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ABSTRACT

THE EARLY CATECHETICAL RENEWAL IN FRANCE AND ITS INFLUENCE IN THE
TEACHING OF RELIGION

BY

MARY PENELOPE COKE

Experience of teaching in France in the late 1950s led to an awareness of excellent methods and resources for religious education. This in turn led to a study of the French catechetical renewal movement. While it became evident that the main movement was led by Fr Joseph Colomb in the years immediately following the Second World War, it was soon apparent that the roots extended much further back in time.

The present work is concerned with tracing the roots of the early catechetical renewal, set against the background of the early twentieth century. The influence on it of movements such as Modernism, and of the new educational ideas, are considered as well as others from abroad such as the Munich Movement. The effect of the call for a more gospel-based approach in the teaching of religion by Bishop Landrieux of Dijon in 1922 and a moving away from the Catechism is discussed.

Among the key figures who emerged in the years between the two world wars were Mme Marie Fargues and Mlle Françoise Derkenne, also Fr André Boyer and Fr Charles Quinet. Their creative activity was particularly intense in the 1930s. Their influence, traced in many instances through unpublished correspondence, is shown to be considerable, not only in France but in the wider international sphere. In particular, there is evidence that their change of approach to the concept of religious education as opposed to that of religious instruction came about sooner in France than elsewhere. It is also suggested that the remarkable tenacity of some of the pioneers in the face of considerable opposition may have helped to bring about the changed attitude to the laity, particularly to women, in certain branches of the Christian Church.

THE EARLY CATECHETICAL RENEWAL IN FRANCE
AND ITS INFLUENCE IN THE TEACHING OF RELIGION

BY

MARY PENELOPE COKE

FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF DURHAM
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1985

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15. APR. 1986

Thesis

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INTRODUCTION

1. Suggested Origins

There is disagreement among authors as to the date of the commencement of the modern catechetical renewal movement; indeed there is a certain reluctance to make a clear commitment as to when it began. R.M. Rummery¹ suggests 1928 at the Congress of Munich. J.A. Jungmann² goes back to 1900, and also to Munich. A. Godin³ states that it began in Germany and was well-developed in France by 1940. However, these and other authorities all mention Joseph Colomb as being at the source of the main French Catechetical movement in the immediate post-war period from 1946. Investigation showed that there was, in fact, considerable activity in France from the earliest dates given above, running parallel with that in Germany. This activity is little known outside France and even within it is not fully documented. One of the aims of the present work is to show that there was, indeed, an early catechetical movement upon which the later one was based rather than being based upon the movement emanating from the German-speaking countries.

2. Criterion for a movement

A movement is likely to arise from initiatives by individuals scattered in both time and space. The moment when these efforts may be said to constitute a movement could be the moment of awareness of a large number of people that something was happening. Georges Duperray⁴ calls this criterion of the emergence of a movement 'visibilité', which might be rendered as 'perceptibility'. It would take the form of a body of publications, but, above all, of the notability of a certain

-
1. Richard M. Rummery FSC., Catechesis and Religious Education in a pluralist society (1975), p.1.
 2. Josef Andreas Jungmann SJ., Handing on the Faith (1959), p.32.
 3. André Godin SJ., 'Some developmental tasks in Christian Education' in Merton P. Strommen, ed., Research in Religious Development (1971), p.109.
 4. Interview with Georges Duperray, former director of religious education, archdiocese of Lyons, Lyons 1 June 1979.



number of people known to be engaged in the same enterprise. In France this would seem to have been in the ten years leading up to the Second World War.

3. Pedagogical turning-point

The origin of the movement in France as elsewhere lay in the awareness of the ineffectiveness of current methods of teaching religion through the catechism. This, allied to the spread of new educational ideas, brought about a pedagogical turning-point in catechesis and a reaction against indoctrination. The early movement however, was not able to dispense with the catechism itself, despite misgivings already felt about its content. The pioneers were educational practitioners rather than theorists and certainly not theologians; these would come later in the main movement.

4. Limitations

The present work also attempts to show the influence of the early French catechetical movement on the teaching of religion. It is necessary, however, to point out certain limitations. In the first place the movement was concerned almost entirely with children of primary age, up to the time of the Solemn Communion at the age of eleven or twelve. Secondly, it is concerned with catechesis, that is where teacher and taught share the same Christian faith by baptism.

5. Separable concepts of catechesis and religious education

This does not mean that the work of the early French catechetical movement is irrelevant to the situation in this country, where there is increasing religious pluralism. Indeed the wider concept of religious education embraced by modern schemes such as Theodore Sizer's neutrality approach⁵ may well lead to the evolution of a dual system. Rummery's analysis, too, leads to the conclusion "that the concepts of religious education and of catechesis are clearly separable."⁶ As the number of children of committed Christian families in State schools continues to increase,⁷ and where the bias of the religious education they receive inclines more to neutrality in the confessional sense, the

5. Rummery, Catechesis and Religious Education, pp.160-61. The whole of Chapter 5 of Rummery's work is concerned with the concept of religious education in a pluralist society where various schemes, including 'Learning for Life', Lancaster and Sizer are analysed.

6. Rummery, Catechesis and Religious Education, p.171.

7. This was already a problem in 1971. cf. Rummery, *op.cit.*, p.194.

Christian churches are likely to have to take in hand the catechesis of their own members on some other basis, perhaps the parish.

Parish-based catechesis for children was forced on the early French catechists by law. It developed into a catechumenate embracing the whole Christian family from the youngest child to the oldest adult.

The very existence of the denominational schools is being called in question. In 1948 Colomb wrote of France, "Three million baptised children are being neglected for one million in Christian schools."⁸ It could similarly be argued that in this country the diminishing resources of the Christian churches, especially in dedicated personnel, might be better deployed in teams of catechists working in the state schools within the framework of a parish catechumenate. Already the need for continuing education in religion has been recognized⁹ and there are experiments in this direction. It may be that this would prove a more effective way of conserving the Christian heritage.

8. Joseph Colomb pss., Pour un catéchisme efficace (1948), p.11, note 2(b).

9. Rummery (op.cit. p.181) says "... the educational task in religion... is not concluded... by the end of schooling, but rather [is] something continued as a life task." Also, p.194, "What provision is made for the continuing religious education of adults...?"

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Every movement involving people with a common cause is bound to be affected to a greater or lesser extent by external and environmental factors which may include geographical position, religion, politics or economics. Indeed the beginnings of any such movement may well be influenced by a variety of circumstances in which the first members find themselves. In this chapter it is proposed to delineate the main areas of the background to the early French catechetical movement with a view to a clearer understanding of what follows in subsequent chapters.

