



# The Need for Public Catholic Alternative Schooling

A Review of Literature & Independent Research on the  
Practical Problems of the Public/Private School Divide

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THE NEED FOR PUBLIC CATHOLIC ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLING

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## ABSTRACT

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**PROBLEM:** The First Amendment of the Constitution seems to call for the disinterested support of religious institutions by the government, yet the Department of Education's philosophical agenda has subtle but undeniable teleologically religious consequences. If the public/private school separation is politically unsustainable on philosophical grounds, then the only remaining measure of qualification for public funding should be the ability to provide for the common good. By this measure the Catholic Church in general and its educational system in particular has surpassed many other tenured American institutions.

**PROCEDURE:** In a qualitative study and literature review, the researcher investigated the various dynamics of the private and public educational systems in relation to philosophy, theology, ethics, and the common good. The action study was based on a five answer open-ended questionnaire, which was responded to by four school and community administrators.

**FINDINGS:** The questionnaire helped to establish the dual theses that Catholic schooling provides for the common good to a superior degree, especially in the domain of character education, and that the public-private school distinction is arbitrarily biased toward the federal Department of Education with its utilitarian teleology.

**CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** The questionnaire responses varied in regard to perspectives and solutions to the philosophical problems of the public/private distinction, but not significantly. The feasibility of thorough reform in Church/state relations was not anticipated. Support for the second half of the thesis, that Catholic schools can service a broad range of educational and developmental goals for the public good, was explicit throughout the responses. The subtle theological implications of the First Amendment and the haphazard qualifications of the public-versus-private distinction are politically charged controversies that nevertheless need to be openly discussed and settled in order to save America from continued cultural depravity and economic collapse.

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# THE NEED FOR PUBLIC CATHOLIC ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLING

## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### Statement of the Problem or Research Question

The separation of Church and State, as articulated in the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and subsequently interpreted by law, has resulted in philosophical confusion about the meaning of the word *religion* and its function in human society (Bryk et. al., 1993, Chapter 12, Section 3, para. 28). What is a Church? What is a religion? Are only Churches religions? Despite the purposefully non-specific language of the Constitution, the actual application of the Establishment Clause, at least in regard to schooling, has been highly prejudiced since its inception (Carpenter and Kafer, 2012). In recent history, the ambiguity of meaning coupled with the pressures of public need have forced a loosening of regulations against state/public and Church/private entanglement (Bulkley and Burch, 2011; Weinberg, 2013). If it can be assumed that some form of universal education is teleologically oriented to human happiness (Vasilopoulos, 2011), then the unavoidability of religious implications in *public* education may already be apparent (Schindler, 1996). This study asks the question: what are the theoretical and practical consequences of Catholic education, in its various modes, on the human person in the American context? Are these consequences positive measures of scientifically determined characteristics of healthy development, and if so, why is public educational funding so strongly biased against them? How is this chasm between public and private education being widened or bridged by the surveyed schools?

## Statement of Purpose

In this action research project, the purpose is to (1) extend the range of analysis about logical and pragmatic errors in the First Amendment and (2) to explore the historical roles of Catholic education in responding to the American demand for equitable achievement and holistic development in schooling. The short term goal of this research project is to gather evidence for the necessity of Catholic education in the market of the public's educational choices. The long term goals are to stimulate conversation on the meaning of religious liberty, specifically in regard to academic freedom, and to inject the science of theology back into mainstream discussions on education.

## Definition of Important Terms

Public: This term means of or pertaining to the population as a whole. In this Master's Project, *public* refers to human services funded by the government. This research study will examine perceptions of administrators about the need for public alternative schools as measured by a questionnaire (Appendix A).

Catholic: This adjective can generally mean having a broad or universal pertinence. In this Master's Project, *Catholic* refers to a specific group of Christians who associate themselves with and faithfully adhere to the interpretations of divine Revelation, transmitted through sacred Scripture and sacred Tradition, by the Magisterium of the Roman Church. In reference to education, this term usually refers to privately funded schools. This study will examine perceptions as they relate to Catholic schools as measured by the questionnaire.

Boarding School: This is a school at which students receive or produce food and lodging during the educational interim. These institutions are also called *residential schools* here without distinction. In this Master's Project, *boarding school* also implies a holistic approach to instruction, one that is synonymous with the idea of the *total institution* (McGuire, T., & Dougherty, D, 2008). This study will examine the perceived need as measured by the questionnaire.

Traditional School: This phrase refers to private or public day-schools that function in relative parallel to the federally standardized educational system. In this Master's Project, *traditional school* connotes an educational institution with a regular division of subjects and age-groups, a non-residential school environment, and a bias toward testing outcomes above instructional methodology.

Alternative Education: This phrase indicates private or public institutions that serve the purposes of human development or rehabilitation in a broad sense. In this Master's Project, *alternative education* refers to any instructional pedagogy that has been established as a substitute means of human formation, intellectually, emotionally, physically, and/or spiritually.

Common Good: By common good is to be understood the sum total of social conditions which allow people, both as groups and individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily. In this Master's Project, *common good* refers to those aspects of a religious or secular institution whose value is recognized as transcending ideological affiliation.

Rehabilitative: Rehabilitation entails the restoration of a person or environment to what is considered a healthy condition or normative capacity. In this Master's Project, *rehabilitative*

references an educational pedagogy that functions as social scaffolding, to restore the autonomy of persons or communities and then be removed.

### General Hypothesis

The author anticipates that the literature review and interview data will expose unresolved tensions in the public-private education debate, such as the indirect funding of private parties for public services and the abstruse division between cultural and religious education. It is also expected that the research will support a case for Catholic alternative schools to engage in public education, specifically for the educational aims of character education and civic renewal.

## Chapter 2

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### Introduction

There are a pantheon of failings in American education today. Some of these problems include: a lack of correlation between school-grades and real world excellence, the ignorance of a philosophical hierarchy of truth, the neglect of emotional and spiritual character formation (Shields, 2011), the monopolization of educational resources by corporate interests, and the collapse of multiple ‘intelligences’ and skillsets into an inhumanly narrow ‘common core’ (Johnson, 2014). As John Taylor Gatto exhorted the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Relations, genuine educational reform must begin at the subsidiary level; “it will involve gradual merging of schooling with community life, a de-professionalization of the learning enterprise” (Gatto, 2009, p. 154). The highly educated and inventive citizenship of pre-Civil War America – having profoundly superior rates of literacy long before the rise of state schooling – attests to the democratic potential of a holistic and communal model of education. In the present day, the necessarily gradual process of reclaiming education and putting it back into the hands of families and parents would be assisted by rehabilitative centers of reform for the demographics most in need. The *Public Catholic Alternative School Model* is a means to this end.

## The Philosophical & Theological Problem of the First Amendment

In a philosophy of education journal, Vasillopulos (2011) contrasted Aristotle and John Locke in relation to the idea of education as a natural right. Antagonism between philosophers and policy-makers has been evident since the dawn of written history, but practical politics and philosophical discourse need not be antithetical. The ancient Greeks would have agreed that *to govern was to educate and to educate was to govern* (p. 21). Locke grounded natural rights in the *pre-social* condition of humankind, while Aristotle considered humankind a *social animal*. Aristotle was not a natural rights proponent per se, but he nevertheless safeguarded the autonomy of individual freedom against the tyranny of any state. Thus, neither Locke nor Aristotle would concede that natural rights or freedom for the good can be surrendered to a social contract of any kind. The concept of *inalienable* rights, as adopted and developed in the U.S. Constitution, means these rights are inseparable from the human person as such. In the American system, civil rights are always derived from and subordinated to natural rights. Locke's radical individualism did not allow him to include education as a natural right since this would require a natural dependence on social institutions. Moreover, "life, liberty and property are not only natural rights for Locke. They are the means by which a coercive state – tyrannical in principle – can be controlled" (p. 33). Still, for Locke, and more so for Aristotle, the possibility of tyranny in society does not outweigh the goodness (and necessity) of social life for virtuous living. Education, for both philosophers, is a part of natural human development and, therefore, is an extension of the rights to life and happiness.

Vasillopulos represents a strong position for seeing education as connected to natural rights through its inherent relationship to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. It must be noted, however, that this article only brushes the surface of a massive subject. The author leaves

the big question unanswered: what kind of education is required for this free and fulfilling life? Because Aristotle is one of the most influential thinkers (with very few equals) in human history, and one of the main architects of Western Civilization, it is important to be familiar with his philosophical contributions on the topic of education. If human nature is inherently social, as he famously asserted, and friendship in the highest order of common goods, then education should be seen as an extension of *eudemonia* (a flourishing life of virtue), a relationship between students and the people of the past and present. Similarly, notwithstanding important differences, Locke desired the fulfillment of the individual, and so, setup natural rights as his bulwark against social and political injustice. The end of human existence, for both these philosophers, was a *religious* condition of personal perfection. Although education is not, presently, considered a constitutional right, the question must be asked as to what extent democratic liberty and just society is possible without education. It is *imperative* to note, however, that education does not necessarily connote modern day schooling. Gatto (2009) will take up the question of what education actually means in its primordial and essential sense.

In his book, *Weapons of Mass Instruction*, renowned educator John Taylor Gatto (2009) asked “What is Education?” (p. 145). Immanuel Kant had said that education should answer four questions: *What can I know? What may I hope? What ought I to do? What is Man?* Ironically, modern public schooling, which has its roots in Germany, does not even broach these questions. This is in no small part due to the separation of Church and state. The four questions are bypassed: knowledge is taught, hopes are assumed, duties are given, and a uniquely human anthropology is altogether ignored. Schooling no longer educates, it merely indoctrinates. On October 23, 1991, Gatto was asked to speak to the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Relations about the subject of how schools should look in the year 2000. Since the shift to longer

hours and nation-wide compulsion, post-Civil War public school has failed to preserve, let alone improve, the literacy and competency rates of Americans. As a first step to repairing the broken educational system, there would have to be “a long, loud national, regional, and local debate whose purpose would be to establish the range of acceptable definitions of an educated person” (p. 148). A *compulsory* institution has to constantly bear the burden of defending its value, and standardized tests have completely failed to correlate with what is generally considered a successful life. In fact, modern schools, in many ways, inhibit true education. At minimum, the curriculum of a *educated* person should have the following qualities: 1) a cultivated appreciation for solitude; 2) skills in forming healthy relationships; 3) an awareness of past growth and a desire for future development; 4) “a hard-won blueprint of values;” 5) a sensitivity to cultural diversity; 6) a method for critically evaluating ideas; 7) a sense of professionalism as meeting the needs of the human community; 8) a motivation to seek variety in proportion to stability; 9) a study of history in the layers of world, country, local, and personal; 10) hands-on exploration of the physical world; 11) experience in a variety of emotional bonds (family, friendship, comradeship, community, networks) 12) a grappling with mortality and the meaning of life (p. 150-51).

Although not an academic text, Gatto’s work draws on 30 years of experience as a public school teacher. Gatto was named New York state teacher of the year before resigning on the op-ed pages of the *Wall Street Journal* and becoming a best-selling author. Gatto has a holistic sense of the student that is rare and insightful. In the end, Gatto stopped teaching because of the limitations his institution put on the work of educating. Without the lessons that Gatto recommended to the Senate committee, he believes young people become emotionally and intellectually crippled. Children need to learn these concepts and practice them from a young age

so that they are prepared to confront a world of challenges, including counterproductive social customs, political corruption, and moral evils. Only children educated in a holistic curriculum, like Gatto's, will be able to aid in the reversal of the present decline in American culture. The Catholic alternative school model is intended precisely for this reason: to create an environment insulated from the decaying culture where children can learn to be fully human.

In "Philosophical Education Against Contemporary Culture," renowned philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre (2014) asserts that there are four stages to a complete philosophical education: 1) the questioning of assumptions about *happiness* in the proximate age, 2) the analysis of the meaning of the *good*, 3) investigating the *nature and unity of the human person* as answers to the previous, and finally, 4) to insert oneself into the ongoing dialogue of historical conversations (p. 43). When philosophy is taught in school, it is usually from the perspective of a history of ideas rather than as a relevant and living conversation. The situation in education is hindered by a general lack of integration between school life and home life, so that even when the content of education is excellent it cannot be sufficiently internalized by the students. Compartmentalized living has led to compartmentalized thinking. The habit of philosophical analysis is dying on the vine along with its fruits of innovation, and thus, the philosophers have been segregated from the public square. American culture resists, even rebels, against philosophical questions posed outside of an academic setting. It is acceptable to evaluate the argument between Socrates and Alcibiades, but the question must stay at school; not many students will apply *the same question* to the indirect politics of television propaganda. The Western intellectual tradition had always understood human persons to be inherently inquisitive, the implication being, that when questioning is stifled so is the actualization of human potential. Contemporary ideas about happiness rely largely on a cultivated condition of false expectations

supported by willed ignorance. “There are then two possibilities: *either* we fail to put in question happiness, as it is now generally understood and valued, and by so doing allow our students to be deceived and self-deceived, to be, as Flaubert and de Gaulle put it, stupid, *or* we try to rid ourselves and them of illusion and deception, by putting in question the contemporary understanding of happiness” (46). Over-specialization in the professional world breeds a culture of distrust, as each specialist feels inhumanly distant from the specialists outside his or her field. Without the connecting principles of philosophy, the relationships between disciplines are like schoolyard politics, each subject leveraging power over the others with its *secrets*. True education, on the contrary, requires an apprenticeship in suffering constructively toward unity, which, when undertaking reciprocally, leads to the phenomenon of creative emergence, that is, products which are greater than the sum of their parts.

The philosophical process itself moves one toward solutions, echoing Gatto’s (2009) words. To assess the goodness of any action or aim, one must be able to place it within the landscape of human fulfillment, to evaluate its effects amidst a personal and social environment that possesses specific qualities. Thus, the definition of the human person, distinct from all other beings, and the purposes of his or her existence must be somewhat well established before the assessment can begin. These presuppositions should be rationally defensible and the relationship between the means and the ends clearly mapped out. The next step is to study the history of identical or similar conceptions of the human person as the one presently held by the student, and the genealogy of ideas related to the proposed action or aim, and to make adjustments to one’s position and strategy according to the wisdom gained in related situations, theoretical or real (p. 48) Therefore, the value of a philosophical education cannot be measured in time or money; it is ultimately the very fabric that weaves together a robustly creative and existentially liberating

society. Once a student has learned the right habits of thinking, there is no obstacle in his or her journey to happiness that cannot be moved. The courage and humility to disidentify from what is popular and easy, first through the practice of dialectical thinking then through works of service, empowers a person to stand back from all other pressures except that universal human desire for truth – which most of the great minds of Western Civilization thought was the beginning of a desire for God. Once one becomes confident enough to stand alone with Truth/God, from such a viewpoint, the respective goodness of an idea or behavior or person can be lucidly discerned. In turn, one will learn to logically defend and also regularly refine the formulations of truth which have born the greatest fruits. The question of *What am I to do?* to contribute to the welfare of society will be answered in this process. Materialistic and dualistic educational models simply do not answer the engage philosophical questions and thus further antagonize social stratification through relativism of the answers. An education that bypasses the philosophical development of the student will very likely enslave him or her in an extremely limited perception of happiness, one that offers no hope of sustainability or growth for the individual. History’s voice on the issue is clear: a society run on intellectual and vocational slavery will inevitably destroy itself.

