederick Denison Maurice collaborated with the author Charles Kingsley and lawyer John Ludlow to begin the Christian Socialist Movement. Maurice understood socialism as primarily the ideal of co-operation and association standing in contrast to the individualism of those who advocated a laissez faire culture. He sought a greater degree of social harmony within the existing social structure, calling upon society to recognise Christ as its head and acknowledging the brotherhood and sisterhood of all. As the renowned preacher and contemporary Frederick Robertson put the issue 'This, then, is the Christian revelation- man is God's child and the sin of man consists of perpetually living as if it were false'.<sup>64</sup>

Maurice's ecclesiology stressed that national communities were ordained by God and the national church is called to imbue the life of the nation with spiritual values. The church, he stressed, should be seen as both Catholic and Protestant, with the former denoting the universal aspect and the latter the national aspect thereby reflecting the relation of every nation and person to God.<sup>65</sup> Kingsley was the publicist while Ludlow, a layman, wanted to infuse what he had seen of socialism with Christian principles and try and ensure that newly emerging social order, including co-operative associations, had a Christian influence.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Hutchison, William R. "The Americanness of the Social Gospel; An Inquiry in Comparative History." *Church History* 44, no. 3 (1975): 367-381. p375.

<sup>65</sup> Marsden, John. "Frederick Denison Maurice; Christian Socialism and the future of Social Democracy." *Heythrop Journal* 45, no. 2 (2004): 137-157. p140.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.* p143-4. "Ludlow, John Malcolm Forbes (1821-1911)." In *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (2 rev.ed.), edited by E.A. Livingstone. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. Ludlow, was a lawyer and social activist. He had spent time, as a youth, in Paris where he had experienced the ferment of socialist ideas. As a lawyer he was able to provide a great deal of practical help in the setting up of co-operatives. His influence was credited, in England, with preventing much of the antagonism between Church and Socialism that occurred in many other countries.

This early phase of Christian socialism in England waned after 1854. Maurice's Christian Socialism relied on moral persuasion but it lacked any analysis of the economic or political dimension of class issues or the plight of the workers. There was no appreciation of the structural dimensions of the social evils. But Maurice in particular left a substantial theological basis for a Christian social ethic which influenced social reformers on both sides of the Atlantic.<sup>67</sup>

A disciple of Maurice, Charles Gore, was to have a major influence on theological and social teaching on the Church of England. Gore was an Anglican theologian, a bishop and prominent in the liberal wing of the Anglo-Catholic movement. In 1889 he helped found the Christian Social Union at Oxford. One of Gore's most significant contributions to theological thought was the centrality of prophecy to the argument for the reality of God. Without this witness of the prophets, the gospel could not be properly taught. Indeed the Church itself, through prophecy, needed purification to make it an effective servant in and to society. The failure of the Church in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to challenge the dominance of the *laissez faire* economy was a cause of ignominy and rather than simply deploring the misery, should have attacked the foundations of the injustices, by bearing prophetic witness against those social abuses. The Church had failed to live the 'pre-eminently social ethics of the Kingdom of God.'<sup>68</sup>

In 1937 J H Oldham introduced middle axioms into the ecumenical discussion of social issues. Middle axioms were the intermediate principles which sat between the primary Christian social principles which come from the knowledge of God's character and his relationship to mankind, and the specific policies developed to deal with the issues.<sup>69</sup> William Temple, although he never used the term, helped formulate a number of these axioms at a Conference on Christian Politics, Economics and Citizenship in 1924. They included the right of workers to the dignity of a living wage and the aspiration that unemployment should be eliminated.

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<sup>67</sup> Marsden. "Frederick Denison Maurice; Christian Socialism and the future of Social Democracy." p147. Maurice was recognised as one of the most profound theologians and spiritual guides in the Anglican Church of the nineteenth century. Aubert, Roger. "Social Christianity." In *Catholic Social Teaching: An Historical Perspective*, edited by David A Boileau. Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2003. p117.

<sup>68</sup> Carpenter, James A. "Charles Gore: After Fifty Years." *Expository Times* 94, no. 3 (1982): 71-75. pp72-74.