It is proposed to consider these background areas under four main headings:- Political, Ecclesiastical, Educational and Catechetical. It is impossible to keep them completely separate but it is essential to provide an adequate setting.

1. Political Background: The Third Republic

(a) Constitutional stability, political instability

In later chapters it is hoped to demonstrate that the catechetical renewal in France was gathering momentum in the generation between the two world wars but that its roots go back much further than that. Politically this falls within the limits of the Third Republic (1870-1940). This was the longest-lived and most stable of the French constitutions; in fact, it was France's only period of constitutional stability.¹ However the fragmentation and multiplicity of political parties led to great political instability, with more than a hundred governments during this period. Relative unity during the First World War was followed by further periods of instability.² This did not,

-
1. J.Blondel, 'Contemporary France: Politics, Society and Institutions' in D.G. Charlton, ed., France, a Companion to French Studies (1979), p.622. The country has had sixteen constitutions, though some were not implemented and others lasted only a few years, seemingly following "cycles of constitutional monarchy, republic and dictatorial empire."
 2. Douglas Johnson, 'French History and Society from the Revolution to the Fifth Republic' in Charlton, ed., op.cit. p.179.

however, mean that the Third Republic covered a period of chaos. The State became stronger both at home and abroad. There was general prosperity in a country still, in 1914, one of agriculture and small enterprise.

(b) Educational reform

"An insistence upon education was to be the main ideology of the Third Republic. In 1879, 1882 and 1886 education was reformed."³ According to the provisions of the new laws primary education was made free, compulsory and secular for all children aged between six and thirteen. The state imposed its standards upon all teachers in the public educational system. Education and educational methods became uniform and the general climate of unity and patriotism at the onset of the First World War could be taken as testimony to the efficacy of the system in that respect. The number of primary teachers had doubled by 1914 and more than 85 per cent of children attended school.

(c) Tension between Church and State

These laws both arose from, and led to, tension between Church and State.⁴ Priests and religious were effectively excluded from state schools as were all vestiges of religious practice. However France was not a totalitarian state and according to Article 2 of the law of 1882 "Public primary schools are closed one day a week (other than Sunday) so that parents may, if they wish, have their children given religious instruction outside the school buildings."⁵ Private schools were also permitted, where religious instruction was optional, and where priests and religious could be admitted.⁶

(d) Origins of the tension

The tension between Church and State had been inherited from the

-
3. Johnson 'French History and Society from the Revolution', p.181.
 4. Blondel, 'Contemporary France', p.583. This question is further discussed below, p.17.
 5. André Boyer, Un demi-siècle au sein du mouvement catéchistique français (1966), p.13.
 6. It was necessary for religious teaching orders to be authorized by the state, (Waldeck-Rousseau Law of 1901). Many were refused and ultimately all religious were expelled between 1901 and 1905. The majority returned in the years immediately following the war and were able to obtain authorization to teach. Between the wars about one-fifth of all French children attended private schools of which the majority were denominational and where the standard was generally higher than in the state schools.

Revolution; indeed, the religious issue became one of its major problems.⁷ The material privileges of the Catholic Church had been attacked, persecution followed and there was an attempt to impose a new faith. The Goddess of Reason had been enthroned on the high altar of Notre Dame in Paris. "Yet in spite of the division created by the civil constitution of the clergy, the Church was not moribund."⁸ Even with the immense losses through death and defection the French clergy showed itself to be renewed and more tenacious than ever. The people, too, in large part remained loyal to the old faith and there was civil war in parts of the country on the religious issue. However the unanimity of the French in that matter was destroyed. Gradually, especially in the eyes of the working class, the view spread that "the fanaticism of the priests went hand in hand with the tyranny of the kings";⁹ for the restoration of the monarchy in 1815 had brought about a 'revenge' of the Catholic Church.¹⁰ Henceforward the association was sealed of the 'old order' represented by the monarchy, the aristocracy and the Church. The Republic became likewise increasingly anti-clerical so that by mid-century the issue was truly dividing the nation. There were certain areas¹¹ that were profoundly republican, where priests and nobles were equally disliked. Their leaders were members of the liberal professions, doctors, lawyers and above all teachers. At local level it was indeed the teacher who embodied the opposition to the parish priest. Thus can be seen the influence wielded by the Third Republic with its insistence on educational reform; the teachings of the village primary school teacher had successfully undermined those of the village curé.¹² There was increasing dechristianization but the Catholic Church still continued to play a major part in the social and political life of a country

7. Blondel, 'Contemporary France', p.584. The eighteenth century thinkers Diderot, Voltaire and Rousseau had attacked the Church and all established religion and created a climate of opinion which made the Revolution possible.

8. Élisabeth Germain, Langages de la foi à travers l'histoire: Mentalité et catéchèse: Approche d'une étude des mentalités (1972), p.136.

9. *ibid.*, p.137.

10., Blondel *loc.cit.*

11. *ibid.* The north, east, west and parts of the south-west remained broadly Catholic. The centre and the bulk of the south were anti-clerical.

12. *ibid.*, p.594.

which remained nominally ninety-five per cent Catholic.

(e) Separation of Church and State

The law of separation of Church and State in 1905 did not crush the Church; in fact there were signs of a decline in anti-clericalism, and not all the provisions of the law were fully enforced.¹³ There were also encouraging signs of support for the republic by the Catholics so that it did not feel so threatened. Within a generation the Church had begun to exercise her influence in new areas such as worker's associations.¹⁴

From the outset of the Third Republic there had been conflict and struggle to maintain the republican ideal. Marshal de MacMahon, a distinguished Catholic army officer who was elected President of the Republic in 1873,¹⁵ attempted to force his views on the staunchly republican Chamber in 1877. This led to his dissolving the Chamber and fears grew of domination of France by monarchists, aristocrats and army officers.¹⁶ Many of the republicans appeared corrupt and the government was repeatedly shaken by such crises as the Dreyfus and Panama Canal affairs. Nevertheless the feeling was growing that the republic was worth saving.¹⁷

(f) Leo XIII and the Republic

The influence of Pope Leo XIII¹⁸ on the attitude of Catholics to the republic and their co-operation with it was in keeping with the foresight of that great exponent of social reform. The encyclical letter Immortale Dei of 1 November 1885 has been called the "Magna Carta of the Catholic who believes in democracy as the best system of government."¹⁹ It lays down practical principles to guide the Catholic

13. Johnson, 'French History and Society from the Revolution', p.181.

14. Such as, for example, Le Sillon (see below. p.19), and the Jocist movement (see Chapter 6, p.131).

15. The President's wife, Madame de MacMahon, was the first President of the Archiconfrérie de l'Oeuvre des Catéchismes. (See Chapter 2, p.41).