Samuel Rocha (2009) discussed the need for a rehabilitation of the erotic dimension of education in “A Return to Love in William James and Jean-Luc Marion.” Love of wisdom, or *philo-sophia*, as introduced in Plato’s *Symposium*, has been supplanted by a mechanical appropriation of scientific methods in education. Rocha critiques the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* because: “It is very clear that love has nothing intentional or explicit to do with the ‘science’ of this program” (Rocha, 2009, p. 579). In William James’s *The Will to Believe*, he proposed the following: “Well, of two conceptions equally fit to satisfy the logical demand, that one which awakens the active impulses, or satisfies other aesthetic demands better than the other,

will be accounted the more rational conception, will deservedly prevail” (Rocha, 2009, p. 582). Thus, aesthetical preferences are given epistemological priority to reason. James believed that through intuition – defined as an emotional prognostication rather than as an intellectual insight vis a vis Aquinas – one receives beliefs and premises which will generally *reject* subsequent rationalizations that are in contradiction to them, even when said rationalizations are logically convincing (p. 584). Jean-Luc Marion makes a similar point declaring that intuitions hold an *ultimate cognition*, bookending every intellectual cognitions in an ontological way: “Knowledge does not make love possible, because knowledge flows from love. The lover makes visible what she loves and, without this love, nothing would appear to her” (Rocha, 2009, p. 585). Marion objects to conceptions of reason that marginalize love. Marion inverts Descartes *cogito ergo sum*, I think therefore I am, insisting that *we love before we think* (578). For both Marion and James, though in different respects, love in the form of intuition and emotion widens the horizons upon which the intellect exercises its discursive vision.

As it regards education, Rocha enlists these philosophers against the modern propensity for mechanistic schooling, as if children were computers requiring only the programing of addition information. In fact, educational pedagogy needs to acknowledge the human person in as much of his or her entirety as possible, at least, as a *sensually based*, organic, social life-form with a capacity to procure abstract thought in the service of his or her ends. “The very meaning of education today is fundamentally modern, scientific, and behavioristic, and for good reason. The school is a historically modern institution where modern science has become central to its perceived effectiveness, and the behavioristic assumptions of human persons who function as objects, capital, and other less than- human things are embedded in its pedagogy” (Rocha, 2009, p. 585). Marion contends that the scientific revolution censured the erotic origins of education in

the Platonic Academy and this has destroyed the legitimization of the humanities, arts, and music as proper disciplines of knowledge. Educational psychology has shown that “what is likely to be remembered, cherished, and practiced is, as James put it, that which awakens the active impulses and other aesthetic demands” (Rocha, 2009, p. 586). Teaching is more an art than a science, and the subjects taught are not computers but human persons.

Bryk, Lee, and Holland (1993) combined their own field work with the previous literature of their time into a piercing study on the relationship of Catholic education to the common good. The authors summarized the four foundational characteristics of the Catholic high school as: 1) a delimited core, 2) a communal organization, 3) decentralized governance, and 4) an inspirational ideology (this last element giving form and reason to the others). The core curriculum of Catholic education is an essential factor in the more equitable social distribution of achievement found in the Catholic schools (Bryk et. al., 1993, Chapter 10). The two elements that distinguish Catholic school leadership from most of their public counterparts are Christian personalism and the principle of subsidiary. Personalism has value as an effective device to engage students in academics. Moreover, it signifies a particular moral conception of social behavior in a just community (Bryk et. al., 1993, Chapter 11). Similarly, the principle of subsidiary assures that human dignity mediates administrative actions by *facilitating* localized initiatives rather than homogenizing governance through a mechanistic bureaucracy. This promotes dialogue and collegiality across hierarchies. But unlike the decentralized communal structure and the delimited academic organization – both of which can be measured by regression analyses and effect sizes – the impact of a school ideology and culture is more difficult to appraise. Post-Vatican II Catholic education is much more sensitive to individual religious liberty: the right of students to pursue truth without coercion. The scholastic pedagogy

of indoctrination in theological facts has widely been replaced by the persuasive nature of a personal encounter with Truth. To this end, Christian charity is sometimes couched in the language of social justice. More importantly, in the Catholic culture, social action is integrated into religious symbols that have the potential to transcend merely philosophical convictions. For example, “the words and life of the ‘man called Christ’ stimulates reflections about how students should live as persons-in-community. The notion of the ‘Kingdom of God’ offers a vision toward which human effort should be pointed. Finally, the image of the ‘resurrection destiny’ nurtures hopefulness—as Christ triumphed over death, so shall mankind. Here is the sustaining force for the day-in and day-out struggle against tyranny, poverty, and injustice” (Bryk et. al., 1993, Chapter 12, Section 1, para. 22). Suffice it to say that the more these *symbols* become *realities* in the minds of students the more potent and energizing their force becomes. For administrators and teachers, the ideology/morality of Catholic schools has often mediated *against* the normally negative influences of low-pay and lack of oversight. Notably, other non-Catholic private schools have not replicated the same positive outcomes, and this raises important questions about the validity of public-private research comparisons, as well as the under-studied effects of cultural ideology on outcomes. In terms of then current reforms (1993), Catholic high schools are still in need of stronger humanistic pedagogical elements, as are most secondary level schools. The authors propose an alternative description of school as a “voluntary community,” which is opposed to “market-responsive firm” (Bryk et. al., 1993, Chapter 12, Section 3). The shift here would be from bureaucratic authority to moral authority, one of the important implications being that high school education ought not to be considered an inalienable right. Compulsory schooling directly contradicts the idea of academic freedom (non-coercive learning), and prevents the voluntary acceptance or rejection of the best educational product, so to speak. However, market

forces absent of a standard moral imperative will not produce the kind of communal environment which this book has shown to be a critical aspect in positive outcomes. Thus, asking the question of what is a proper ideology/morality becomes indispensable for the formation of any institution of public service. “Every school enacts some philosophy of education. Even the narrowest and most secular philosophy presumes certain propositions about individuals and society. These philosophies convey both a preferred ordering for society and an ethic for how individuals should live within it. Formally, this combination of an order and an ethic constitutes a religious understanding” (Bryk et. al., 1993, Chapter 12, Section 3, para. 28). Modern society has affectively traded-in the indoctrination of medieval scholasticism for an equally religious socialization in spiritual neutrality/emptiness and the worship of empirical data. Yet, as is evidenced by the lack of study and discussion of moral principles in the public sphere, scientific inquiry has no method or power to penetrate the realm of morality. Yet, morality plays the most vital role in day-to-day operations and relationships.

Although dated, this book-length study is still considered a standard resource for empirical studies on Catholic school outcomes. The aforementioned Catholic school advantage in curriculum organization may be changing today with the implementation of the public common core, however, the trajectory of these changes is toward a narrowing focus on science and math. This core does not comport well with the liberal arts curriculum of traditional Catholic schools. Likewise, Personalism has become a better utilized pedagogy since this book’s publication, but the philosophical-religious foundation for its implementation – namely, the divine dignity of the human person – remains indebted to and reliant upon Christianity. The pragmatic power of symbols may be the most important element in the discussion about cultural education. At some point, the politically incorrect question must be asked: *which religious*

*symbols are the most efficacious?* The answer embedded in this study is that the Catholic (even more so than merely Christian) religious symbols are statistically superior to other traditions, because they are the symbols with the strongest parallels to historical realities and the greatest ability to assimilate other cultures. On the other hand, if it be the case the no system of religious symbols can be measured against another, then the potential for taking any of the symbols seriously is diminished and one is left with the empirical sciences as the only sure method of knowing what is ultimately true. This latter view is precisely the practical (if not theoretical) position of most American institutions today. Unfortunately, science, in the strictly modern sense, does not actually resolve or satisfy religious tensions because it ignores abstract symbols *a priori* as an intrinsic step of its methodology. The only philosophical or ethical stance it might support is pure materialism and its political offspring, utilitarianism. A large percentage of Americans reject these philosophies without having a coherent alternative. Again, as Bryk et. al. clearly explicated, this philosophical and religious conversation has been almost completely avoided in the national debate. The interactive relationship between a school's culture and the way it forms student's character must eventually be given due attention.

In Chapter Four of his book *Heart of the World, Center of the Church*, Schindler (1996) comments on the educational philosophy of Theodore Hesburgh. Opposing the popular idea that religion and academics are extrinsic to one another, Schindler argues that the secular university does not possess the normative model of rationality, as is often supposed. The vocation to holiness, which Vatican II called the universal mission of all peoples, has a specifically intellectual dimension that the Catholic school must advance. The secular school cannot be neutral in respect to this mission (as it claims legally and philosophically). It is in fact inimical to it. Firstly, all critical methodologies are informed *a priori* by metaphysical and theological

presuppositions (p. 154). Secondly, the public university's standard of logic is operationally atheistic, thus only supporting fideistic or voluntaristic forms of faith (p. 159). Thirdly, liberalism (the supposed neutrality of reason) in academia denies the essential revelation of Christianity, namely that reason (the *Logos*) is ordered and ruled by Love. In other words, the destructive dichotomy between facts (external) and morals (interior) was overcome by Christian Revelation, which made *Love* (morality absolutized) the meaning behind both the method and the content of every intellectual discipline. This religious assumption is viable in the sciences *because* it is not dichotomous or isolating, that is, the order of love (elucidated by the Christian Trinity) requires a familial conversation, moving freely in both directions, between morality and empiricism. But, morality must always have the last word. The critical point is that no academic or governing methodology can claim a morally liberal/neutral position. For this reason, the assumptions of every individual or collective worldview ought to be disclosed in the ongoing conversation towards ultimate truth. The tragic reality, however, is that the secular school system operates according to a quasi-religious functional-atheism and the metaphysical presupposition of empiricism all the while *pretending neutrality*.

The argument of this essay by Schindler has indispensable import for the integration of disciplines. The philosophical unity of the sciences is all but impossible without the explicit disclosure of faith-based premises, ideologies, and worldviews within academia. The only way to bring the various disciplines of education into harmony and cooperation is through a religious underpinning. Schindler identifies three contradictory concepts of academic freedom: 1) freedom *for* the religious unity of knowledge, 2) freedom *from* the religious unity of knowledge, 3) and the freedom not to choose. The classical Western Christian understanding of religious liberty was always freedom *for* truth, goodness, and beauty, that is, the freedom discovered within certain

theological and philosophical boundaries. With the rise of democracies came a new conception of religious liberty that was originally intended to protect citizens *from* the tyranny of a national religion, such as Communism or Islam. The tension that arose in the Catholic Church, especially palpable at the Second Vatican Council, between these two contrary definitions of liberty, led to a compromised position in the Christian West. This position is represented in the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, and its error is that it does not acknowledge its own religiosity. The third conception of freedom, articulated above, is in fact a logical impossibility. No one is free *not* to choose a religion; not to choose is in fact a choice and, by nature of its faith-based premise, a religious choice. The bifurcation of empirical choices from religious choices can only result in the relativizing of one realm and the worship of the other respectively. Likewise, academic freedom *from* religion inevitably means teaching from the perspective of an atheist. Therefore, the measures of the *Lemon Test* for educational legislation prove unsatisfactory and even dangerous. To advance or inhibit religious practice is deemed unconstitutional under the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. The point here asserted is that religious practice begins its life with nothing less than any and all forms of education, because *religion is merely another word for the logical symbiosis of disciplines* (a process which is synonymous with sanity in rational creatures). Thus, the First Amendment has outlawed philosophical consistency in public education!

Porter (2010) argued that theology should be considered queen of the natural sciences. Psychology was taken as the primary example of a natural science and its methods were compared to the hermeneutics of Scriptural interpretation. Both theologians and psychologists must interpret data – theologians the data of Scripture and psychologists the data of various human sciences. In instances where a particular hypothesis of scientific data contradicts an

establish doctrine of Scripture, there must be a means of establishing hierarchy between the two disciplines. “What follows here is an epistemological argument for the notion that well-grounded theological claims have a higher authority than well-grounded psychological claims such that in cases of apparently irreconcilable conflict between psychological and theological claims, theological claims should rule the day” (Porter, 2010, p. 9). Assuming that Christian Scriptures are truly the inerrant Word of God, God’s epistemic credentials will simply out-weigh the credentials of finite and imperfect observations (even with the aid of instruments) of the natural world. Yet, in cases where psychology explicates on human functions that theology has not broached, as is frequently the case, psychology retains complete autonomy. In a situation where psychology, or another science, challenged the theological position on a non-definitive teaching, theologians would be obliged to integrate psychological/scientific findings as much as possible, as Thomas Aquinas taught (Porter, 2010, p. 10).

This article has strengths and weaknesses. Some have disagreed with Porter’s argument on grounds that the transmission of God’s revelation to the human mind is nebulous in comparison to the transfer of scientific measurements to the human mind. This rebuttal is valid in so far as it specifies the different modes of apprehension involved in the two forms of knowledge. Empirical sciences are mediated primarily through the corporeal senses, whose data, though not infallible, is testable and repeatable. The data of religion, however, is received in conjunction with but transcendent of sensual experience. It is adhered to by a movement of will towards someone or something loved, by faith, and its authority admits of no prior substantiation. In theory, the hierarchy of God’s authority over science is obvious enough, but the question of how God’s reality is transmitted to the human mind is much more difficult. The basic logic of Porter’s argument still holds. God’s dominion extends to the human interpretation

of divine self-revelation (which not need be Scripture alone, as Porter seems to assert). This is to say, the possibility of the communication of objective religious data from God to humanity is not beyond God's power. Even if religious data is mediated and accommodated to human limitations, such as particular symbols and linguistic contexts, these facts by no means preclude the plausibility of religious norms.

Saint Pope John Paul II (1990), in his Apostolic Constitution *Ex Corde Ecclesia* spoke on the identity of the Catholic educational institution as: “an academic community which, in a rigorous and critical fashion, assists in the protection and advancement of human dignity and of a cultural heritage through research, teaching and various services offered to the local, national and international communities” (John Paul II, 1990, para. 12). Uniting the search for truth and the confidence in God. There is only one culture: that of man, by man and for man(5). And thanks to her Catholic Universities and their humanistic and scientific inheritance, the Church, expert in humanity, as my predecessor, Paul VI, expressed it at the United Nations(6), explores the mysteries of humanity and of the world, clarifying them in the light of Revelation” (John Paul II, 1990, para. 3). Preserving freedom, justice, and human dignity (para. 4). The very meaning of the human person is at stake in education, without mentioning the purposes of science and society. “In a Catholic University, research necessarily includes (a) the search for an *integration of knowledge*, (b) a *dialogue between faith and reason*, (c) an *ethical concern*, and (d) a *theological perspective* (John Paul II, 1990, para. 15). The distinction of methods in the various disciplines is important, but interdisciplinary studies, which require philosophical and theological bridging, “enable students to acquire an organic vision of reality and to develop a continuing desire for intellectual progress” (John Paul II, 1990, para. 20). In this way, the pursuits of reason have been consistently helped by the broadening of faith. In order to satisfy the dignity of the

human person, each discipline needs to discover its moral implications, which is finally possible only through adherence to Scripture, Tradition, and the Church's Magisterium. Ultimately, education for the human person is growth in the ability to wonder as well as to choose (para. 23).