<sup>69</sup> Marsden, John. "William Temple: Christianity and the Life of Fellowship." *Political Theology* 8, no. 2 (2007): 213-233. p217. Temple's four primary social principles were 'freedom, or respect for personality; fellowship; the duty of service; and the power of sacrifice.' It is then expected that the intermediate principles act as effective guides for action in any given time and situation.'

Temple, who became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1942, had gained a national profile as regards social issues. His 1942 book *Christianity and Social Order* sold very well.<sup>70</sup> It justified the Church's right to interfere in matters political, economic and social. For Christians to carry out their moral responsibilities and participate in civic life, the Church must provide them with a 'systematic statement of principles' to aid them, and carrying with it a denunciation of those customs or institutions which offend against those principles.<sup>71</sup> Temple was widely acknowledged as having provided substance to the social reforms that transformed post-war Britain.

In the United States a parallel social movement had been promoted by enlightened Protestant clergy during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The social gospel movement in America was influenced by F D Maurice, and leaders such as Walter Rauschenbusch a New York Baptist seminary professor and Washington Gladden a Congregational pastor, argued that the corporate world needed to be Christianised and needed to concern itself with the welfare of the poor and oppressed. The lack of regulatory order had allowed extensive exploitation of workers and liberal theology did not adequately tackle the evils of monopoly capitalism. Advocates of the social gospel tried raising the consciousness of Christians to the plight of the working class and sought structural change while at the same time providing the more traditional forms of Christian charity. Prophecy was recognised as having a central role, 'the beating heart of scripture'.<sup>72</sup> Old Testament prophets provided a case in point where the captivity of Israel was in part attributed to the neglect of the disadvantaged and dispossessed.<sup>73</sup>

The social gospel tended to lose momentum after World War I. This was due to the horrors of the war, where any signs of human betterment or progress were almost crushed. Prosperity was normalised in the post-war boom, leaving little room for issues raised by the social gospel. At the same time social and theological conservatives in the churches began a fundamentalist reaction to any innovation in

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<sup>70</sup> *Christianity and Social Order* sold 139,000 copies which was impressive, especially during wartime.

<sup>71</sup> Brown, Malcolm. "Politics as the Church's Business: William Temple's *Christianity and Social Order* Revisited." *Journal of Anglican Studies* 5, no. 2 (2007): 163-186. p166.

<sup>72</sup> Dorrien, Gary. "Society as the Subject of Redemption; The Relevance of the Social Gospel." *Tikkun* 24, no. 6 (2009): 43-47.

<sup>73</sup> Gray, Don. "Beyond Orthodoxy: Social Theology and the views of Protestant Clergy on social issues." *Review of Religious Research* 50, no. 2 (2008): 221-240. p223.

religion. Historical relativism and positivistic science threatened what had been unchallenged certainties of scripture and dogma.<sup>74</sup>

The social gospel was termed 'Christian Americanism' by the Swiss theologian Emil Brunner. This reflected a certain superior European attitude towards the liberal nature of the social gospel as being the American religious style. This American style was seen to be concerned with the 'world bettering business', and as such somewhat lacking in theological sophistication. However an influential book by W A Visser t' Hooft, *Background of the Social Gospel in America* (1928), helped move pre 1914 European perceptions of America as a country that had little to say in terms of religious thought to that of being theologically active. Post WWI had American involvement increase in the missionary movement, youth movements and attendance at international ecumenical conferences. The Americans who tended to be involved were primarily evangelical Protestants of a liberal persuasion with a social-activist inclination. They were not eager to correct the European assumption that conservative religion in America was almost dead. As Visser t' Hooft wrote ' A choice for or against American Christianity by the mid-twenties ad cone to be the same thing as a choice for or against the Social Gospel.'<sup>75</sup> The evidence for overwhelming commitment to the social gospel across the Protestant United States or achieved greater success than in Europe or Great Britain at this time is, at best, uncertain. Yet the 1935 findings of a survey of 100,000 religious leaders of twenty two faiths in the United States revealed that the religious leaders were profoundly influenced by their social environments. The majority of clergy were content to carry out their religious work in a way that did not conflict with community standards. In general they did not take any more radical action than did the overwhelming majority of the 'respectable class' in their community. ' By contrast those clergy who sought social justice had to deal with tensions that arose between those ideals and the reality of successfully functioning in the community.'<sup>76</sup>

Both Christian Socialism in Great Britain and the Social Gospel Movement in the United States shared many of the theological insights that proved troublesome to their more conservative brethren. Explicit evangelism was to come second to a

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<sup>74</sup> Ahlstrom, Sydney E. *A Religious History of the American People*. 2nd ed. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004. p806.