16. Johnson, op.cit. p.179.

17. It did not escape notice that Catholics, including thousands of priests, went to the front in the 1914-18 war.

18. Leo XIII (Vincenzo Pecci 1810-1903) reigned as pope from 1878 to 1903. His most famous encyclical letter 'Rerum novarum, on the condition of the working classes', was published in 1891.

19. Philip Hughes, A Popular History of the Catholic Church (1958), p.237.

citizen of the new secular states. It was followed in 1892 by a letter to the Catholics of France Au milieu des sollicitudes reminding them "that there was nothing in a republican constitution that was inherently immoral, or impossible for Catholics to accept loyally as the choice of their country."²⁰ The effect of this was one of the more encouraging aspects of the ecclesiastical background to the early catechetical movement.

(g) Le Sillon

Two years after the letter Au milieu a movement began, later to be known as Le Sillon, which attempted to tackle the social problem. It started by initiating study circles for young workers which they later ran themselves.²¹ The movement developed,²² encouraged by Leo XIII and many of the bishops. Inevitably it became political and was attacked by the right-wing Action Française²³ and later by the Integrists.²⁴ Gradually it lost the support of many of the bishops in the changed ecclesiastical climate of the reign of Pope Pius X. It was finally dissolved by that Pope in 1910, in the wake of the condemnation of Modernism (p.23), thereby suffering the fate of so many movements ahead of their time. To their credit it must be said that the founder, Marc Sangnier, and most of the members submitted to the Pope's decision. Not without reason had one of their supporters, Archbishop Mignot of Albi, written about them that they "are the best among the good."²⁵

20. F.R. Hoare, The Papacy and the Modern State (1940), p.215.

21. It was in a similar way that the JOCist movement (Young Christian Workers) began in Belgium with Joseph Cardijn in 1912, more than twenty years later. (See Chapter 6, p.131).

22. Alec R. Vidler, A variety of Catholic Modernists (1970). The whole of Chapter 8 of this book is devoted to 'Marc Sangnier and the Sillon'.

23. The Action Française, founded in 1908 by Charles Maurras (1868-1952), was nearly condemned by Pius X in 1914 because of the agnosticism of its founder. Later opposition to it both by bishops and anti-clericals led to its condemnation in 1926 by Pius XI, thus freeing the French Church from a burden and pointing to the realistic path of Catholic support for the republic. (Mark Schoof OP., Breakthrough: Beginnings of the New Catholic Theology (1970), pp.96-97).

24. The Integrists (sometimes called Integralists) are a movement within the Catholic Church opposed to change. Their destructive opposition to much in the catechetical movement is mentioned in Chapter 4, p.76, note 31.

25. Vidler, op.cit., p.219.

Most of the young men involved in Le Sillon continued to work for the Church in France in other ways. "One finds them at the origin of one movement after another ... the Young Christian Workers and specialized Catholic Action ... Christian trade unionism ... the renewal of parish life. One finds them in publishing ... in journalism ... in social action."²⁶ Though peripheral, these spheres of action are undoubtedly linked to the catechetical renewal and some aspects of them will be mentioned later.

2. Ecclesiastical Background

Some of the tensions between Church and State in France at the beginning of the present century have been outlined above (pp.16-19). The episode of the Sillon illustrates tensions within the Catholic Church both in France and between France and Rome. Part of their origin lies much further back in certain movements originating in France and the Low Countries in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; these were Gallicanism and Jansenism. There is also the more recent and short-lived Modernism of the end of the last century. The issue was further complicated by other movements set up in opposition such as Ultramontanism and Integrism. All of these movements have a place in the background to the French Catechetical Renewal though not all are of equal importance. No attempt will be made to go into them in any great detail but significant points will be indicated.

(a) Gallicanism and Ultramontanism

The high point of Gallicanism may be said to have been the promulgation in 1682 of the Four Articles of King Louis XIV and their subsequent acceptance by all the French clergy.²⁷

26. Joseph Folliet, Chronique sociale de France March-April 1950, pp.127-128, quoted in Michael P. Fogarty, Christian Democracy in Western Europe 1820-1953 (1957), p.267.

27. The four articles may be summarized as follows: 1) Neither the popes nor the Church have any power over temporal princes as such; 2) the decrees of Constance on the superiority of the General Council to the pope still hold good; 3) the papal primacy must be exercised with due consideration for the customs of local churches; 4) the papal decrees, in matters of faith, are not irreformable until the whole Church has signified its assent to them. (See Hughes, History of the Catholic Church, pp.181-182.)

(i) Aloofness from the Church of Rome

These, in effect, indicated a claim on the part of the national hierarchy to be semi-independent of the Pope leading, therefore, to a certain separation from Rome. This did not go as far as that between England and Rome in the sixteenth century and there were no essential dogmatic differences. Inevitably there was a reaction and the Ultramontanes or anti-gallican party came into being. The latter upheld and even sometimes exaggerated the claims of the papacy and many bitter arguments ensued.²⁸

(ii) Effects

Effectively these ended in the nineteenth century²⁹ but the attitude persisted, for instance, in the antipathy between the Catholic monarchists and the republic. On the other side the severely repressive measures taken by Rome against the Church in France at the time of the Modernist crisis may also have been influenced by the spectre of Gallicanism. Further, it provided an atmosphere in which Jansenism flourished.³⁰

(b) Jansenism

Jansenism was more insidious in that its tenets penetrated into certain areas of Catholic faith and practice. They penetrated the catechism and their influence was to be felt for many years in French catechetics.

(i) Origins

Jansenism was not unique to France; it was in fact widespread in Western Europe. It originated in the Low Countries and its first wave struck France between 1640 and 1670.³¹ It became a well-organized faction supported by the well-connected, the wealthy, and the influential, weighing heavily on the French Church for two hundred

28. Hoare, Papacy and the Modern State, p.174.

29. Hughes, History of the Catholic Church, p.216.

30. Roger Mettam, 'French History and Society from the Wars of Religion to the Revolution' in Charlton, ed., France, a Companion to French Studies, p.105.