John Paul II takes MacIntyre's (2014) discussion further by acknowledging that the final satisfaction of philosophical questions comes by way of theology. The most distinguished version of human anthropology is historically sourced in Christendom. Whatever goodness biology, the neurosciences, and the social sciences have added to the picture of the human person, they will never surpass (or contradict) the proclamation that human beings were made to become the metaphysical and immortal children of God. Moreover, orthodox theology continues to be the only systematically coherent philosophical impetus, in all its aspects, toward social harmony. It has a special capacity for the assimilation of cultures, because of its intrinsic charism of looking to the needs of the last first, and thereby, seasonally shuffling the social classes within each transitioning hierarchy. Catholic formation is historically intertwined with all the major institutions of charity the world takes for granted today. From these witnesses of love have flowed the only fitting responses to life's many philosophical paradoxes. Therefore, any education that occludes or obfuscates the legacy of Jesus Christ has also spiritually and culturally impoverished its children. In point of fact, the future of human civilization depends on the mission of Catholic education.

Looking at the relationship between philosophy, science, and Catholic Tradition, Gavin D'Costa (2005) in a chapter entitled "The Marriage of the Disciplines: Explorations on the Frontier," discussed the doomed fate of a school system which does not integrate its scientific disciplines through philosophy and theology. The collapse of classical methodological distinctions between the sciences (including the science of God: theology) into a single method

(scientific method) by the Enlightenment has confused the reality of the unity of knowledge. Unity does not mean the obliteration of difference. The role of theology is not to adjudicate on the truth or falsity of scientific findings, but to apply those findings as much as possible to the practice of moral living. “Hence, it may be that economics and political science departments carry out specific programs concerned with the Church's social teaching; physics departments explore the interface of cosmology and religious claims concerning creation; and philosophy departments explore the interface between theology, philosophy, and the natural sciences” (D’Costa, 2005, Chapter 6, Section 1, para. 2). Philosophy’s role in this interaction should be understood as the *handmaid* to theology, that is, a mediatrix between theology and the sciences.

In this view of interdisciplinary autonomy-within-unity, theology remains queen, but rules only on those academic cases which transgress Revelation. Thus, the sciences can retain a genuine methodological autonomy from theology but in a qualified sense, neither divorcing the two completely nor ignoring the overlapping premises in worldview. Implied in this rightly ordered relationship of the sciences is the fact that only Christian universities are in a position to investigate and disseminate knowledge properly (notwithstanding the reality of secularization within many Christian schools). D’Costa illumines the existential significance behind a forgotten truth: all branches of knowledge have *ethical implications* that only theology can draw out: “they are all disciplines bounded within creation, whose proper object of study is part of God's good creation, and whose proper object of study is finally and only fully understood within the light of God's overall purpose for all creation, the coming of God's kingdom. Knowledge is in this important sense both worship and praise, as well as profoundly pragmatic, vital to social action” (D’Costa, 2005, Chapter 6, Section 3, para. 33).

## The Feasibility of Public Catholic Schooling

In *An Underground History of American Education*, John Taylor Gatto (2003)

demystified the origins of compulsory schooling in America. Breaking from the philosophy of Thomas Hobbes – who believed that the subjects of the state had to be corporeally and psychologically colonized to maximize the efficiency of the social leviathan – and the ruling classes of Europe, in the newly discovered colonies, Americans preferred the libertarian individualism of John Locke (p. 22). Young American education flourished in a zeitgeist of excitement about *the possibilities of free people to create themselves*. Since everyone's father was an entrepreneur of one sort or another, children had the opportunity to stand close-by and learn first-hand the mechanisms of social industry. This phenomenon elasticized the social classes and promoted vibrant political activity. In his historical survey, Gatto took the educational analogy of Athens and Sparta for America and Europe respectively. The Athenians promoted the ideal of *philosophia*, the love of wisdom, more a way of life than a form of instruction. The Spartans, on the other hand, used compulsory formation from a very young age to mold its citizens into warrior pawns of the state. The greatest military defeat in the history of Britain, the American Revolution, in large part resulted from the English army's inability to adapt its leviathan hive-mind to the specialized warfare of a local free-thinking militia. Unfortunately, after the First World War, international influences flooded back into the United States, namely Prussian educational theories modeling themselves on Sparta, and infiltrated American policy in the 1910s. Corporate subordination and factory education began to supplant the highly personalized instruction that had made the American economy world-renowned. The appearance of an eye in the pyramid of the one-dollar bill in 1935 signified a profound shift in governmental and educational mentality. This image, adopted from Confucianism, Buddhism,

and especially Hinduism, revealed the return of power from European intellectuals onto American politics (p. 35). Discovering the Hindu caste system had taught the British government especially how effective it was to use factory-schooling as a means of keeping the proletariat from rising out of the working class. The first Americans were self-educated and home educated primarily, and thereby mastered multiple disciplines in a lifetime, being productive members of society from the age of reason onwards. This fact is what made America so prodigious to the rest of the world, and its loss has been a spiraling fall from grace back into the historically redundant error of collectivism.

The Catholic model of education was subject to mechanization throughout history as well (it is perhaps a current that all institutions must vigilantly swim against). What began as the Cathedral and monastic schools of the Middle Ages, became a much less well-rounded (less emotionally and socially engaged) styles of education, focused on the dialectical analysis of principles, culminating in scholasticism. Forced conditions of instruction often arise out of the fear of anarchism or heterodoxy, but such fears had no time to settle into the mainstream of educational policy before the eighteenth century, because education was only available to a very small percentage of society, mostly those charged with ecclesial administration. Gatto's historical review raises the question of whether the public-private dichotomy in education ought not to be eliminated altogether, not to recreate the scholastic hegemony of philosophy, but for an opposite effect, that is, to help the state control its propensity to over-legislate. The original liberality of American citizens created the best educated nation (pre-Civil War) in the history of human civilization. Most of the signers of the Declaration of Independence were equivalent in age to today's seniors in high school or college freshmen, but educated at the level of one or two present-day Master's degrees. Yet, today's children are extended in adolescence sometimes into

their thirties. Such a model of education prevents economic innovations as well as political overturn and, if it continues, will lead to the history of another fallen empire. Thus, when speaking of a public Catholic alternative school, the author suggests that the proper (and Christian) method of education should look more like early American schooling than the contemporary industrial model.

Carpenter and Kafer (2012) reviewed the history of private school choice by examining the development of these programs, the relevant court cases, and school choice research. Schools in the colonial period were run by local communities, mostly through the administration of Churches of various Protestant denominations. Any children could attend these schools because they were funded by charity donations or a small tuition. Compulsory attendance in these private and charity schools became commonplace after the Revolutionary War. “As a result of this diverse system of schooling, the young nation enjoyed a high rate of literacy; by 1840, for example, 90% of northerners and 81% of southerners were literate” (Carpenter and Kafer, 2012, p. 337). After the Civil War, these schools increasingly became tax-funded state-controlled *common schools*. These first public schools were highly sectarian (Puritan and Protestant) and particularly inimical to Catholics, who were forced to start their own school system. By the late nineteenth century, states around the U.S. had adopted legislation to prevent Catholic schools from receiving public money. “Thus, what began as an anti-Catholic measure has since evolved to become antireligious” (Carpenter and Kafer, 2012, p. 338). Although attempts to totally outlaw parochial schools failed, public funding was stripped from them, functionally eliminating school choice for families without sufficient wealth. School choice essentially began with the 1947’s Supreme Court Case, *Everson v. Board of Education of Ewing Township*, which reimbursed parents for bus fare to religious schools. The modern voucher program, however, was

not initiated until the 1970's, along with other important cases including the infamous *Lemon v. Kurtzman* (1971) that declared state actions could neither advance nor hinder religion.

Subsequent cases in favor of tax-assistance or vouchers justified themselves by the fact that money did not go *directly* to religious institutions (parents chose where the money went).

Sometimes these vouchers were only given to students with *special needs*. Several studies, from the 90's to present, have shown that vouchers improve outcomes for students who receive them, as well as outcomes for the public schools who compete in their markets (p. 342-43).

Carpenter and Kafer have put together an important history, remarkably thorough despite its brevity. The genesis of the public-private school distinction in America reveals the philosophical and theological impossibility of institutional religious-neutrality. Instead of actual neutrality, the majority's religious premises have simply overridden the minorities'. The idea of secular aims is ultimately meaningless. There is no hope of a secular education. Just as public education once endorsed Protestant values, it now endorses a modern form of Atheistic Gnosticism. Just as public education once endorsed a philosophy of freedom for virtue, it now endorses a philosophy of freedom for utility. The state will always be religious because the human person is religious. When the state makes the distinction between itself and *religions*, it merely refers to those *religions* which are not its own. Further study is needed in regard to educational tax refunds for private education and their relationship to outcomes on achievement.

Weinberg (2013) asks the question whether religious charter schools are now or could become constitutional? Of course, private schools must be allowed legally, but the public funding of those religious schools is usually considered a violation of the *Establishment Clause* of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. On a positive note, "the Constitution does the following: (a) protects parents who disagree with the state's educational aims, empowering

families to use private education (*Pierce v. Society of Sisters*, 1925); (b) prohibits the state from banning subjects (in this case German) from being taught in schools (*Meyer v. Nebraska*, 1923); (c) prohibits the state from requiring students to commit acts that violate their religious beliefs (*West Virginia v. Barnette*, 1943); and (d) prevents compulsory education that would endanger an established religious community's way of life (*Wisconsin v. Yoder*, 1972)" (Weinberg, 2013, p. 325). Deciding whether or not a charter school is a public or private actor is a complex process and varies from state to state. Charter schools are generally considered public/state schools, but a charter statute or voucher system cannot be used to bypass the requirements of the *Establishment Clause*. Nevertheless, a charter school can offer religious opportunities in several key ways, including: 1) religious people can found a charter school, 2) a charter founded by religious people may still use a values-centered curriculum, 3) student prayer may be accommodated but not initiated or enforced, 4) religious classes may be taught so long as they do not espouse a particular religious position (pp. 331-33). Framing religious beliefs within *cultural values* has worked for several public charter schools in various states, since the boundaries of the two realms are blended. Weinberg concludes: "While the law currently does not permit the operation of a denominationally Catholic charter school, there is certainly room for Catholics to form charters that will meet the needs of their children" (Weinberg, 2013, p. 337).

Weinberg's study offers important insights into the practical possibilities of retaining Catholic identity in a publicly funded charter school. Though it would not be Catholic in the fullest sense as defined by *Ex Corde Ecclesia* (the most recent Vatican promulgation on the subject), a public charter school could still preserve the freedom of students to learn in a Catholic environment. How this might be accomplished within the guidelines cited above would surely

fluctuate from state to state, but the philosophical, theological, and liturgical aspects of the faith cannot technically be inhibited any more than they can be coerced.

Responding to the current trend of increased privatization of schools (neo-liberalism), Bulkley and Burch (2011) have analyzed one of its aspects: the contracting of public educational services to private entities, for-profit and non-profit. The authors asked important questions like: how much government over-sight is needed in these respective relationships? and how do these contracted service-providers influence the politics of education? Educational management organizations (EMOs) are the most common for-profit firms, including many well-known textbook publishers such as Houghton Mifflin and Princeton Review, and newer organizations such as Blackboard and SchoolNet. Illustrating the influence these private vendors can have, some now provide and help interpret important educational data, and some create accountability tests and design intervention programs for failing students and schools (p. 240). In the non-profit sector the two largest organizations involved in public education are charter management organizations (CMOs) and human capital providers. “Along with the growth of CMOs is an increase in the development of education professionals by nonprofit organizations, rather than by institutions of higher education. Although only directly reaching a small percentage of prospective educators, organizations such as Teach for America and New Leaders for New Schools, as well as ‘in-house’ preparation of educators by CMOs including KIPP and Uncommon Schools, have attracted considerable publicity and financial support from both foundation and governmental sources, and people affiliated with these organizations have been active in state and national policy” (Bulkley and Burch, 2011, p. 242). Federal policy has induced the creation of many of these organizations in its various pushes for accountability and by rewarding certain reforms such as mandated tutoring. The increased role of market vendors in

public education has helped mitigate the overdrawn budgets of many districts, allowing the hiring of nonunionized workers at lower wages, among other advantages (p. 245-46). However, there is always the danger of private greed and market monopolies. Nevertheless, a shift in power is underway from the *old* school boards, unions, parent organizations, and voters to *new* private entities (p. 247).

Bulkley and Burch (2011) have made an important contribution to the study of school reform in this collection of research findings. The role of new private actors in public education supports the contention of Weinberg (2013) that Catholic education may yet find a niche in the public education market. The question as to how the services of the Catholic Church might be able to meet market demands is one of the central focuses of this literature review, hopefully to be addressed to some degree in the following sections. This article reveals a few notable possibilities: A Catholic organization could function as an EMO, a CMO, an educational training facilitator, or as a variety of “venture philanthropies” (Bulkley and Burch, 2011, p. 242).

The Center for Education Reform (2011) published the article “New Wine for an Old Bottle: Saving Catholic Schools,” suggesting five ways to reduce the losses and slow the closures of these schools. Waiting on the legislation of better ‘school choice’ options may be ineffective in helping Catholic schools that are struggling right now. Instead the article offers suggestions that can be implemented from within. First, the Catholic School Management Organization (CSMO) is suggested as *a new kind of CMO* like the very successful KIPP programs (pg. 3). Catholic groups could contract within such organizations to ‘outsource’ various operational components that distract from teacher instruction and relationships with the students. Preliminary estimates suggest by purchasing these resources at scale some Catholic schools might cut tuition by one thousand dollars per student (pg. 4). Second, the *Blended School*

*Model*, integrating online and in person instruction, could seriously benefit many Catholic schools. The “essential ingredients for any effective blended program are a quality online curriculum with built-in instructional intelligence combined with a powerful learning management system and expert online teachers” (The Center for Education Reform, 2011, pg. 4). This system provides efficient use of personnel resources, enhanced curriculum, and increased marketability. A third option: create independent Catholic Schools. These schools would have to disconnect from their parishes financially to some extent while still taking advantage of many dioceses facilities. Since the school market follows the quality of reputation, it might be important for Catholic schools to be able to market themselves apart from a diocese. This could mean working under a CSMO or a religious order instead. The example of the very successful Nativity Schools in New York City is especially advocated (pg. 7). Fourthly, Catholic schools can change their management structures. Two examples are the creation of business-oriented professional development training and the creation of parish-independent lay boards of governance. “The boards are truly governing boards that have responsibility and accountability for financial and academic success, providing more opportunity for scalable change and innovation than parish leaders typically have time to explore” (The Center for Education Reform, 2011, pg. 8). Finally, there is the possibility of creating new revenue streams by combining charter schools with Catholic assets. “Catholic schools should consider borrowing from the school reform playbook operating like public charter schools, online or virtual schools and adopting excellent academic models, all the while staying focused on their ultimate mission of bringing the truth of Jesus Christ to the hearts and minds of those within their reach” (The Center for Education Reform, 2011, pg. 9).