<sup>75</sup> Hutchison. "The Americanness of the Social Gospel; An Inquiry in Comparative History." p367-.9

<sup>76</sup> Davis. "The Social Action Pattern Of The Protestant Religious Leader."

vision that saw progressive social transformation as being a primary role of the church. Christians were being asked to transform those structures in society that were at the heart of the problem, or as Gore declared 'a grinding of the faces of the poor and the robbery of God'.<sup>77</sup> It was society that needed to be redeemed. Politics became the Church's business.

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<sup>77</sup> Carpenter. "Charles Gore: After Fifty Years."p74



## Appendix 5

### A Brief Historiography of 'the Split'.

Although accounts of the Split were available in the late 1950s, (including Tom Truman's *Catholic Action and Politics*) and continued to be published during the following years, a particularly useful work was a more recent scholarly study, Bruce Duncan's *Crusade or Conspiracy? Catholics and the Anti-Communist Struggle in Australia*, published in 2001, which has served as my principal source.<sup>78</sup> Duncan argued that Santamaria and his followers were heavily influenced by the right wing pre-war European thought of Charles Maurras and had a fundamentally flawed understanding of Catholic Action. As such Santamaria failed to appreciate the importance of separating the Church from politics, as advocated by Jacques Maritain. Duncan was also highly critical of the hierarchy and the manner in which it naively approved the establishment of the Catholic Social Studies Movement and continued to support it.

Many of Santamaria's writings are critically examined by Patrick Morgan in *B.A. Santamaria: Your Most Obedient Servant* (2007) and *B A Santamaria: Running The Show* (2008). Key position papers, memorandums, instructions and meeting minutes provide a documentary trail and put key events into context. Richard Doig's PhD thesis *National Catholic Rural Movement and a 'New Deal' for Australia. The Rise and Fall of an Agrarian Movement 1931-58* explores the social justice themes of the Catholic Action that embraced agrarian ideals and Santamaria's leadership of the Rural Movement. Race Matthews (*Collateral Damage: B.A. Santamaria and the Marginalising of Social Catholicism*) argues that Santamaria's anti-communist activities effectively ruined any real chance of distributism playing a meaningful part in social Catholicism in Australia. Katherine Massam's *Sacred Threads* revealed a wide diversity of lay spirituality in Australia and how Catholic Action was interpreted in different ways outside of the main cities. In a 2006 essay Duncan considers the controversy in the Catholic Church and the on-going repercussions in *Santamaria and the Legacy of the Split*, concluding that 'the crusade mentality, resting on a quasi-Manichaeian view of good versus evil, is a treacherous mindset that results in dangerous misconceptions and disastrous consequences.' *The Great Labor Schism A Retrospective* (2005), edited by Brian Costar, Peter Love and Paul Strangio,

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<sup>78</sup> Bruce Duncan is a Redemptorist priest and lectures at the Yarra Theological Union in Melbourne.

provides a series of essays examining aspects of the split, especially the mixing of religion and politics. It remains perplexing why Santamaria received so much support from the bishops to promote his brand of Catholic social teaching which, through politicizing the Catholic Social Studies Movement, seriously damaged the cohesion of the Catholic Church in Australia and altered the political face of Australia.

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 Wellington Archdiocesan Archive (WAA).

The main collections accessed in these libraries were

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Alexander Turnbull Library Wellington (ATL):- Manuscripts collection and in particular records concerning politics, church activities and industrial relations; J.J Mulheron papers; Roth papers; Auckland Maritime Cargo Workers Industrial Union, 1955-56 documents, NZ Federation of Labour Record and Research notes; Auckland Trades Council Minutes and Correspondence.

Wellington Archdiocesan Archive (WAA):-The following are the main sub-headings under which much of the documentation was filed - Bus transport to schools, Wellington Catholic Education Board, Catholic Education Office, Miscellaneous Catholic Sodalities, History of Education and Private Schools, Interdenominational Committee and Association of Independent Schools, Social Justice Study Groups, Education State Aid, Government Grants, Circulars of Archbishops, Rev. J A Higgins, Holy Name Society.

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