31. Germain, Langages de la foi, p.98. This was after the posthumous publication, in 1640, of the Augustinus of Jansenius, (Corneille, Jansen, Bishop of Ypres 1585-1638). Its origins went back sixty years with a new theory of grace deduced by Michael Baius of Louvain from St. Augustine, which was condemned by the Church. The Augustinus was also condemned, in 1649.

years. "The strong emphasis on the infirmity of human nature as the result of the Fall and on the inscrutability of God's plans for the salvation of the individual"³² distinguished Augustinianism from mainstream Catholic theology. The Jansenists were the most influential representatives of this school of thought and they have often been equated with the Calvinists. Yet "Jansenism eludes close definition since it was an intellectual tendency rather than a specific doctrine"³³ and leading Jansenist theologians were among the most effective opponents of Calvinism.

(ii) Second Phase

After its condemnation Jansenism went underground only to reappear in the eighteenth century in what Élisabeth Germain describes as "a second phase ..., political and Gallican, more and more rigid."³⁴ The opposition party of anti-jansenists, negative in attitude, was no less responsible for the "impoverishment of moral and religious life and the mounting anti-christianity of the end of the eighteenth century."³⁵

(iii) Principal Effects

Put in simplified, black and white terms, one could say that Jansenism affected the life of the Catholic Church in three main ways:

- through the doctrine of grace and its relation to man's free will,
- through the function of the Sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist and thence the whole question of the conduct of a truly Christian life,
- through the relation of the papacy to the hierarchy of bishops.³⁶

The manner in which these ideas reached the minds of the ordinary Catholic was, of course, much more subtle; it was through the influence of the innumerable catechisms in use in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and through the preaching of the clergy. It is possible to

32. D.C. Potts, 'French Thought in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries' in Charlton, ed., op.cit., p.235.

33. *ibid.*

34. Germain, Langages de la foi, p.98. The centre for this phase was Pasquier Quesnel's book which was an edition of the New Testament riddled with Jansenistic moral reflections. It was condemned by Pope Clement XI in 1713 but the condemnation was not accepted by many, particularly those of Gallican inclination.

35. Germain, *loc.cit.*

36. Hughes, History of the Catholic Church, p.177.

distinguish the Jansenist and anti-jansenist catechism manuals.³⁷ Yet it can be seen that "pastoral zeal is often to be found on the Jansenist side."³⁸ There was a desire to enhance the grandeur of God at the expense of denigrating man, God's creation. Disunity was engendered which went to frightening extremes. A bishop of Jansenist leanings would denounce a parish priest for refusing to accept the diocesan catechism which had, perhaps, only just replaced the anti-jansenist one of his predecessor. The parish priest in his turn might withdraw from his curate the task of teaching catechism because he considered him to have Jansenist ideas.³⁹

The effect of Jansenism on the reception of the sacraments held Catholics in thrall into the twentieth century. The Council of Trent advocated frequent Communion and taught that its effect was to strengthen man against sin. The Jansenists, however, opposed the idea; using scriptural justification they maintained that to receive Communion was a reward for virtue and even went so far as to say it was more meritorious to refuse it than to accept it.⁴⁰ This gloomy, austere attitude prevailed even after the decrees of Pius X advocating frequent Communion for all the faithful and First Communion for children at an early age.⁴¹ In the French catechetical scene the controversy over First and Solemn Communion was linked to this attitude (p.116).

(c) Modernism

The Condemnation of the Modernist movement by Pius X was mentioned above (p.19) in connection with the Sillon. According to Mark Schoof the present situation in Catholic theology has discernible roots in that period at the beginning of the present century which was "the

37. Germain, op.cit., pp.99-103. This author carries out a detailed comparison of two such catechisms on the question of the nature of the Church. In the Jansenist one there is no mention of the authority of the pope and the bishops. She concludes, "The first sees the Church as the People of God; the second sees the Church as a structured society. No doubt these were complementary but one cannot help feeling that we are in two different atmospheres. Might one not even go so far as to say these are two ways of seeing Catholicism?"

38. *ibid.* p.105.

39. Germain, Langages de la foi, p.106, where actual examples are given of these happenings.

40. Hughes, History of the Catholic Church, pp.178-179.

41. The decrees are to be found in translation in Joseph B. Collins, ed. and trans., Catechetical Documents of Pope Pius X (1946).

relatively short and rather depressing episode of modernism."⁴² Modernism itself, therefore, and its influence on the French catechetical movement must now be considered.

(i) Desire of adaptation to new conditions

Alec Vidler⁴³ prefers to consider the Modernists as "a highly diversified collection of individuals with inchoate and inconsistent ideas ... They had in common ... a desire in one way or another to promote the adaptation of Catholicism, of the Church and its teaching, to new conditions." Modernism was considered by the Pope to be a system of ideas and a "synthesis of all heresies",⁴⁴ giving the impression of a co-ordinated group of people with a coherent body of ideas. This definition was regarded as misleading by nearly all the Modernists but it has to be acknowledged that it was a "confused episode in the history of Catholic theology"⁴⁵ and the truth is not easy to establish.

The pontificate of Leo XIII (pp.18-19), provided a more liberal atmosphere in which relations between Church and State in France were eased somewhat. His creation as cardinal of the (to many) 'liberal', and therefore suspect, theologian John Henry Newman in 1879⁴⁶ was a further indication of a more relaxed atmosphere. Then, too, the publication in 1893 of the encyclical letter 'Providentissimus Deus on Biblical Studies' and the establishment of the biblical commission encouraged modern historical and biblical criticism, though with restraint. In France the Instituts Catholiques or Catholic Universities, were being founded⁴⁷ where these modern methods were firmly established, and to which were attracted many brilliant intellects. Among those invited by the historian Louis Duchesne (1843-1922) in 1879 to join him at the Institut Catholique of Paris was the young priest Alfred Loisy.⁴⁸

42. Schoof, Breakthrough, p.16.

43. Vidler, Catholic Modernists, pp.15-16 passim.

44. See the English translation of Pascendi in P. Sabatier, Modernism (1908), p.309, quoted in Vidler, Catholic Modernists, p.15.

45. Schoof, Breakthrough, p.45. 46. *ibid.* p58.

47. The Institut Catholique in Paris was founded in 1876 by Mgr. Maurice d'Hulst. He also founded the Oeuvre des Catéchismes in 1886 (see Chap.2, p.41).