The school reform movement has much to offer the American Catholic school system, as the above article has made explicit. By the clever adoption of these five techniques, Catholic programs across the country could potentially take back a large portion of the school market. Several studies have shown the superior outcomes and reputations associated with the traditional Catholic methods of instruction. Taking advantage of this foothold, the alternative Catholic school model has the prospect of rehabilitating many struggling demographics within the United States. Tied to the fate of Catholic schools is the liberating effects of the philosophical and theological training of the mind. In so far as this effort is at the service of the Christian mission, there may even be a moral obligation to adapt Catholic techniques of business to fit the needs of the present economy, thereby, preventing the dissolution of person-centered education into a utilitarian *common core*.

Craig N. Horning (2013) has reviewed the growing relationship between public Catholic schools and religious charters. As shown above, religious charter schools and urban Catholic schools have been developing certain symbiotic relationships. Without question, the leasing of Catholic facilities to charter programs provides significant additional income to urban parishes. The competition between charter schools and Catholic schools for religious students is shifting in favor of the former. “The U.S. Department of Education (1997) found that the most common reasons for founding charter schools are: to realize an educational vision; have more autonomy over organizational, personnel, or governance matters; serve a special population; receive public funds; engender parent involvement and ownership; or attract students and parents” (Horning, 2013, p. 366). These reasons, of course, are just as attractive to Catholic families. Enrollment in private Catholic schools has dropped from 90% to 40% between 1960 to 2008 (p. 367). Charter schools are carving out a third sector where many private and public dimensions of policy fold

together. Charter schools can teach and accommodate religion to the fullest extent, but they cannot endorse religion institutionally. These types of charters are growing in numbers, as the concern for intellectual formation outweighs most families' desire for spiritual formation, which can take place in a separate setting and still be accommodated by the school (p. 371). However, religious charter schools cannot legally meet the requirements of the U.S. Catholic Bishops Conference guidelines for Catholic schools. Compartmentalizing the religious aspects of the school is incongruous with developing a Catholic identity (from the school). Regardless of the numerous financial and administrative advantages, a Catholic school that converts into a charter school is no longer a Catholic school in the proper sense (p. 375).

This literature review is important. It illustrates that main problem with religious charter schools is that they cannot endorse the religious beliefs that they take as their founding inspiration. Legislation remains unclear on how religious charters will be treated in the future, but at present the Establishment Clause seems more than flexible enough to entertain many different value-based structures of school organization. Interestingly, no Catholic schools have yet attempted to create a Catholic charter in order to see how the legal inquiry would ultimately unfold (p. 379). Even if such an effort were to be unsuccessful, the leasing of former Catholic facilities to charters may remain as an opportunity to aid the Catholic Church *as a whole*, even if at the expense of *traditional* methods of Catholic schooling. "In the cases where a majority of non-Catholic urban poor were attending Catholic schools that close, continuing to serve these populations by leasing to public charter schools must be considered in light of Catholic social teaching and the common good" (Horning, 2013, p. 381). The fact, that this reality puts more pressure on home schooling and alternative methods of Catholic formation may not be a negative effect. Pluralistic programs of study could still provide a comparable level of philosophical

education and even teach a great deal about the doctrinal aspects of Catholicism from an external viewpoint. The task of conversion and formation in the particulars of the Catholic faith is a duty that can shift to Catholic lay and parish organizations if necessary. The next section of this literature review will examine instructional outcomes that can parallel between traditional and alternative Catholic educational models.

### Catholic Schools and the Public Good

#### *Closing the Achievement Gap*

In a book length study, Shyamalan (2013) and a team of researchers conducted interviews and reviewed prior research in order to uncover the keys for successfully closing the achievement gap between high and low income students in America. In his book, Shyamalan reveals *five keys*, emphasizing each key's mutual dependence upon the four others. When these keys are cooperative within a school, the positive correlation to achievement is evident. The first key is eliminating ineffective teachers. A teacher from the bottom quartile can set a student back four times further than a teacher from the top quartile can bring him or her ahead. "Every school that I visited that is closing the achievement gap lets go of a certain percentage of the lowest-performing teachers. These are charter schools that have the ability to do this. Some of the best schools we visited had rates of 'nonrehiring' of 1 to 7 percent" (Shyamalan, 2013, p. 102). The second key is school leadership and culture. "A principal that is one full standard deviation above the mean – that is, one in the 80th percentile or so—has a positive effect size on student achievement of +.11 for an entire school" (Shyamalan, 2013, p. 116). Schools that are closing the achievement gap, like North Star Academy, KIPP, and SEED, free their principals (often

through the assistance of an operations manager) to focus on observing and assisting teachers. Everyone who works at schools like these, from custodians to technicians, agrees not to hinder the school culture. Classroom goals, celebrations of success, uniforms, school colors, and regular mantras are all elements of outstanding school cultures. The third key to closing the achievement gap is a consistent and thorough feedback loop – frequent assessments for students, teachers, and administrators alike, along with basic training in data analysis and application. One study showed an effect size of +.363 in a high school students’ math achievement by implementing systematic feedback practices (p. 151). The fourth key is smaller schools. Despite studies that have shown small school size *alone* to be an ambivalent factor in student achievement, all the schools that are closing the achievement gap today limit their student body to around 600 at most (p. 218). The final key in Shyamalan’s system is more time in school. Although pre-school “head start” type programs have exhibited the potential for large positive effect sizes in Kindergarten students, those results have been shown to fade significantly by fourth grade (p. 195). More supplementary time in school is needed. Every summer Low-SES students fall *at least* a month behind their peers. “The difference in the summer experiences of kids from families in different socioeconomic tiers—each kid’s placement was determined by a combination of things, including parents’ income, level of education, job status, and whether the student qualified for any kind of meal subsidy—accounted for more than half the difference in test scores by the time each kid entered high school” (Shyamalan, 2013, p. 196). The amount of extra time these children need is, debatably, 500 additional instructional hours.

Shyamalan’s compilation of research exemplifies the value of data for potentially solving real world problems. Closing America’s achievement gap is at the heart of more extensive socio-political issues that must be faced today. Shyamalan’s findings are relevant to the public Catholic

alternative school model for notable reasons. The first reason lies in the *essentially* cultural approach that Christian schools have always taken toward education, at least in theory if not in practice. The perennial cultivation of the human person, as an intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual entity embodies the ideal of school cultural and leadership quintessentially, and is one of the primary reasons for the superior achievement in Christian schools (Jeynes, 2012). This is even truer of Christian residential schools. Small school sizes and extra-school summer programs are also keys that perennial schools often have in common with Shymalan's high achievers. What Christian schools *can* learn from Shyamalan's study is the importance of keeping diligent records of data and providing systematic evaluation and feedback in all directions.

Morales (2010) stated that the achievement gap between students of color and whites, urban and suburban students, as well as between low-socioeconomic and high-socioeconomic students, remains a reprehensible reality nationwide (p. 164). The study went on to examine academic-resilience, that is, cases of high academic achievement in spite of risk factors that frequently portend low achievement and even failure. One of the primary at-risk factors is low-socioeconomic status. In Morales' eight-year qualitative study, of fifty high-achieving at-risk students, the major difficulty that most of the children had to overcome was the social pressure to remain in their initial socioeconomic and cultural class. To "class jump" is for many young poor and black people considered an act of treason, and carries with it the stigma of abandoning one's family and neighborhood for selfish advancement (p. 167). However, those students who were able to overcome this societal impetus to self-sabotage their academic careers did so largely through the mentoring of sympathetic teachers (p. 167). These role-models were able to convince the conflicted students of their ability to fully engage academia without leaving behind their cultural identities, but rather to use their academic successes for activism within their own

communities. Teacher-student mentoring, parent-student relationships, and cultural sympathy emerged as the vital protective-factors in bridging the socio-economic achievement gap.

Morales conducted an informative and interesting study, full of insightful interview quotes and subsequent discussion. Relevant to this literature review, the loving student-mentor relationship, the call to a missionary/activist lifestyle, and the cultivation of supra-cultural goals are all qualities uniquely emphasized in the Catholic tradition. If these factors can be identified as empirically verified protective strategies, then certainly Catholic education can make an argument for its ability to aid the achievement-gap crisis. Moreover, because they factors take on a religious imperative within Catholic identity, their potency is *maximized* only in this Christian milieu. No other religion can boast a stronger philosophical foundation for trans-cultural activism oriented back to and not away from the familial and community relations which were so highly valued by many of these at-risk students. Morales himself suggested future research on the protective factors and possible initiatives to assist at-risk students (p. 173).

Jeynes (2012) conducted a massive meta-analysis of 90 studies (the most comprehensive yet) to compare the student outcomes in public, charter, and private-religious schools. Both faith-based schools and traditional public schools have succeeded in different realms. “Religious school educators tend to have high expectations and insist that their students take an advanced course load, whereas public schools are more likely to encourage classroom discussion and the taking of elective courses” (Jeynes, 2012, p. 329). This detailed study showed that students in religious schools out-performed their peers in public and charter schools, in both academic and behavioral measures. There was no significant difference in outcomes between public and charter schools. “Even when the study uses sophisticated controls that consider the influence of SES, selectivity, and other factors... the overall academic difference for all the studies combined

appears to be approximately two tenths [.20] of a standard deviation, which favors faith-based private schools. Behavioral measures, on the other hand, remained roughly the same, at nearly .35 of a standard deviation unit” in favor of religious schools (Jeynes, 2012, p. 324). This study also looked at four in school variables: taking harder courses, high expectations, reduction of the achievement gap, and classroom flexibility. The overall effect sizes were .19, .20, .10, and -.15 respectively, again mostly favoring religious schools (p. 323). The one area in which private schools could learn from public schools was in the measure of classroom flexibility, that is, opportunities for in-class discussions and the diversity of course electives.

Jeynes’ study is the present standard for studies in public versus private outcomes. The results of this meta-study are upsetting because they reliably claim that religious schools outperform public schools in almost every way, yet public schools monopolize the education of America’s youth and receive several times the funding (p. 325-26). It is not insignificant that these religious schools are mostly Christian. Faith-based school held a .10 advantage over public and charter schools in closing the achievement gap. Since *religious* can be an amorphous term, as already discussed, it is essential that future studies isolate schools by their particular religious beliefs. In this way, it may become more clear what practices are contributing to the differences in achievement outcomes. The superiority of faith-based religious schools in the domain of behavioral measures is markedly in need of further analysis.

### *Character Education & Spiritual Health*

Shields (2011) has argued that *character* building should be considered the primary aim of education, yet remains mysteriously absent from reform policy discussions and practice (p. 48). Looking at previous research, Shields divides character education into four forms of

personal character: intellectual, moral, civic, and performance character. Although knowledge content and personal character are never entirely separable from each other, a shift in focus or *aim* from one to the other can significantly affect outcomes. Previous researchers gave intellectual character six dispositions: curiosity, open-mindedness, reflectivity, strategy, skepticism, and a desire for truth (p. 49). This definition of intellectual character calls into question the primacy of science and math in contemporary curriculums, since neither of these disciplines have a monopoly on the aforementioned qualities. Moral character is the disposition to do the good, and this is different than merely learning the virtues. “In the language of cognitive psychology, the person of moral character has chronically accessible moral schema and scripts that predispose them to recognize and act on moral issues latent in situations” (Shields, 2011, p. 51). Civic character “will involve cultivating respect for freedom, equality, and rationality; an appreciation of diversity and due process; an ethic of participation and service; and the skills to build the social capital of trust and community” (Shields, 2011, p. 52). Performance character refers to the strength of will, perseverance, and self-management required to attain one's goals.

Although brief, this study summarizes well the ultimate goals of education. The mature character of the human person and his or her ability to enjoy and contribute to the common good is the essential balance of life which educators sought to impart in classical and Christian tradition. Shields' four forms of character (intellectual, moral, civic, performance) are similar to Fisher's four domains of spiritual health (personal, communal, environmental, transcendental) in the following study (Francis et. al., 2012). As an unfortunate consequence of deconstructionism, society has forgotten or ignored that Christendom had the longest history of developing these humanistic pedagogical elements. Although scholasticism may be justly accused of over-

emphasizing syllogistic reasoning, it did not fail to ground reason in the supernatural relationship with God (Giertych, 2011). Comparing the corollary relationships between character education, spiritual health, and religious affiliation will be crucial for future research.

Beachum, McCray, Yawn, and Obiakor (2013) looked at the history of character-education for teachers in the United States and asked present-day pre-service teachers if they would support an increase in such preparatory studies. The initiative was highly supported. Studies show that there is a rising perception of moral decay in American society, and therefore a greater need for schools to counteract this degradation through character education (p. 470-71). Character education was essentially common place during the first two hundred years of the formalized teaching profession. The 1960s and 1970s saw the introduction of “new ideas” that drastically changed educational practices (p. 473). With revolutions in diverse forms of liberty, there came an undermining of traditional philosophical principles that were previously the foundation of ethics in Western Civilization. Without consensus on essential moral premises and their bases in objective reality, ethical norms have been difficult to re-establish. Yet, most people agree that moral education is more vital today than ever before because of the disintegration of the family, the receding number of participants in the democratic processes, and the necessity of common values for living a fulfilling life (p. 473-75).

This is a well conducted quantitative study, particularly valuable for ascertaining pre-service teacher perspectives on character education. The overall teachers’ support of character education imbedded within various elements of curriculum, revealed that the integrated use of philosophical analysis across disciplines is an essential element of character education. One needs to decide, rather quickly in life, what one believes is of foundational value. Deciding, in general, what ought to be done and what ought to be avoided is the beginning of moral

development. Without these questions, no solutions to human problems can be constructed because no definite goal is laid out. In so far as possible, *value* needs to be defined as a quality arising from human relationships, rather than as a merely abstract concept rooted in *purely* rational analysis. Everything that has value has value because it is lovable, and without love there is no value. Love is a uniquely human value; it is a communion shared between personal-subjects that involves the freedom to give oneself and to receive others. The human person is a combination of *self*, open to the infinite, and the *wholly other*, who motivates action. Without either element, there can be no love. Thus, a sufficiently dignified human anthropology requires the avoidance of both collectivism and individualism, while retaining the positive aspects of both. This could be accomplished in the classroom by never limiting the positive capacity of the individual to *forgive* and to *heal*, and never neglecting or ignoring the needs of the group. The ultimate teacher of moral behavior is the teacher who is morally formed. This points again to the life of holiness, articulated in Catholic tradition as the highest aim of life.

Francis, Penny, and Baker (2012) conducted a comparative study between thirteen to fifteen year-old students in Anglican, secular, and Christian schools to assess differences in spiritual health according to John Fisher's four domains, using 189 questions on a five-point scale. "Within the new independent Christian schools, the participants comprised 244 male and 217 female students... within the Anglican schools, 1,269 male and 1,296 female students... within schools without a religious character, 2,635 male and 2,711 female students" (Francis, Penny, and Baker, 2012, p. 359). Fisher developed a set of reliable psychometric instruments capable of operationalizing the model first established by Ellison, who demonstrated that spiritual health affected *all* other aspects of human well-being. The *personal domain* looks at self-image. The *communal domain* includes those who share in one's life. The *environmental*

*domain* is concerned with the natural, local, and global environment. The *transcendental domain* is the most complex (because it cannot be abstracted from religious premises) and its focus is on ultimate and non-physical realities. Notably, this study found that 35% of the students surveyed have found no purpose in life, 20% thought there was nothing they could do to make the world better, and 18% sometimes considered killing themselves. More students believed in their horoscopes than in God. Anglican and secular students exhibited almost indistinguishable spiritual health, save for a mild increase in belief in God among the Anglican pupils. The spiritual health of students in Christian schools stood out across all four domains. Eighty-seven percent of those in the Christian schools believed in God, as opposed to 22% in the other schools.

As the authors point out, the study was limited by its relatively small pool of schools and its age-group restriction. Particularly lacking was the presence of Roman Catholic representatives. This research sheds light on the relevance of spiritual health to overall human well-being and the significant differences which the Christian school model can have on spiritual outcomes. Since spiritual health can be defined “as a sense of well-being that is derived from an intensified awareness of wholeness and integration among all dimensions of one’s being,” then there may be a strong philosophical case for the superiority of Christian premises in cultivating logical integration between experiential domains (Francis, Penny, and Baker, p. 353). For example, the premise that God himself historically suffered and died for love, with the promise of resurrection, offers perhaps the best philosophical reason for hopeful perseverance in difficult times. If this can be demonstrated, then certain Church or state contentions might be overcome for the sake of the common good on philosophical grounds. Although faith in Jesus Christ is often considered merely one faith option among many, an argument could be made to reconsider

Christianity in secular terms as the only rational basis for hope, and therefore, an educational necessity.

Erickson (2014) surveyed several landmark studies comparing Catholic and public schools and found Catholic education to be overtly superior, particularly in regard to the positive effects of character education. Erickson also exposed several politically rooted biases in his own extensive experience doing education research. First of all, comparisons of public and private schools that are restricted to achievement test scores ignore the contribution which character building lends to academic success, moral leadership, and civic responsibility. Another problem in some research is that the net contribution of Catholic schools would be significantly higher if the much smaller financial-resources of Catholic schools was factored into the data. When all other factors are equal, lowering cost will improve other variables. This is part of a larger argument for public funding of Catholic schools, since it is likely that Catholic schools would produce better results per tax dollar than their public counterparts, with the qualification that Catholic schools not be forced into inherently a-Catholic or even anti-Catholic school regulations. Erickson cites other research as an example of how mindless regulations on school diversity can destroy an excellent school. Erickson's radical solution to reviving Catholic education in America *for the public good* includes nullifying biased research, reducing public/private conflicts of interest, clarifying the ways in which Catholic schools outperform public schools, strengthening Catholic school practices by not conforming to public school reform agendas, pro-actively exposing Catholic school accomplishments for public scrutiny/praise, and finally, lobbying powerfully for tax support that is not attached to destructive regulations.

Erickson's breakdown of the problems facing Catholic schools is well-informed and unbiased. His reason for defending Catholic education is simply that it has done a greater service to America's children than public schools. The undervaluing of character education in debates over school performance is without a doubt an enormous missing link in the flood of reforms washing over America's educational system. Likewise, political rhetoric that equates specialization to segregation has had disastrous results for those who truly require a different kind of education than what is now a federal education panacea called *common core*. The only real commonality in the common core initiative is its demographically miniscule, though monetarily massive, locus of funding. It is not surprising then, that commendable research like Erickson's is continually ostracized from educational forums (p. 86). This essay supports the thesis that Catholic education deserves public dollars in recompense and support for its obvious service to the public good. Defining *public good* should be the topic of future studies to bolster the claim that Catholic education has an irreplaceable role in improving America's denigrating culture and economy.

Giertych (2011) has examined the pedagogy of Revelation, as recorded in the Christian scriptures, and asked what relationship this methodology might have to individual moral formation. Thomas Aquinas taught that the universal inclination to do good and avoid evil could, by reason alone, lead to the comprehension of *natural law*. The Ten Commandments were given to the Jews, not because they could not have figured them out on their own, but because human beings are assisted in doing good by the moral command of a personal God. Only with the definitive Revelation of Jesus Christ does moral law begin to surpass reason (i.e. the Sermon on the Mount), and thus the power to live this moral life also surpasses human ability (i.e. the sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit). The philosophical and theological confusion around these

ideas tends to be the result of over-simplification and stratification. The transcendence of reason does not necessarily imply the absence of reason, nor does sanctifying grace of necessity imply a lack of human agency. In the Christian dispensation, reason and faith, nature and grace, operate in a complementary fashion, though the latter terms take primacy of place. For some reason (original sin?), this is an extremely difficult paradox for human beings to accept, and has led to the heresies of *rationalism* (reason without God) and *voluntarism* (will without reason). Thus, rational virtue was divorced from moral excellence, and the latter became optional (p. 114). However, rather than consigning moral excellence to the last step of development (i.e. for mystics and saints only), Giertych responds that the pedagogy of the educator is to unite the last step (union with Christ) to every other step of reason along the way. “The old [natural] Law needs to be interpreted within the context of the friendship with God that has been made supremely possible through Christ” (Giertych, 2011, p. 119). The tenets of reason certainly retain their crucial role in moral formation, especially with pre-adolescents, but ultimately should become infused with the uniquely Christian concept of *charity*. “This inner change of view that has infused charity as its foundation allows one almost instinctively to exclude egoism from human sexuality; it allows one to enjoy personal generosity in human relationships; it allows one to view ethical problems, be they social or bioethical from the angle of generosity in truth” (Giertych, 2011, p. 122).

This article takes the ethical conversation back to its historical roots in Catholic monastic and scholastic pedagogy. The paradigms of rationalism and voluntarism coincide with Schindler (1996) who gave the same fallacies different designations, namely subjectivism and objectivism. The perennial difficulty with these concepts is that they seem contradictory and therefore are often allotted disassociated realms of influence. But this is a practical impossibility, as has been

the separation of Church and state. When the two realms do not complement and interpenetrate, one kingdom is bound to attempt a coup of the other. Hence, American cultural history has moved from pervasive Protestantism into practical atheism. What Catholicism has always offered the world is a way to integrate faith and reason through a consistent and sustainable conversation with history that also has to be, simultaneously, a conversation with God, in order to supply the human person with his or her fullest potential for *moral* behavior, as defined empirically in the previous studies and theologically by the Catholic Magisterium.

### The Public Catholic Alternative School Model

Asbury and Woodson (2012) reviewed the effectiveness of the public boarding and charter schools KIPP (Knowledge is Power Program) and SEED (Schools for Educational Evolution and Development) on high risk populations and found them to be remarkably successful in closing the achievement gap. The authors propose extending the public boarding model into elementary grades in order to arrest at-risk factors for children when they are the ages of greatest vulnerability. The KIPP and SEED schools have shown that it is possible to counteract the ubiquitous disadvantages of poor families in deviant communities – factors well-documented to outweigh even the best intra-school reforms (p. 119). The authors defend their public boarding school proposal against three anticipated criticisms. The first concern is that of cultural deprivation, a serious issue after the American Indian school abuses of late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries which have only recently come to light. However, the model proposed minimizes the risk of cultural isolation by allowing voluntary entry and exit, fostering academic rather than religious culture, encouraging parental involvement, and by having no

racial qualifications for attendance. Secondly, although the economic feasibility of the public boarding school may be questionable, the precedent of KIPP and SEED proves its possibility. Moreover, the offset of public expenses for future incarcerations and welfare money, which the at-risk youth statistically consume, substantiates a strong argument in favor of forward public investment. Finally, to avoid marginalizing or offending poor families this public boarding model would cultivate parental involvement in their children's education and ultimately hope to eliminate the need for the boarding schools in deference to family autonomy.

The proposition made in this essay is a welcome alternative solution to a serious crisis in American unemployment and deviant behavior. The authors convincingly argue that closing the achievement gap for poor children will have much more obvious and immediate effects than the mostly imaginary *war on poverty* (p. 119-20). The success of the KIPP and SEED schools in this task has been outstanding and deems continued study. The one weakness of Asbury and Woodson's proposal is the unexamined ambiguity in what they call a focus on "academics rather than culture" in their school environment (p. 156). Another study has shown that school culture is one of the main accomplishments of the KIPP and SEED educational models (Shyamalan, 2013). Granted that the authors were referring to the culture of American Indian boarding schools, nevertheless, the meaning of an academic focus is need of definition. If with further study, the goals of the public boarding school were better elucidated, this prototype may or may not support the inclusion of public *Catholic* boarding schools into the system. The locus of future studies should be to clearly delineate the purposes of education, so that the value of particular school cultures (which always include axiomatic faiths or religion) can be, to some extent, measured against a social ideal.

McGuire and Dougherty (2008), using snowball sampling, interviewed 34 participants who had worked as staff or faculty in one of many Seventh-day Adventist boarding schools. The research questions were: “what is the nature of the total institution qualities of a parochial boarding school from the perspective of teachers and staff?” (McGuire and Dougherty, 2008, p. 9), and “how is the notion of the panopticon revealed and enacted by the faculty and staff in a parochial school?” (McGuire and Dougherty, 2008, p. 11). The term *total institution* refers to a place of work or residence where the lives of its members are regulated in every sphere of activity. The *panopticon* refers to a kind of surveillance where the watcher/s can see every movement of those being watched. One who believes he or she is under surveillance is less likely to break the rules, because the pressure of the panopticon induces a kind of social self-awareness. “To a great degree, living in the fishbowl with the attendant implications that one’s own spiritual and religious practices are visible to others, carries with it great implications for the regulation of faculty/staff members’ spiritual practices” (McGuire and Dougherty, 2008, p. 19). The similarities of boarding school to a prison environment, although legitimate, are overshadowed by the enabling qualities of the educational climate. The familial language used by participants to describe their relationships with students illustrates the intimacy which developed in this milieu. “Emerging unmistakably in this study was the joy, delight, and satisfaction inherent in the close relationships formed with students and staff alike – relationships made possible by the same all-encompassing qualities that mark boarding schools as total institutions” (McGuire and Dougherty, 2008, p. 25-6).

Though seemingly negative, the fishbowl analogy sounds much like Shyamalan’s (2013) record of oversight in the highest performing charter and magnet schools. The occasional desire to escape these institutions, as McGuire & Dougherty note, is reminiscent of any rigorous

training or formation program (i.e. the Green Barrettes or the Trappist monks); the psychological battle between the choice to stay or leave is an essential element in the empowerment or *enabling* process. This study is relevant to arguments against total institutions as negative establishments. The reason that teachers and staff submit themselves to the mentally laborious atmosphere of the panopticon emerges saliently in the interviews: only a residential schooling context offers the opportunity to engage in the students' lives on an intimately personal and quasi-parental level.

Gundlach (2012) performed a comparative historical study between the use of boarding schools as a method of socialization for American Indians and as preparatory institutions for children of the social elite. In these contrary cases, education is used as a tool for social stratification, as a method of “repression” in the case of American Indians and Alaska Natives and as a means to protecting “privilege” in the case of the elite (Gundlach, 2012, p. 476). “Throughout this historiography, researchers have incorporated the concepts of the total institution (Goffman) and cultural capital (Bourdieu) as key to analysis of residential education” (Gundlach, 2012, p. 480). For both groups, behaviors and identities are significantly altered by the boarding school experience.

This study is significant because it reviews much of the literature published on boarding schools, although purposefully directed around the idea of social stratification. As in McGuire and Dougherty (2008), the negative connotations of *stratification* are not without positive corollaries. For example, in a social environment where the educational and behavioral levels of the populace are consistently below average, a kind of *positive stratification* becomes necessary. This is evident in the work of inner city charter schools that are closing the achievement gap, many of which are boarding schools. In this study, the author mentions that David Wallace Adams' “most significant contribution may be his argument that boarding schools led to the

development of a shared Indian identity” (Gundlach, 2012, p. 472). Likewise, any serious educational reform will require that certain groups be removed from the settings in which they continually underperform, if only to return to these environments and perpetuate change.

D’Sa (2006) offers a psychological profile of the *preventive* educational method of John Bosco, today referred to as the “system of expression” (D’Sa, 2006, Section 1, para. 2). Bosco’s method centered-around reason, religion, and charity, synthesizing the three into daily life so that the students (primarily deviant boys) would develop holistically: physically, intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually. Charity, literally *loving-kindness*, is the unifying element of the system. It avoids becoming mere sentimentality through the tests of reason and the enlightening of religion. “Carl Jung, Erik Erikson, Robert Kegan, Wilbur Smith, Scott Peck and many other modern psychologists reaffirm Don Bosco’s fundamental intuition, viz. that disinterested love re-creates the person and releases the forces for his growth to maturity. When love is given, it becomes in the one who receives it a source of self-acceptance and self-confidence, a stimulus to self-realization and creativity, and a revelation of his own unique worth” (D’Sa, 2006, Section 2, para. 5). Because a human person is inherently a *meaning-making* organism, the practical actions of *loving-kindness* unfold in a process of personal growth. This growth is essentially the skill of giving the best possible meaning to one’s circumstances. It is a process promoted by a three-step evolution and therapy: for the student it is “this struggle to *identify* with a given stage of development, *differentiate* within that stage, and finally *transcend* into the next stage of unfolding” (D’Sa, 2006, Section 4, para. 7). For the teacher or therapist it is to “Confirm, Challenge and Continue” (D’Sa, 2006, Section 5, para. 1). Anachronistically, Bosco implemented *confirming* by establishing *rapport* with students, that is: “we [Salesians] learn to be compassionate without being sympathetic; we show empathy without trying to rescue them

from the turmoil they experience as a result of the continuous growing that needs to take place” (D’Sa, 2006, Section 5.1, para. 7). *Challenging* must always follow the strong confirmation of the other, because it involves pushing a student off equilibrium into a feeling of insecurity and uncertainty. These moments are like Erikson’s *crises points* in development. A supportive and reliable community is essential for the child as he or she *transcends* their previous conception of self and reintegrates. For John Bosco, *continuing* meant always “being around,” accompanying a child on their journey of growth, so that a youngster never feels alone in the risks that he or she undertakes, and this is “will ultimately be the most deciding factor in the transformation of the adolescent into a mature adult” (D’Sa, 2006, Section 5.3, para. 5).

D’Sa’s study helps uncover the power of Catholic symbols to realize the psychological and philosophical principles of education and human development. Particularly within the cultural isolation of the residential school, Bosco was able to create a utopia of positive psychological case studies. The fact that this was not his intention is precisely the evidence which suggests that his Catholic methodology had already prognosticated many psychological principles. In this sense, Catholic education reveals itself as the paradigm for all educational models. For most of his students, Bosco achieved life-long behavioral rehabilitation as well as academic success for at-risk students. Translating this model into the public realm would have clear benefits for the American common good.

Morrison and Fedrigotti (2009) compared and contrasted the educational philosophy of John Bosco with modern thinkers, including John Dewey, Alfred North Whitehead, Martin Buber, and Jacques Maritain among many others. As J.P. White famously pointed out, the pupil of a religious believer is *in danger* of being indoctrinated by the educator’s faith (Morrison & Fedrigotti, 2009, Section 4, para. 4). “‘Belief’ or ‘faith’ is an inescapable element of one’s

fundamental view of life. This is true even of those who deny the value of ‘belief’ or ‘faith’. Their denial is itself an instance of ‘belief’, of ‘faith’. The challenge, therefore, is not whether we should believe or not. The challenge is, rather, what is worth believing and what is not” (Morrison & Fedrigotti, 2009, Section 4, para. 5). The tension between wanting to exercise certain controls over education and also wanting to allow students free decisions can only be overcome by the voluntary embrace of a common ideal. For Bosco, this ideal was a model of the good life shaped specifically by *Christian* charity, the example of Jesus Christ clearly surpassing any merely practical ideal. Another essential feature of the Bosconian pedagogy was the indispensability of play, both unrestricted and pragmatic. “It was during games that the teachers who joined in did much purposeful counseling in an informal atmosphere” (Morrison & Fedrigotti, 2009, Section 9, para. 1). In this way, children’s freedom is given full expression, while the noninvasive presence of teachers during play assures that confrontations with temptation are more likely to become instances of moral growth.