48. Schoof, *op.cit.* p.57.

(ii) Scientific approach to exegesis

Loisy has been called the 'Father of Catholic Modernism'⁴⁹ though he himself disclaimed the title. Nevertheless it was his doctoral thesis on the inspiration of the Bible, completed in 1884, that raised the fundamental question by applying Duchesne's strictly scientific methods of historical research to scriptural exegesis. On the advice of Mgr. Maurice d'Hulst, rector of the Institut, the document was pigeon-holed as its publication would cause such a furore as to compromise the Institut.⁵⁰ Loisy taught scripture there from 1889 so his ideas became widely disseminated in Catholic intellectual circles. As a result of a controversy on "free exegesis" involving both d'Hulst and himself he was dismissed in 1893 in order to save the Institut.⁵¹

(iii) Some other French Modernists

That d'Hulst was himself a Modernist became evident through the controversy mentioned above. Loisy was blamed for articles written by d'Hulst and the latter did not attempt to shield him.⁵² At the seminary d'Hulst, together with a number of other future participants in the Modernist movement came under liberalizing influences.⁵³ They were led to move away from the current interpretation of scholastic theology and to be more preoccupied with the fundamental problem of the historical development of revelation.⁵⁴ This in turn led to the influence of Newman through his theology of development. One of the most prominent of the Modernists who, like Loisy,⁵⁵ later left the Church, Marcel Hébert (1851-1916), was of the group. He formed a close friendship with another member of the group, Léon-Adolphe Amette (1850-1920), who became Archbishop of Paris in 1908. The latter's orthodoxy would later be attacked by the Integrists (p.19) for this very reason. A fourth member of the group was Eudoxe-Irénée Mignot (1842-1917), later Archbishop of Albi (p.19), who always maintained his

49. F. Heiler, Der Vater des katholischen Modernismus: Alfred Loisy, 1857-1940 (1947), quoted in Vidler, op.cit. p.20.

50. Vidler, Catholic Modernists, p.36.

51. Schoof, Breakthrough, p.58.

52. Vidler, op.cit. p.166, quoting a letter from E.J. Dillon to Loisy, 25 Feb. 1908.

53. *ibid.*, p.65.

54. Schoof, op.cit. p.59.

55. In fact Loisy was excommunicated in 1908 whereas Hébert left voluntarily in 1903.

zest for the critical study of the Bible.⁵⁶ He sympathized with Loisy and was a staunch supporter of the Modernists and their ideas though he acted cautiously so as not to scandalize his flock. When Benedict XV became pope in 1914, Mignot sent a memorandum setting out what he considered to be the needs of the Church "of which not the least was a relaxation and correction of the anti-modernist campaign."⁵⁷ There were, of course, other influential members of that particular group⁵⁸ and indeed many other Modernists, most of whom need not be considered here.

Maurice Blondel (1861-1949) is not always considered to be a Modernist⁵⁹ but his influence on some of the Modernists was considerable. He was also an early influence in the Sillon (p.19).

(iv) A movement at the wrong time?

In the aftermath of the Second Vatican Council it is difficult, perhaps, to comprehend the savagery with which the Modernist movement was condemned.⁶⁰ As so often before, the movement represented advanced thinking which the Catholic Church as a whole was not yet prepared to accept. It is conceivable, too, that had the movement come to a head earlier in the reign of Leo XIII, things might have been different. As it was, towards the end, his advisers seemed to be persuading the Pope to go backwards or at least to slow down in his attempt to bring the

56. Vidler, *op.cit.*, p.36.

57. Vidler, *Catholic Modernists*, pp.104-105.

58. One of them was Francis Bourne (1861-1934), later Archbishop of Westminster. Vidler (*op.cit.* p.176) says that he was "much less unsympathetic to the Modernists than some other prelates."

59. Vidler, *op.cit.*, p.79. There is an example of Blondel's influence on the French Catechetical movement in the life of Colomb, one of its principal architects. He was removed from his seminary teaching post because of accusations of being too Blondelian. (Jean Vimort, *Le mouvement catéchétique et l'essor du catholicisme française après 1945*, *Catéchèse* no.80 July 1980, p.18).

60. Schoof (*Breakthrough*, p.48) says that it "was one of the most violent ever pronounced by the Catholic Church." However, the harsh invective employed in the original encyclical letter *Pascendi* was modified in some later editions of Denzinger, large portions being left out altogether. Schoof (*ibid.* p.154, note 46) says that "in the ... new version ... of 1963, there are, of the thirty-four or so pages of the 1913 edition, only about seven left ... and this edition was prepared for publication before the Second Vatican Council."

Many authors nowadays agree on the ineptitude of the handling of the Modernist affair by Pius X.

Church forward to meet the world. With his death in 1903 the last signs of that attempt disappeared. The new Pope, Pius X, gave the matter into the hands of the Holy Office. Vidler feels that the theologians were not given any chance to discuss their developing ideas seriously within the church.⁶¹ Again, the controversy came to the surface at an unfortunate time, that of the final stage of the struggle between Church and State in France, leading to the separation act of 1905 (p.18).

(v) Repression

In 1910 the anti-modernist oath⁶² was imposed on all clergy. Advisory bodies, bound to secrecy, were set up in every diocese. A reign of terror followed, revealing a panic unworthy of the Church of Rome.⁶³ The First World War helped to cool things by providing a different focus of attention. Theological debate was pushed into the background⁶⁴ and by the time it was taken up again other movements had begun to emerge.

(vi) Effect on catechetics

Probably the main way in which the content of catechetics was affected by Modernist ideas was the question of Adam and Eve and original sin. A considerable controversy arose as to when it should be introduced to children, how, or if at all.⁶⁵ The debate continues, but in the different climate created by much new theological thinking and

61. Alec R. Vidler, Twentieth Century Defenders of the Faith (1965), p.37.

62. Vidler, (Catholic Modernists, p.89) mentions Abbé E. Maubec of Rouen as the only priest in France who refused to take the anti-modernist oath, quoting a letter from A. Loisy to F.Cumont, 25 Nov. 1919. This provides another instance of the influence of Modernism on the early French catechetical movement. It was Maubec, as Curé of the parish of St John Eudes, Rouen, who launched Marie Fargues in catechetics, giving her, in 1931, a liberty almost unknown previously. (See Chapter 5, p.110).

63. Alec R. Vidler, The Church in an Age of Revolution (1971), pp.187-188.

64. Schoof, Breakthrough, p.17.

65. The early protagonists in France were Marie Fargues and André Boyer. The matter is touched on again later, (chap.7, p.147) and is dealt with in some detail in many of these authors' works, especially Fargues, How to teach religion (1968), p.47, idem. Introduction des enfants au mystère chrétien, (1955) Vol.2, passim, especially pp.74-75.
Boyer, Mouvement catéchistique français, p.231.

the publication of books such as those of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. The Second Vatican Council and the developments since have in many ways vindicated the ideas of the Modernists.