This study of the Salesian educational pedagogy is enlightening for several reasons, not least of which is its embodiment of the Catholic public alternative school model suggested here. First, the diffusion of John Bosco’s philosophy was inspired entirely by the successfulness of his practices, and not from theoretical speculation. Secondly, the Bosconian model anticipated the insights of modern educational philosophy and educational psychology, such as life-long habits of learning, the balance between content and freedom, the alteration of study and work, autonomy of the school community, the personalization of education, multi-cultural education, and rehabilitative education (Morrison & Fedrigotti, 2009, Section 10, para. 4). The issue at hand is whether this kind of model might be given the opportunity to extend into the American public realm and if the training of teachers ought not be reinterpreted as the formation of saints?

## Conclusion

Although the general focus of the reviewed studies has been residential and charter schools, the need for a wider range of alternative educational settings and methods is tantamount. Online education and special education are only two examples of practices that could be multiplied and blended according to the needs of each infinitely unique individual. If the practice of student residency is necessary, it is rehabilitative in nature, and the same would hold true for a Catholic boarding school for at-risk populations. The primacy of parental involvement in the success of children, as recognized by Asbury and Woodson (2012), cannot be overlooked. The goal of any curriculum design should be to *assist* families in their inherent responsibility and superior potential to educate their own off-spring, whether that means opening institutions that can operate *in loco parentis* or providing resources to community-renewal initiatives. The administrative structure of an educational institution must not fear its own temporality. As a mother should not fear the parting of her mature children, the aim of all public services should be to scaffold the particular families and the local community only until the foundation is stable and ready to support its own weight. Every great teacher desires students that surpass him or her, and so it should be with the evolution of educational methods. If the reform movement is not heading toward subsidiary engagement, then it is not working. True progress will never involve the reactionary abandonment of traditional philosophical and religious content, but it should involve minor developments of method and emphasis to suit the needs of the age. In the end, the professional educational endeavor is nothing more than a macrocosm of that universal struggle to empower without spoiling, to assist without controlling, to entertain without manipulating, to persuade without coercing, to love without possessing, all this for those dangerously free creatures – the task which all have known as raising a child.

## SUMMARY OF LITERATURE REVIEW BULLETS

### Philosophical and Theological Problems

1. *Vasillopulos* (2011) Article
  - Education is an extension of the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, and therefore, a kind of natural right
  - Education does not necessary mean modern day schooling
2. *Gatto* (2009) Book
  - The public school system is failing to educate; standardized tests do not correlate to real world success
  - A real education should impart intellectual, spiritual, physical, emotional, social, and political values; only in tandem do these make a well-educated person
3. *MacIntyre* (2014) Article
  - Philosophical education should 1) question assumptions about happiness; 2) analyze the meaning of what is good; 3) investigate the nature of human personhood; and 4) insert the student into ongoing historical conversations
  - The segregation of philosophy from other disciplines leads to social stratification
4. *Rocha* (2009) Article
  - Education needs to re-appropriate emotional intelligence
  - Children are not machines that teachers program
5. *Bryk, Lee, and Holland* (1993) Book
  - Famous book-length study of the positive Catholic high school outcomes
  - The culture of a religious ideology drives the success of good schools
6. *Schindler* (1996) Book Chapter
  - The public realm cannot be neutral to Catholicism, because all institutions make metaphysical and theological presuppositions, and so it has become inimical to it
  - Freedom does not allow neutrality, but necessitates implicit or explicit choice
7. *Porter* (2010) Article
  - Theology has an epistemological priority over the sciences
  - Christian faith, though not reliant upon empirical data, is never excluded by it
8. *John Paul II* (1990) Apostolic Constitution
  - All research should integrate knowledge with ethics; interdisciplinary studies are necessary to cultivate teleological consensus, ultimately in religion
  - The future of civilization depends on Catholic education
9. *D'Costa* (2005) Book Chapter
  - Philosophy mediates the sciences with teleology and therefore both these disciplines (PHL and THE) are prerequisites to a good educator
  - A successful ethical program will have theological underpinnings

## Public/Private Ambiguities

### 10. *Gatto* (2003) Book Chapter

- Apprentice-style personalistic instruction and the localized appropriation of media created the best educated nation in history before the Civil War
- Today's industrial schooling extends adolescence by limiting the experiences of children and narrowing their motivations

### 11. *Carpenter and Kafer* (2012) Article

- The public/private distinction was originally a Protestant/Catholic distinction
- School-choice is the most legally justifiable system of educational tax distribution

### 12. *Weinberg* (2013) Article

- The state can and does offer protections against forcing students to violate their religious beliefs
- A public Catholic charter school could be legally viable, but this might require the couching of religious principles into the school culture

### 13. *Bulkley and Burch* (2011) Article

- A shift in power is underway from the *old* school boards, unions, parent organizations, and voters to *new* private entities
- A Catholic organization could function as an EMO, a CMO, an educational training facilitator, or as a variety of venture philanthropies

### 14. *The Center for Education Reform* (2011) Article

- Outsourcing certain non-instructional administrative duties could save a large amount of money on Catholic school tuitions
- Catholic education has a market advantage in terms of outcomes research

### 15. *Horning* (2013) Literature Review

- Catholic schools as religious charters may be a shift that needs to happen
- Religious charters can support a religion so long as they do not endorse it; the necessary endorsement of Catholic principles could take place outside of school

## Closing the Achievement Gap

### 16. *Shyamalan* (2013) Book

- 1) Firing bad teachers; 2) great school leadership and culture; 3) consistent feedback on three levels: students-teachers-administration; 4) small school sizes; and 5) supplementary hours of education are the *five keys* that data shows can close the achievement gap

### 17. *Morales* (2010) Article

- Mentorships are crucial protective factors that allows at-risk students to become high achievers

### 18. *Jeynes* (2012) Meta-analysis

- Faith-based private school students out-perform charter and public school students, on average

- Private schools score lower than publics and charters in classroom flexibility

### Character Education and Spiritual Education

#### 19. *Shields* (2011) Article

- Character education should be the primary aim of schooling
- Character is built by integrating intellectual, moral, civic, and performance (grit) domains

#### 20. *Beachum, McCray, Yawn, and Obiakor* (2013) Article

- Teachers support character education
- Character education is *more crucial* in an age of moral relativism

#### 21. *Francis, Penny, and Baker* (2012) Article

- 35% of students have no answer to the purpose of their life; 20% think the world is beyond repair; 18% of students have thought about suicide
- Spiritual health (character education) was significantly higher in Christian schools

#### 22. *Erikson* (2014) Article

- Catholic schools far outperform public schools dollar for dollar
- Catholic schools need to publicize their successes more actively in order to gain more public funding

#### 23. *Giertych* (2011) Book Chapter

- Catholic pedagogy avoids both rationalism and voluntarism by making charity the end goal as well as the immediate goal
- Catholicism rightly taught has the greatest potential to enhance moral behavior

### The Public Catholic Alternative School Model

#### 24. *Asbury and Woodson* (2012) Article

- Residential schools like KIPP and SEED are extremely effective for at-risk populations and offer a model to be imitated by any educational institution
- The offset of public expenses for future incarcerations and welfare money, which the at-risk youth statistically consume, substantiates a strong argument in favor of forward public investment in schools like these

#### 25. *McGuire and Dougherty* (2008) Article

- A residential school is a total institution in the sense that it creates an environment of continuous and complete oversight
- Such environments are highly effective for working with children in *loco parentis*

#### 26. *Gundlach* (2012) Article

- Boarding schools have the weakness and strength of being social stratifying
- Social stratification can be positive when used to cultivate values that the popular culture does not support

#### 27. *D'Sa* (2006) Article

- John Bosco's preventative educational method is called the "system of expression" grounded in reason, theology, and charitable works

- Bosco's psychological system uses the three-fold method of affirming > challenging > being available to the student

28. *Morrison and Fedrigotti (2009) Article*

- Bosco anticipated modern educational psychology and was extremely successful in rehabilitating deviant youth through his system of supporting individual expression and then inciting maturation through a saintly example

## Chapter 3

### METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

#### Type of Design

In this basic research design, a non-experimental survey was used. Open-ended written questionnaires were sent to participants for data gathering, followed by an identical internet survey.

#### Participants

Content: Participants are school and community educators of traditional and alternative Catholic schools.

Units of Analysis: One unit of analysis per participant was used.

Geographic Extent: The participants surveyed are located in the following areas: Steubenville, OH, Phoenix, AZ, Pittsburgh, PA, and New York, NY.

Time of Membership: The minimum time of membership for the administrators surveyed was two years working in a relevant institution.

Sampling Technique: Using dimensional non-probability sampling the participants were chosen from different regions of the United States and for experience throughout a variety of educational practices.

Ethics: For this minimal-risk study, an informed consent form articulated costs and benefits and promised debriefing of results and analysis, as well as personal or institutional

confidentiality for the participants. This study maintained all of the ethical considerations of the American Psychological Association document *Ethical principles of psychologists and code of conduct*, 2013.

### Apparatus

A questionnaire was sent to a non-probability convenience sample of four school and community administrators. The questionnaire contained five open-ended short answer questions. A consent form was given to each participant disclosing the ethical principles of the study (Appendix B). The questions were intended to evoke diverse responses to the two focuses of the research project: the interaction between public and private entities in the educational culture of America and the potential Catholic educational contributions to the common good. The quality of the questionnaire was validated by three expert judges. One expert judge is a curriculum specialist, one is a veteran traditional Catholic school teacher, and one is a Catholic school administrator.

### Procedure

Three Catholic school administrators and one homeschooling family participated in the experiment. Permission for this research project was provided by Dr. Michael Joyce and Dr. Mark Furda. Each participant signed a permission form to collect data from them (Appendix E). The questionnaire was approved by expert judges (Appendices C & D) and sent to participants along with an informed consent letter. The questionnaire was designed to evoke keywords in the responses. The commonalities in the answers were analyzed and the unique variables interpreted by the researcher.

Internal Validity: Internal validity was maintained through an extensive multi-disciplinary review of twenty-eight academic sources, operational definitions of terms, thorough descriptions of the populations, and a tentative operationally defined hypothesis. The controls for error included the evaluation of expert judges and the treatment of experimental variables.

External Validity: Due to the use of non-probability sampling, there is no external validity in this project.

### Operationally Defined Hypothesis

The researcher anticipates that the questionnaire responses will support the second half of the thesis of the literature review, that Catholic schools can service a broad range of educational and developmental goals for the public good. The responses to the public/private, or Church/state, problem of the First Amendment are expected to vary from each participant.

## Chapter 4

### RESULTS

The questionnaire gathered four respondents from separate states. Their responses are presented below in declarative fashion under five thematic categories: philosophical tensions, public funding, cultural-religious ambiguities, alternative education, and the common good. *Philosophical tensions* refers in general to issues of Church and state separation. *Public funding* relates answers having to do with federal or state school subsidies. *Cultural-religious ambiguities* narrates responses that draw attention to the amorphism between school culture as a, supposedly, secular concept and religious education as such. *Alternative education* recalls responses that suggest schooling alternatives and ideals for specific circumstances of instruction. Finally, the category of *common good* lists all responses denoting the social advantages of Catholic education.

#### Philosophical Tensions

Respondent One (from here forward simply R1) is an academic dean of a private Catholic High School. In his or her responses, R1 brought attention to the ancient philosophical relationship between love and truth, as it relates to the religious and the secular respectively. Our school “forms young men and women to love the Good, which they encounter in their search for truth. These two aspects are closely related; love is the appropriate response to truth and, therefore, authentic love always remains grounded in truth. Authentic intellectual inquiry, formation in the truth, leads us to the fundamental truth of God’s love for us and the invitation into a relationship to love God and others.” Thus, the teaching of truth cannot be separated from an exploration into the objective meaning of love, which is essentially a religious philosophical

concept. The reasonableness of Christianity's articulation of the idea of love is demonstrated concretely in the work ethic of the teachers and the logical rigor of the disciplines taught. "For example, the principle of working 'heartily, as serving the Lord and not men' (*Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition*, Col. 3:23) is integrated by expecting teachers and students to strive – as Our Lord did – for excellence in all their endeavors, not by expecting them to talk about Jesus in every lesson. The reasonableness of the Faith is most clearly apparent to students who have learned to exercise reason rightly in all their studies." R1 also gave the following example of the relationship between religion and philosophy: "Seeing in a Geometry class that truth can be known, demonstrated, and communicated with absolute certainty better disposes students to seeing and accepting the philosophical and theological truths that are taught in a moral theology class." Moreover, education, for R1, is a human right that protects free speech and the freedom of religion; Christian education protects the worldview of a substantial number of American citizens. R1 stated that cooperation is tenable between Catholicism and the U.S. Government *theoretically*, but any foreseeable *practical* reconciliation seems unlikely.

Respondent Two (R2) is the principal of a private Catholic High School and a home schooling parent. R2 addressed the philosophical problem of the First Amendment through his or her assertion of the complementarity between reason and faith. "Cross curricular initiatives between departments help our students recognize the complimentary that exists between principles of faith and, what might be referred to as, 'secular' academic subjects." His or her school advances numerous human rights including the following: "the right to a quality education, the right to food and water for under privileged children that our school sponsors in under developed countries, equal opportunity for women and minorities, the right to life and basic health care, environmental responsibility, and the advancement of the preferential option

for the poor.” These actions are necessarily informed by a faith-based, and rationally supported, commitment. R2 does not believe that the legal reconciliation of the Catholic Church and the U.S. Government is foreseeable *at this point* in American history: “In theory, I believe a relationship between the Catholic Church and the U.S. government would be equally advantageous to both parties and would greatly benefit the common good of all U.S. citizens. However, in reality, I do not believe that this relationship is even possible let alone sustainable. The current climate of hostility toward all things religious, with especially harsh sentiment toward any sort of orthodox Christianity, prevents even an honest discussion about the pros and cons of such a relationship. Even the mention of a relationship between the Catholic Church and the U.S. government would bring out the worst of ideological politics. I believe that our nation is far too polarized to even consider an idea like this at this time in our history.”

Respondent Three (R3) is the principal of a private Catholic school. He or she stated that it is the government’s responsibility to protect the freedom of choice for religion and expression, but not to directly support any particular philosophical system. “One of the things that makes America great is our right to expression and religion. The Church is strong on its own as is a well-managed school with good planning and strong leadership. It is not the government’s responsibility to keep our schools sustainable. It is our government’s responsibility to provide all families with a choice as to where and how they may choose to have their children educated and where.”

Respondent Four (R4) is a homeschooling parent and professional educator. R4 sees religious implications imbedded in every academic discipline such that: “in fact, all truth is from God, so there is no need to apply those [Christian] principles in an artificial way – where the content of the curriculum is true, God will always be well-represented.” He or she asserted that

the right to Catholic education is inherent to the rights of free speech and free worship as protected in the Constitution's Amendments: "by educating our children ourselves we are defending our rights to free speech and freedom of worship." "Religion and state can and should be symbiotic, in the sense that both should, in their different spheres, provide an environment in which virtue is encouraged (religion) and can be pursued without hindrance (govt)."

### Public Funding

R1 asserted that Catholic schools deserve public funding due to the sheer number of young people for which they are responsible. "Education is a public service deserving of subsidy." "Jesus famously said, 'Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's.' I don't think this absolves Caesar from rendering unto Catholic schools what is justly theirs: 'the laborer deserves his wages'. For this reason, I support public funding of Catholic schools to a limited extent. We have a tuition tax credit program that allows citizens to receive a dollar for dollar tax credit for any donations they make to a private school. This means that the state will consider any money (up to a statutory limit) donated to a private school as a payment against the citizen's tax liability. I think this or something like vouchers is a good solution to the problem." However, "I am opposed to the government attaching unreasonable or unjust strings to the money it would provide and would rather go without it than be hamstrung in the teaching of Truth."

The feasibility of government funding for Catholic schools was portrayed by R2 as evidentially merited, but unacceptable if it came at the cost administrative independence. Tuition credit to parents would be the best program to equalize the private and public education sectors on this issue. Presently, the federal system inhibits the free exercise and expression of private schools. "Every Catholic school I've worked at experiences financial difficulty due to the

restrictions on governmental support. This factor drives up tuition which in turn makes it more difficult for citizens to enroll their children in Catholic schools. Therefore, fewer citizens receive a quality education because they are unable to apply their tax dollars to their child's education." Government funding could contribute a great deal to the enhancement of Catholic public services if it did not interfere with the explicit proclamation of the religious motivations that undergird them – echoing the literature review by Horning (2013).

R3's school receives state funding for busing, textbooks, and 'mandated service', as well as money for professional development and additional resources for literacy and math. "I support the idea of vouchers. I do not support having any government oversight in the way that we educate the students that attend our school. It is not the state's responsibility to fund our school. Our school exists to be a viable alternative for families who choose a Catholic education. A voucher program gives families the choice to direct tax dollars to the institution of choice based on the families' belief systems, not the schools'. Church and State is an important freedom that would not be compromised by giving families the control. After all, the family is the first place we look, as Catholics, for education, not the state."

R4 stated that the home school laws in their state "are not too onerous, and we have not had any noteworthy trouble with the local school system. Federal funding has no place, we feel, in the home school, and even for private institutions, it would seem to us that a dependency on tax dollars is likely to cause a conflict of interests sooner or later."

#### 'Cultural' versus 'Religious' Ambiguity

For R1, education is formation in virtue, both secular and Christian; to become "just, courageous, moderate, prudent, loving, hopeful, and faithful." This mission of R1's school "is to

provide a liberal arts education that forms virtuous young men and women who know the Truth and love the Good.” This kind of training of the human person, which was solidified in the scholastic liberal arts, is the legacy of the modern American Catholic school. The reason for the ambiguity between the *secular virtues* and the *Christian virtues* is precisely due to their converging historical origins. “We do not simply wish to inform our students. In other words, we do not seek only to fill our students’ minds with knowledge of facts. Rather, what we seek is to draw the students through the things they learn into an encounter with truth, with the one who is True, the author of truth, Jesus Christ.”

R2 implied the ambiguity in religious/cultural elements of education by the cross curricular initiatives of his or her school, and in a desire to establish philosophical continuity in discussion across the various departments. “There is always the temptation for teachers to become too hyper-focused on their own subject matter. For this reason, it is important to always seek ways to challenge each other to step out of our comfort zones and learn how our fields are interwoven and mutually enriching. These types of initiatives are extremely valuable to the overall development of the student.” R2 said that “discipline [character development] is the bedrock for a strong academic program as well as a vibrant Catholic identity and culture. In a disciplined learning environment young men and women feel safe to explore new ideas and challenge themselves to step into leadership roles.” R2 believes that Catholic identity provides crucial support and inimitable assistance in the development of such virtue. “Teachers should seek to inspire students by what they teach and how they live. Hypocrisy is not inspiring in the mind of young people; rather it cultivates cynicism and disrespect. These attitudes are a detriment to academic discovery and excitement. Not every teacher in a Catholic school needs to

be Catholic and, of course, we are all sinners, but it is vitally important that each teacher is committed to the mission of the school.”

R3 purposefully made no distinction between the Catholicism and the academic mission of his or her school. “The expectation here is that every course in every discipline be taught through a Catholic lens meaning that the whole child is considered, Church teaching is presented, the themes of Social Justice and our duty as citizens of a global community are addressed. We take very seriously here the importance of ‘[students] experience learning and living fully integrated in the light of faith’. Our Profile of a graduate requires that our students demonstrate the ideals of our mission and demonstrate, in tangible ways, what it means to have been a student in our school. Meeting the requirements of the Profile is statistical and tangible proof that our graduates are ‘going forth’ into the world as disciples. We do not have a religious mission and an educational mission. Our school is different because the two are interwoven into a single thread for our students. If all we do is teach academics we are no different. The Church calls the Catholic school to be counter cultural so our mission requires that the fundamental basis of everything that we are is Catholic.” Culture, leadership, and financial oversight were said to be generally more impactful than additional funding by itself.

R4 implied that Catholic home-schooling provides the best vantage point from which to critique and improve the wider culture because it allows its students to observe the cultural from a healthy distance. “Our goal is to educate in an environment which gives our children wide opportunity to explore their interests and talents, encourage their creativity and self-reliance, and provide an aesthetic and cultural environment in which their minds and souls can be formed on Catholic principles before they are thrust into the challenges of the wider culture.”

## Alternative Education

R1 recommended recourse to homeschooling up through eighth grade, as the ideal when parents are well-formed. This should be the case because parents are both the most loving and the most demanding towards their own children. “I think single sex, day-school high schools are ideal for most students, provided they have a stable home life. For at-risk youths (particularly males) with unstable home lives, I think a boarding school or functional boarding school (i.e. an academic-year group home) is an excellent option, particularly if such an institution provides good role models for the young.” “I think it is high time for vocational schools and apprenticeship to make a comeback. Not every new development in our society is opposed to the Church. One good development in my opinion is the growth of localism and the accompanying interest in sustainable craftsmanship and quality goods. If there were a model of education dedicated to St. Joseph and patterned after what his workshop must have been like, many, many young people (young men in particular) would benefit, especially those who are not called to higher education.” In addition to these alternative preferences, R1 wishes schools could be more aesthetically beautiful; in order to draw the mind and heart to transcendent truths. “I would fill the hallways with beautiful paintings; replace the mass-produced furniture with warm, handmade, wooden desks and tables; find ways to let more natural light in; scale the buildings to man using the golden ratio; grow things.” Notably, the respondent also strongly recommended the integration and interaction between grade-levels – “a house system (a la Hogwarts)” – as opposed to arbitrarily separating students by age, a kind of organizational pattern that has no real world equivalent. “To collaborate with older and younger peers, to mentor and be mentored, to develop friendships, build camaraderie, and engage friendly, but intense, competition – these are much more important than ‘career and college readiness’ standards.

As regards alternatives to traditional schooling, R2 stated, in accord with the Second Vatican Council, that parents are the primary educators of their children. Pre-school through third grade should always take place under the nurturing care of the mother, with cross-curricular and unit studies emphasizing reading early and often. Additional collaboration with parish-based bi-gendered learning would be ideal. The grade levels of fourth through eighth should also be homeschooled, but worked out closely with like-minded parents who have high proficiency in a variety of subjects. At this stage, there should be continued cross-curricular and unit studies with occasional male and female segregated learning. The *second best* option for this learning group (through eighth grade) would be a classical education at a traditional Catholic school. For grades nine through twelve, R2 suggests that education must become highly personalized: “I think it is difficult to identify one ideal school at this age due to the great diversity that exists in every human person.” Homeschooling would work for an independent and academically self-disciplined child, while traditional Catholic schooling would normally help the opposite type of child to develop those characteristics. Additionally, apprenticeships and vocational training that combine classroom learning and field experience could be highly effective for the more active, tactile, and/or the stereotypical ADHD children. R2 made the noteworthy claim that “the quality of education and the culture at many colleges and universities today is so poor that unsuccessful students not only waste their time and money but actually acquire ‘negative skills’ which make them worse off in society than had they gone right into the workforce as teenagers before succumbing to vice and decadence.” Boarding schools were not generally recommended unless the family home environment is unhealthy or non-existent. If a rehabilitative model became necessary in a given community, it ought to strive to maintain or cultivate family involvement in

the education of the children as much as possible without breaking the integrity of the program or insulting the dignity of the parents (a potentially difficult balance to strike).

R3 also maintained that education is primarily the responsibility of the parents. “Our job as a school is to provide the best education according to the charisms and teachings of the Church. If our schools are strong and faithful, families will choose the school that best suits and will be the best partner in the fundamental process of education and affords them the fullest and best opportunity for Christian education.”

R4 suggested that homeschooling can provide the most thoroughly Catholic environment: a broad spectrum of opportunity to develop talents, encouragement for creative endeavors, and self-reliance rather than reliance upon socio-cultural systems. Again, the choice of schooling for older children “would of course depend upon the child, the family, the available school options, and the situation in general.” Boarding schools or any schools which separated child from home could only be considered last resort options. “Home education specifically, and families in general, would be greatly benefited by an economy in which fathers were at home more, and working with their families. Worthwhile community projects and classes are a good social and educational opportunity; more affordable arts lessons would be nice.” R4 also mentioned that “the re-establishment of the apprenticeship would be a great thing for people of both sexes, and for the culture and economy at large.”

### Common Good

R1 made the clear connection between formation in virtue and living a life of charity. “We contribute to the common good by performing and encouraging our students to perform the corporal and spiritual Works of Mercy:” to feed the hungry; to give drink to the thirsty; to clothe

the naked; to harbor the homeless; to visit the sick; to ransom the captive; and to bury the dead. The spiritual works of mercy are: to instruct the ignorant; to counsel the doubtful; to admonish sinners; to bear wrongs patiently; to forgive offences willingly; to comfort the afflicted; and to pray for the living and the dead. “We do every one of them.” The Catholic emphasis on the love of God inherently leads to love of neighbor, which is an obvious common good. “By forming our students in virtue, we foster good citizenship.” Students at this school perform 15,000 hours of community service annually.

R2 asserted the positive role that active membership plays in the socio-political community. The cultivation of this kind of leadership is an essential element in the respondent’s school and so contributes in this way to the common good, as quoted in the first section of the results. This respondent’s school is concerned that its students acquire *practical* life skills as well as a sense of justice and a desire to meet felt needs. Furthermore, “the education of young people is certainly a public service that our school accomplishes each year. In addition, our school has a community service requirement which mandates that our students volunteer their time for non-profit organizations in the community.” “I don’t have the exact statistics, but approximately 95% of our graduates advance to higher education or technical schools. This statistic alone demonstrates the success of our educational model in that we are preparing young men and women to become contributing members of society. However, this is merely the secular reasoning. In addition, numerous graduates go on to work in service fields (nursing, social services, civic service, etc.) due to the Christian environment which fostered an ethical code of conduct as well as a commitment to serving others that flows from Christian discipleship.”

R3 said, “Our public schools are some of the best funded schools in the country with the worst results academically and socially. Our Catholic schools are some of the best schools in the

country academically and socially; not to mention we are putting faithful citizens into the world and we are doing so for half of the per student cost of our public counterparts.” If this is true, the implications for adopting Catholic methods are obvious.

R4 believes Catholic home schooling can provide children with innovative approaches to real-world problems and a heightened sense of community. Moreover, homeschooling opens the space for the arts to become a better integrated element of the general curriculum and skill set of its students. To quote again: “Worthwhile community projects and classes are a good social and educational opportunity.” This kind of interaction between the private home and the public society is paradigmatic of a proper relationship between Church and state.

## Chapter 5

### DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Discussion

The researcher anticipated that the questionnaire responses *would vary* in relation to the first half of the thesis, in reply to the philosophical problems of the public/private distinction. It was also predicted that the responses *would support* the second half of the thesis of the literature review, that Catholic schools can service a broad range of educational and developmental goals for the public good. These two hypotheses are discussed below.

#### *Church-State and Private-Public Tensions*

As the first part of the literature review was intended to draw out (Gatto, 2003), the history of educational philosophy has been complex and pliable. In America, this reality is intertwined with a historically young and perpetually maturing political philosophy. Respondent One and Respondent Two regard this maturation to have had negative consequences for education, in so far as the interpretation of First Amendment freedoms and the Establishment Clause have grown more and more to favor the Department of Education in the marketplace of school choice. Whether this is a true maturation or in fact a corruption of the principles of the U.S. Constitution is essential to the question at hand. All four respondents agree that it should be the government's role to *support* the free exchange of philosophical and religious ideas, *not* to take sides by legislating the competition out. Two respondents used the Roe vs. Wade court decision as an example of over-extension of federal law into religious matters – they also implied that this transgression of founding principles was likely beyond atonement. The problem is

rooted in the apparent ignorance of the present legislative body about the teleological orientation of particular truth claims, as Respondent One indirectly pointed out. Those concepts which have the clearest association with religious doctrine and therefore the highest implications for human behavior, such as *life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness*, ought to be relegated to the most local democratic pool as possible. This is why earlier American education was so successful, precisely because it was highly individualized, unstained by the tyranny of a common core. Hence, all four respondents concur that parents should be the primary educators of their children.

How the reality of parents' rights to the education of their children should interact with the federal or state government was handled differently by Respondent Three and Four. Respondent Three rejected the state's responsibility to fund private schools without addressing whether the public educational system was legitimized in its appropriation of citizens' money. Respondent Four made the same sharp distinction between homeschooling and public schooling in terms of their sources of funding without addressing whether the right to spend tax money on education should be universal. This negligence can perhaps be explained by the very common acceptance of the government's philosophical prejudice against its own religiosity. As the first part of the literature review mentioned (Carpenter and Kafer, 2012), the private-public discrepancy in education has always really been a matter of the religious majority versus a religious minority, since there is no such entity that can exist outside of religious premises. The main difference between the original Protestant-Catholic divide in education and today's private-public division is merely a difference in faith principles as Schindler (1996) laid bare.

The duplicity between outward proclamation (i.e. religious liberty or private-public separation) and practical policy (i.e. the persecution of religious education through market monopolization) in the federal government comes to light in the ostensible ambiguities between

*school culture* and *religious formation*. The most successful of schools that are closing the achievement gap are precisely those who have appropriated quasi-religious ritual actions into the structures of their school environment and teaching methods, for example see Shyamalan (2013). Among these methods is the classically developed understanding that virtuous character leads to a happy life. It is difficult to identify the point at which Christian virtue extends beyond secular (or cardinal) virtue since they have been interwoven from the very beginning of institutionalized schooling. Respondents One, Two, and Three clearly acknowledged that Catholic education has been doing the bulk of the work of character education in the United States. Respondent Four also pointed out the superior position maintained by the homeschooled child, who standing outside of the mainstream fashions, can become more sensitive to those needs of the age that are most essential and most human.