3. Educational Background

As has been said (p.16), the Third Republic instituted educational reform in a succession of education acts from 1879. For the methods to be adopted France had, in the main, to look outside her frontiers. There was no shortage of ideas for this was a time of ferment in the educational world.

(a) Influence of the German-speaking world

The first half of the nineteenth century was dominated by Herbart and Froebel in Germany and Pestalozzi in Switzerland. It must not be forgotten, however, that the roots of their revolutionary theories and methods lay in the eighteenth century with Jean-Jacques Rousseau.⁶⁶

(b) A French Theorist

Most people would agree that his "influence upon later thinkers was perhaps more far reaching than that of any other writer on education ... In fact, there were but few educational thinkers of the nineteenth century who were not influenced in one way or another by Rousseau."⁶⁷ However, the part played by France in the re-shaping of the educational institutions of Europe in the eighteenth century was quite insignificant."⁶⁸ Nor, indeed, was she to contribute much in the nineteenth century. The German influence already mentioned continued to dominate.

(c) Dewey

The coming of the twentieth century brought an outstanding figure from the United States, John Dewey (1859-1952). He himself acknowledged his debt to his predecessors in Europe but his own ideas may be considered to be the culmination of educational theory.⁶⁹ The first half of the twentieth century had been a period "of fruitful thought

66. Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-78) was born in the city-state of Geneva which was French-speaking. For a time, under Napoleon, it actually formed part of France, from 1803-13.

67. S.J. Curtis and M.E.A. Boulwood, A Short History of Educational Ideas (1965), pp.283-284.

68. William Boyd, The History of Western Education, (1969), p.284.

69. Curtis and Boulwood, Educational Ideas, p.496.

and experiment by a far greater number of skilled educators than any period of the past could boast."⁷⁰ These came from different countries and adapted Dewey's theories to a greater or lesser extent.

(d) Montessori

Following close after Dewey came Maria Montessori (1870-1952) who achieved a universal reputation hardly second to his.⁷¹ Such was the impact of both Dewey and Montessori that their books were soon translated into many languages. Their influence on education was, therefore, quickly felt. However, there was a tendency, especially in the case of Dewey, for their disciples and interpreters in a particular language area to have a disproportionately greater influence.

(e) New Movement in Education

In France names such as Claparède and Bertier would be cited in preference to Nunn or Kilpatrick. Indeed, purveyors of parallel ideas would also be on the syllabus at the training colleges even if their names were hardly known outside their own language area. As examples may be cited the names of Kergomard and Ferrière. All of these educators, in common with Dewey and Montessori and many others formed part of the new movement in education. Their methods were child-centred and activity-based, aided by the rapidly developing science of psychology. They strove "for the liberation of both pupil and teacher from the shackles of outmoded pedagogy."⁷² These influences pervaded the training of nursery and primary school teachers and hence reached the schools.

(f) Influence on the Catechetical Movement of the new methods

As has been said above (p.16), religion was excluded from the state schools but this did not prevent the new methods in education from permeating catechetics. From 1906 some of the more enlightened French clergy were calling publicly for a renewal of catechetical methods (p.61). The private schools were free to teach religion (p.16) and use up-to-date methods.⁷³ Increasingly, trained teachers were becoming involved in catechetical work and seeking to adapt the new

70. *ibid.*

71. *ibid.*

72. *ibid.*

73. Some consideration of the part played by private schools in the catechetical renewal will come in later chapters, especially Chap.5.

methods to the teaching of religion. The two most notable ones were Mme Marie Fargues and Mlle Françoise Derkenne.⁷⁴ Both have left on record the names of the educators who influenced them; they include Dewey, Montessori and Piaget, names too well-known to require further mention here. Other, less well-known names from French-speaking countries are included and are worth some further consideration.⁷⁵ They illustrate two things that have already been mentioned (p.29): a certain parallelism of ideas on the one hand, and an interpretation of ideas on the other. The French-speaking areas involved were France, Belgium and Switzerland.

(g) Some of the French-speaking educators

(i) Kergomard

First in point of time, and as a remarkable pioneer, was a French-woman, Mme Pauline Kergomard (1838-1925).⁷⁶ She took over as Inspector-General of the Infant Schools (Écoles maternelles) in 1879 and for almost forty years worked at their transformation with considerable success. Thirty years before Montessori she put forward similar ideas,⁷⁷ insisting on health and hygiene and freedom of spirit. "The child is at the Infant school to develop its faculties and not to learn [from books]."⁷⁸ Before her time the reverse was true and the learning process imposed from age two to twelve was similar; the system was "a school before being maternal."⁷⁹

74. Their contributions will be considered in Chapter 5.

75. Fargues, (How to teach religion, pp.15 and 18) lists Claparède, Decroly, Binet, Demolins, Ferrière, Cousinet and Simon. In her library are to be found books by Dottrens and Bovet, as well as by Decroly, Simon and Ferrière. There are also many numbers of the periodical Éducation, edited by Georges Bertier and La Nouvelle Éducation, edited by Roger Cousinet.

Jean Vimort, Des Témoins nous parlent de Joseph Colomb: Interview de Françoise Derkenne, Catéchèse no.80 July 1980, p.99. In this interview Derkenne lists the following authors studied at the training college for kindergarten teachers about 1930: Kergomard, Decroly, Montessori, Ferrière, Piaget, Dottrens, Dewey, Freinet.

76. A study of her life and work was published by Derkenne in 1938: Pauline Kergomard et l'éducation nouvelle enfantine.

77. Pauline Kergomard, L'Éducation maternelle dans l'école (1886).

78. Mme Petit-Dutaillis, L'école maternelle française in Congrès international de l'enfance, p.231, quoted in André Boyer, Pédagogie chrétienne, Vol.1: Problèmes et méthodes (1945), pp.138-139.