As a final corresponding idea in this category of responses, it is worth recalling the thesis of Gavin D'Costa (2005). He brought attention to the role of philosophy in mediating academic departments. All respondents would agree that Catholic identity as such weaves the aspects of the human person into a unity of purpose, but this would be a dogmatic concord more than a philosophical harmony. Respondent Two explicitly, and Respondent One and Three implicitly, referred to cross curricular initiatives as needles threading together respective subjects. Cross curricular work requires the teachers of each subject to be competent in philosophical language and method. This harmony of method is the critical element, much more than philosophical agreement. As there is no *Catholic* philosophy strictly speaking, space opens for important variations of character and allegiance here. While school culture can stand in for philosophical variety, it is perhaps slightly more useful to remember a teacher's Hegelianisms than his or her classroom flag (though the value of arbitrary/transitory loyalties is often understated).

The question of public educational funding hinges on the philosophical problem of *defining religion*. A basic dictionary definition would be that religion is a belief concerning the cause, nature, and purpose of the universe. According to this classification, it would be hard for anyone to avoid religion. Thus, the legal definition of religious education in America is entirely based on an institutional association to a historically and etymologically recognizable set of such beliefs. In other words, a religious community couched in a psychological mission statement is much less likely to be targeted for Church-state violations than one which uses traditional Christian terminology. Yet, a psychological program of education will inevitably make assumptions about efficient causality in the world. As Schindler (1996) elaborated well, the metaphysical presuppositions of a religiously neutral institution are functionally atheistic, and therefore no less religious after all. Claiming to endorse no particular teleology of truth is merely a mask for the endorsement of relativism, determinism, or skepticism. The caveat of this criticism is that schools are still allowed in most cases to facilitate those less underhanded religious beliefs of the traditional faiths (i.e. Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism). Nevertheless, this facilitation sends the message that it is somehow possible for the administration not to have religious beliefs of their own, that is to say, religious neutrality as a practice teaches an idea that is demonstrably false, and does so as if it were true.

### *Catholic Education and the Common Good*

At the heart of the common good of the state is first of all the rights of the human family, which includes individual rights but is not confined therein. The family is the first unit of society, the stem cell of the social body. Therefore, the parents and legal guardians of children should be given every possible opportunity to actualize the potential of their progeny. The state's purpose is to be a help and not a hindrance to this delicate developmental process. When it does so, the

political community indubitably benefits. When it fails to do so, political momentum falls toward despotism and the cultural atmosphere becomes cynical. Put simply, a well formed (well educated) populace makes for a strong political leadership and economic dynamism. The obvious movement of the present-day system is a toward the former state of affairs. A central source of this infection is the dualism between home life and community life. The underlying force of the rehabilitative endeavor – because American society is clearly beyond the point of a mere course correction – has to be the healing of a whole generation of children, many of whom remain in a state of extended adolescence despite having long passed the traditional ages of marriage and occupational readiness. Respondent Two referred to this phenomenon as the acquiring of *negative skills* due to a poorly suited education. Hence, this rehabilitation would be educational in a *classical sense*, that is, not divided from the formation of virtuous character.

The need for this kind of alternative education is tantamount to a nation showing all the signs of moral atrophy. The only question is whether the government itself would submit to such a reeducation. If it did, Catholic school choice within a public marketplace would be possible again. If it would not, then Catholic education may be best served by finding new methods of financial independence and political detachment. The most immediate solution to this problem is for Catholic families to further develop the communal organs of home schooling. All four respondents referred to the primary role of parents in education, and Respondent One, Two, and Three see their schools as being at the service of Catholic families. Respondent Four took the educational process into his/her own hands from the outset. The Catholic school system can and is assisting parents in the education of their children, but the quality of this education is by no means assured solely on the nominal designation of *Catholic*. Both financial restraints and legal interference are causes in the decline of their educational quality – hence, the focus of this study.

## Conclusions

The questionnaire responses did vary in reply to the philosophical problems of the public/private distinction. Support for the second half of the thesis, that Catholic schools can service a broad range of educational and developmental goals for the public good, was explicit throughout the responses. The researcher's hypotheses were corroborated in the results and discussed above.

## Implications

The implications of this projects findings are broad and can be divided into four realms of influence: federal politics, school politics, curriculum development, and general philosophy. The general philosophical implications affect the other three domains. Without pretending to have given a fair treatment to the historical development of the First Amendment's philosophical underpinnings, this project succeeded nonetheless to highlight discrepancies of interpretation throughout the short history of American Church-state relations. What was originally understood to be a protection of the Church against state interference in community affairs, has become a protection of individuals against any public assertions of teleological premises. This shift rests on a philosophical fallacy: namely, that it is possible for human persons to live without ever making a teleological commitment. Implicitly, if not explicitly, the ends of one's being will be presumed and thereby undergird one's decisions. Since institutions are governed by human beings, there is no way to truly segregate personal and corporate responsibility. Every person and institution eventually rises or crashes into its philosophical end. This is a choice that cannot be avoided.

For this reason, every person should continuously cultivate his or her philosophical presuppositions in fear and trembling. Occasionally, this will mean altering course. The

American Constitution recognized the importance of philosophical renewal and attempted to creedalize it. By encouraging democratic diversity, as much as possible, the socio-economic pyramid will continuously shuffle its bricks. This diversity of opinion has limitations, but in matters of moral ambiguity, the coalescing power of conversation was to be given its time – from family to county to state to nation, in that order. What the historian witnesses, however, is the gradual monopolization of goods, services, and ideas into fewer and fewer hands until the majority of citizens are stripped of their public voice and forced to choose between two evils. What can alter this grim picture? Education. But the public department of education serves the philosophical ends of federal politics, as one would expect. Thus, the largely religious questions that divide the country in national elections are precisely those questions which a public teacher is not allowed to suggest have right or wrong answers. It has to be apparent: this state of affairs is unsustainable and immoral.

One particular aspect of the solution was drawn out by this study. Catholic families deserve their provision of public educational funding to invest in whatever alternative forms of schooling they deem appropriate for their individual children. This funding should be universal for all tax payers and unregulated by the state's arbitrary religious preconceptions. The public school system should therefore become one choice among equals in a diverse marketplace of educational styles and focuses. *The common core is the family itself.*

### Recommendations

Several factors inhibited the original qualitative research in this project, most of which were a result of poor foresight on the part of the researcher. In future studies at this level, the survey design should be as streamlined as much as possible. The use of the internet survey is

much more time efficient for participants than the mailed or hard-copy surveys. The suggested time required for responses should probably have been fifteen minutes or less, and this could have been accomplished through a mixture of short answer and multiple choice selections. Finally, in retrospect, the researcher realizes that due to the breadth of controversy associated with his topic, the formulation of the questions and the introduction to the questionnaire could have been presented in a more provocative and less formulaic manner. All these factors would likely have increased, the unusually low, 3% return rate of the researcher's questionnaires, as well as potentially increasing the internal validity of the conclusions by expanding the range of supportive data. Future studies in this area would benefit from the input of several more alternative-education organizations from both the public and private sectors.

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# Appendices

## Appendix A

Also as presented at (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/C89WBVD>)

This is a research questionnaire. Please answer each question in *five sentences or more*. The questions may be delegated to the most appropriate respondent/s in your institution. The text boxes below each question require a response between 50-5000 words; you may wish to write your answers in a separate word processor and paste them here.

1. How does Catholicism influence the mission of your institution? How are Christian principles integrated into the ‘non-religious’ content areas of your curriculum? How might you demonstrate (statistically or anecdotally) the positive outcomes of your institution as related to its religious mission?
2. Is your institution providing one or more public service/s deserving of federal or state subsidies? Do you support the separation of public and private educational funding, to what extent and why? Have you experienced any administrative/financial difficulties due to private/public legal regulations?
3. Is your institution protecting one or more civil or human right/s, and how? How does your institution contribute to the common good, and how? Would government funding support or restrict your institutional mission? Do you think a symbiotic relationship between the Catholic Church and the U.S. government is sustainable, and why?
4. What is the ideal educational setting/methodology (homeschool, monastic school, boarding school, day-school, apprenticeship, etc.) for the following groups: males and females in pre-school, elementary, and high school? When the ideal is not practically

possible, what educational alternative/s would be most rehabilitative for 'at risk' communities?

5. Name the three most important changes you would make to improve your institution if you had the necessary backing. Give specific reasons for these choices.

## **Appendix B**

The following is an informed consent form for a research project questionnaire. The recipient should read this form carefully. Before the questionnaire begins, the researcher and the participant/s should sign this form. Please articulate any questions to the researcher before responding to the questionnaire. The participant will be given one copy of the signed form.

### Consent for Participation in Research

I volunteer to participate in a research project conducted by Cole A. Viscichini from Franciscan University of Steubenville. I understand that the project is designed to gather information about Catholic institutions. I will be one of two dozen institutions being surveyed for this research.

1. My participation in this project is voluntary. I understand that I will not be paid for my participation. I may withdraw and discontinue participation at any time without penalty. If I decline to participate or withdraw from the study, no one will be told.
  
2. I understand that most participants will find the questions interesting and thought-provoking. If, however, I feel uncomfortable in any way during the interview session, I have the right to decline to answer any question.
  
3. Participation involves answering a questionnaire designed by the researcher. The survey will take approximately 15-30 minutes.

4. I understand that the researcher will not identify me by name in any reports using information obtained from this questionnaire, and that my confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure. Subsequent uses of records and data will be subject to standard data use policies which protect the anonymity of individuals and institutions.

5. Other faculty and/or administrators from my institution will neither be present for the questionnaire nor have access to raw notes or transcripts. This precaution will prevent my individual comments from having any negative repercussions.

6. I understand that this research study has been reviewed and approved by the Graduate Education Department at Franciscan University of Steubenville. For other research problems or questions, contact Dr. Furda, Chair (740-284-5326).

7. I have read and understand the explanation provided to me. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

8. I have been given a copy of this consent form [By clicking the 'next' button I have agreed to this consent form\*].

Signed  February 20, 2015

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Signature of the Researcher Date

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Participant Printed Name Date

## Appendix C

Dear Expert Judge:

I am contacting you because of your expertise in the field of education. I am a graduate of Franciscan University of Steubenville with a B.A. in Philosophy, Theology, and Catechetics. At present, I am a candidate for the Master of Science degree in Education at Franciscan University. As part of my Master's research project, I am seeking your expert review of a questionnaire that I hope to send to administrators of diverse Catholic institutions to gather information about Catholic identity and its relation to the common good. This research is intended to support or reject my double hypothesis that 1) religious liberty in education is relative to state and institutional procedures and that 2) Catholic pedagogical methods serve a variety of public needs.

I believe that your knowledge and experience in the field will translate into valuable feedback on this questionnaire and its aims. This non-experimental, non-probability survey consists of five open-ended questions. Your input will bolster the effectiveness of my research and diminish error. Points to consider as you review my questions include:

- A. *Are all questions articulately and professionally written?*
- B. *Does the language used throughout present ambiguity or bias?*
- C. *Should any questions be added or removed or edited to strengthen survey effectiveness?*

This project has been approved by the department chair, Dr. Mark Furda; by my advisor, Dr. Michael Joyce; and by Mr. Jason Aspinall, Professor of Research and Methodology. In accordance with the standard of ethics propagated by the American Psychological Association (2002), the participants in the questionnaire, as well as your input on the questionnaire will remain anonymous. The survey includes a 'judge's rating' section, allowing you to comment and rate the validity and relevance of each item of the questionnaire. Finally, you will receive a debriefing of results and analysis.

If you have questions or concerns about this Master's Project, please do not hesitate to contact me. Your cooperation in this endeavor would be greatly appreciated. Thank you for your service in the field of education and for your time in considering this request.

Sincerely,

Cole A. Viscichini  
(484) 947-1191  
CViscichini001@student.franciscan.edu

260 Lawson Ave  
Apt G  
Steubenville, OH 43952

## Appendix D

For Expert Judge Panel

Item	Good	Fair	Poor	Comments
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				

## Appendix E

Dear Administrator,

I am a graduate student at Franciscan University of Steubenville, working toward a Master of Science degree in Education. I have a B.A. in Philosophy, Theology, and Catechetics. In order to complete the Education program, I am gathering original data according to the following hypotheses: **1)** the separation of Church and state (private and public education specifically) is philosophically problematic and practically unsustainable, and, in part for this reason, **2)** Catholic education should be considered for state or public funding in so far as it can be shown to objectively contribute to the common good, equally, if not more so, than the public system. My goal is to collect data that will support *or* challenge the position that Catholic educational aims and pedagogy can offer a multitude of important services to the common good, including, but not limited to, academic, behavioral, psychological, and spiritual outcomes.

I am writing to request your participation in a research questionnaire that addresses these questions, specifically related to the mission of *your* institution/school. This non-experimental survey consists of 5 open-ended questions, which should take about an hour of thoughtful consideration to complete. I chose your institution/school because of either personal or second-hand experience of its successes and its Catholicity. In accordance with the standard of ethics propagated by the American Psychological Association (2002), I assure you that all responses to the questionnaire will remain completely confidential. You will be provided with an informed consent form (attached) and a post-analysis debriefing once all field-based research is conducted.

If you have questions about this Master's Project, please do not hesitate to contact me. If you are willing to participate, please take a moment to sign below. Your cooperation in this study would be greatly appreciated. This form can be returned by post or e-mail at your earliest convenience until the **deadline of May 1**. Thank you for your deep devotion to Catholic education and for your time considering this request.

Sincerely,

Cole A. Viscichini  
(484) 947-1191  
CVisichini001@student.franciscan.edu

260 Lawson Ave  
Apt G  
Steubenville, OH 43952

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Administrator's position (and brief description if necessary)

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Administrator's Signature

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Date

## Appendix F\*

Dear Administrator,

I am contacting you to follow up on a previous request for educational research data. I have revised my questionnaire and made it digital in order to decrease the time necessary for you to participate. The link to the survey is at the bottom of this email.

I am a graduate student at Franciscan University of Steubenville, working toward a Master of Science degree in Education. I have a B.A. in Philosophy, Theology, and Catechetics. In order to complete the Education program, I am gathering original data according to the following hypotheses: **1)** the separation of Church and state (private and public education specifically) is philosophically problematic and practically unsustainable, and, in part for this reason, **2)** Catholic and public educational funding should be leveled within state or federal programs in so far as it can be shown to objectively contribute to the common good, or else, both relegated to an altogether private system. My goal is to collect data that will support *or* challenge the position that Catholic educational aims and pedagogy can offer a multitude of important services to the common good, including, but not limited to, academic, behavioral, psychological, and spiritual outcomes.

I am writing to request your participation in a research questionnaire that addresses these questions, specifically related to the mission of *your* institution/school. This non-experimental survey consists of 5 open-ended questions, which should take about 0.5 hours of thoughtful consideration to complete. I chose your institution/school either because of personal or second-hand experience of its successes and its Catholicity. In accordance with the standard of ethics propagated by the American Psychological Association (2002), I assure you that all responses to the questionnaire will remain completely confidential. There will be an informed consent page (at the beginning of the survey) and a post-analysis debriefing (once all field-based research is conducted).

If you have questions about this Master's Project, please do not hesitate to contact me. If you are willing to participate, please follow the link provided below. Your cooperation in this study would be greatly appreciated. This questionnaire should be answered at your earliest convenience. Thank you for your devotion to Catholic education and for considering this request.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/C89WBVD>

Sincerely,

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