79. Boyer, Pédagogie chrétienne, p.137.

(ii) Binet and Simon

Another French pioneer, contemporary of Dewey, was Alfred Binet (1857-1911). He was a psychologist and devised the first workable intelligence tests in 1908.⁸⁰ His collaborator was another French psychologist Théodore Simon (1873-1961) who carried on with the work after Binet's death. Dewey knew of the Binet-Simon tests and was to some extent influenced by them.⁸¹

(iii) Decroly and Claparède

Among those following the lines of Dewey's theory, contemporaneously with Montessori, were the Belgian Ovide Decroly (1871-1932) and the Swiss Édouard Claparède (1873-1940). Decroly, like Montessori, was a doctor but from ordinary medical practice went on to work with mental defectives. Unlike Montessori's, his system did not involve elaborate apparatus. He is probably best remembered for developing the Centre of Interest as a teaching method.⁸²

Claparède was one of a group helping to spread Dewey's ideas in Europe in the first decade of the twentieth century.⁸³ He wrote several books on the subject and introduced French translations of Dewey's works. His research into child psychology led him to the study of human intelligence and learning. It led, too, to a meeting with Binet in Paris. He is more likely to be remembered for having founded the Institut Jean-Jacques Rousseau in Geneva in 1912 than for his own research. This Institute was devoted to the study of the new methods of the 'École active'. Probably its most famous pupil, who later became assistant director, was Jean Piaget.

(iv) Ferrière and Bovet

Two of Claparède's collaborators in Geneva were Adolphe Ferrière and Pierre Bovet. Both had been associated with the Institute from its foundation.⁸⁴ They were also associated in the direction of the

80. Curtis and Boulwood, Educational Ideas, p.523.

81. *ibid.*, p.476.

82. Obituary notice, La Nouvelle Éducation no.110 Dec. 1932, p.189.

83. Curtis and Boulwood, *op.cit.*, p.467.

84. Pierre Bovet later became director of the Institut and published an account of its history Vingt ans de vie - l'Institut Jean-Jacques Rousseau de 1912 à 1932 (Neuchâtel: Éditions Delachaux et Niestlé, 1932).

International Bureau of Education at Geneva. Although Bovet is said to have coined the phrase 'École active'⁸⁵ it is Ferrière who is more widely known, both on account of his books and of his other activities. In 1889⁸⁶ he founded the Bureau International des Écoles nouvelles. In 1921 he was one of the founders of the Ligue Internationale pour l'Éducation nouvelle. The following year he founded Pour l'Ère nouvelle, a monthly review of new methods in education which was at the same time 'Organe de la Ligue Internationale pour l'Éducation nouvelle' and 'Bulletin du Bureau international d'Éducation'. All these activities were based on Geneva where he was still teaching at the Institut Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

(v) Dottrens

Another Swiss of a slightly later generation at the Institut was Robert Dottrens. He was a follower of Montessori and devised a method for individualized teaching.⁸⁷

(vi) Demolins and Bertier

There is evidence of direct influence from English educators, particularly in the matter of experimental schools. J.H. Badley had founded Bedales in 1893 as the first coeducational boarding school, run on very different lines from the traditional English public school. He aimed to offer a more balanced school life and asserted that the principles of Froebel and Montessori were of universal application.⁸⁸ These ideas appealed to the Frenchman Edmond Demolins (1852-1907) who founded the École des Roches on similar lines in 1899.⁸⁹ His successor, Georges Bertier (1877-1962), was equally enthusiastic for the new educational methods. He had been one of the group with Claparède (p.31), active in spreading the ideas of Dewey in Europe early in the present century. Two reviews with which Bertier was associated, and which, in 1935 became Éducation, sought to present these ideas to parents in the private sector of education, as well as

85. Boyer, Pédagogie chrétienne, p.184.

86. This date is on the printed letterhead of Ferrière's letter to Fargues 18 April 1928 though Boyer (op.cit., p.185) gives the date as 1899.

87. Germaine Gathelier, Individualized Teaching of the Catechism, Lumen vitae (5) nos.2-3 1950, 394.

88. Curtis and Boulwood, Educational Ideas, pp.516-517.

89. Marie Fargues was on the staff of the school from 1921-30 (see Chap.5, p.108).

to teachers. Among the authors who were regular contributors was Ferrière.

(vii) Cousinet

Another French educator interested in English ideas was Roger Cousinet. He is notable for having developed a method of group-work⁹⁰ which was commended by Dottrens. It was used successfully in secondary schools though originally meant for young children.⁹¹ Cousinet edited a monthly review La Nouvelle Éducation which contained a great deal of material from England.

(viii) Freinet

A rather different, but interesting, method was developed between the two world wars by Célestin Freinet (1896-1966). It purported to develop children's manual dexterity as well as to teach them reading and other educational skills by teaching them typesetting and printing. It was a technique rather than a complete system of education.⁹² It was destined for use even in the infant school, and quite a number of schools took up the method.

(h) Active methods not religious education

Many of these educators will be mentioned in later chapters. The extent of their influence on some of those working in the early catechetical renewal in France can be perceived here and there. However, it must be pointed out that this influence concerned only the adaptations of their active methods made by the pioneers in catechetical method and the systems the latter devised themselves. Except for Montessori who was a Roman Catholic and whose method included religion, and Bertier whose École des Roches included religious teaching, the rest discounted it. While some, like Ferrière, were Christians, others, like Cousinet, Freinet, Claparède and Piaget were unbelievers. There is hardly any mention of religion in La

90. Roger Cousinet, Le Travail par équipes à l'École (Geneva: Bureau International de l'enfance, 1935).

91. Boyer, Pédagogie chrétienne, p.172.

92. *ibid.*, pp.174-175.

Nouvelle Éducation.⁹³ It was fortunate for the Catechetical Movement in France that those in the vanguard were alert and intelligent in making appropriate use of the new ideas.

4. Catechetical Background

(a) Dominance of the catechism

Religious education throughout the western world and in missionary areas at the beginning of the twentieth century was dominated by the catechism. Since Martin Luther's first catechism in question and answer form of 1529,⁹⁴ a continual stream of catechisms both Catholic and Protestant had been produced. The need was felt to guard the purity of doctrine but the means used only led to rigidity and rote learning. Nevertheless in the four centuries following Luther the catechism became the basis for all religious instruction both of children and of adults.

(i) Proliferation of catechisms

Though the early Roman Catholic catechisms such as those of the

93. In the Archives of Marie Fargues at the Institut Catholique in Paris there are some sixty-five numbers of the review Éducation from 1928-42 (p.32). Some contain articles by her or reviews of her books and many are annotated in her hand.

There are also some hundred and fifty numbers of La Nouvelle Éducation from 1923-39 (p.33). Again many of the articles are marked by Fargues and it is interesting to note where she must have obtained ideas for articles and also contributed her own. For instance she published at least three articles on children's games. The first in Éducation (15) no.4 Jan. 1924, pp.193-215 was referred to in La Nouvelle Éducation no.23 Mar. 1924, p.29. An article in the latter review published the following year gave Fargues fresh ideas for her subsequent articles in Catéchisme paroissial et liturgique (14) no.8 10-17 Apr. 1932 and Cahiers catéchistiques no.31 Oct.1935, pp.1-6. The two latter articles, however, were specifically religious.

Fargues' vigilance in the question of religion is illustrated by her marginal comment on an article in La Nouvelle Éducation no.86 June 1930 pp.95-99 by L.Luzuriaga on Les méthodes de l'éducation nouvelle, where the author wrote of the noble attributes of the human race: honour, enjoyment of beauty, desire of perfection, neglected in traditional education. Fargues noted simply "et l'éducation chrétienne?"

94. Luther was not the first to write a catechism, but the invention of printing in the previous century caused it to be the first to receive wide dissemination. (See Guy de Bretagne OMI., History of the Textbook, Lumen vitae (5) no.4 1950, 470).

Council of Trent, Peter Canisius and Robert Bellarmine were widely used, it was not long before each diocese wanted its own. This led to certain abuses such as the infiltration of Jansenism and Gallicanism (pp.20-23).

(ii) Deharbe

In 1847 a new catechism was brought out in Austria by Fr Joseph Deharbe SJ.⁹⁵ This was very successful, being translated into fifteen languages and becoming the model for many other catechisms including many of the later French ones.⁹⁶ Deharbe's Catechism marked a reaction against previous catechisms with its systematic plan and theologically scientific formulation which conserved the purity of doctrine and guaranteed against error.⁹⁷ There was no adaptation of language and no concession made to the principles of psychology and method. Thus the book took over the principal role from the teacher. Reduced from the ample dimensions of that of the Council of Trent, the catechism had become "the small book of elementary theology upon which is based the task of teaching religion."⁹⁸ Moreover it was the starting-point rather than the point of arrival.⁹⁹

(iii) First moves towards uniformity

Though this book-based method of catechesis might suggest simplicity and uniformity, it was only possible within one diocese in France. If either catechist or pupil moved elsewhere, they were likely to be faced with a different catechism with substantially different

95. Germain (Langages de la foi, p.175) says that "with only slight modification, it became the first German National Catechism in 1924". It is noteworthy that it changed the traditional order used in the Catechism of the Council of Trent:- Dogma, Morals, Sacraments, to Dogma, Sacraments, Morals.

96. By 1900, sixty-one of the eighty bishops of France had at least agreed to accept Deharbe's order. (ibid. p.173). Some idea of the plethora of manuals in existence can be gained from a report of 1896 quoted by this author, in which it is estimated that twelve to fifteen hundred catechisms have been published in France over the centuries. (ibid. p.204). Six are listed on p.236. Nineteen others are listed in Claude Billard et Pierre Guibbert, Le petit catéchisme illustré ou la fin d'un mythe (1977), pp.244-246.

97. Pierre Ranwez SJ., Aspects contemporains de la pastorale de l'enfance (1950), p.91.

98. de Bretagne, History of the Textbook, Lumen vitae (5) no.4 1950, 470.

99. idem, History of the Catechesis, Lumen vitae (5) nos.2-3 1950, 368.

wording.¹⁰⁰ In 1870 the First Vatican Council had voted for a single catechism for the whole Catholic Church and many French bishops had supported the motion. It was not till 1914, however, that the first step was taken when Cardinal Amette, Archbishop of Paris (p.25), published one for his diocese. In the next ten years this was adopted by twenty other French dioceses.¹⁰¹

(b) Catechetical Methods

The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries saw the coming of parish-based catechetical instruction.¹⁰² Progressive dechristianisation meant that the family no longer fulfilled its role and by the end of the period, schools were forbidden to teach religion (pp.16). Not surprisingly the quality of the instruction varied greatly from the fervent discourses of the Curé d'Ars¹⁰³ to the barest explanation and endless recitation of the catechism in some other parishes. Fortunately it had long been recognized that a method was needed if the catechism was to mean more than a mere set of formulae to be learnt.

(i) Method of St Sulpice

The most influential of the various methods and one which lasted well into the twentieth century was that of St Sulpice. Fargues' description of the method in use in 1935¹⁰⁴ is little different from that of M. Faillon in 1832.¹⁰⁵ It utilized certain golden rules of pedagogy in that the children were adequately supervised, they knew what to do, they were kept occupied all the time and the occupation was varied. The two-hour catechism sessions involved recitation of the

100. Billard and Guibert (Le Petit Catéchisme Illustré, pp.246-247) list ten different diocesan catechisms published between 1907 and 1934 but there were many more. They are all dull little books, mostly unrelieved by pictures, though a large Catéchisme en images was published in Paris in 1908 as a companion volume. The pictures were black and white engravings, some fairly horrifying.

101. It was only in 1937 that the first Unified Catechism for the whole of France was produced. This subject is treated in Chapter 9.

102. de Bretagne, History of the Catechesis, p.368.

103. Jean-Baptiste-Marie Vianney (1786-1859) Curé d'Ars, a village not far from Lyons. He was renowned for his holiness, his preaching and his extraordinary ability to give spiritual help and comfort.

104. Fargues, How to teach religion, p.8.

105. M. Faillon, La Methode de Saint-Sulpice dans la direction des catéchismes (Paris: Meyer 1832) summarized in Germain, Langages de la Foi, pp.157-159.

previous lesson, explanation of the next, study and learning of part of the gospel and a homily on the gospel, all interspersed with hymn-singing and prayers. There was one priest in charge of the session but he would be assisted by several seminarians¹⁰⁶ and, since the end of the nineteenth century, by a number of woman catechists.¹⁰⁷ Upwards of two hundred children might be involved but they were split into smaller groups for parts of the session.

(ii) The Patronage - a support

To supplement the deficiencies of home and school, and to keep children off the streets, especially on Sundays,¹⁰⁸ a work called the 'Patronage' was founded in 1851. It had two main elements: recreation and religious formation, in which the aim was more to create and maintain a Christian atmosphere rather than actual religious instruction. It envisaged the creation of a new milieu to protect children from their own, recognizing that the home could have a harmful influence.¹⁰⁹ The Patronages were really a forerunner of our modern youth clubs and were generally run on a parish basis. Unfortunately a counter attraction was sometimes provided by the generally better facilities of the municipal establishments. Nevertheless they fulfilled a useful supporting role for the catechetical work of the

106. The method takes its name from the largest parish in Paris, now divided into nine. It originated with Jean-Jacques Olier (1608-57) who became parish priest in 1642. He subdivided the parish and organized the catechism classes. He founded the famous seminary of the same name, still one of the most prestigious in France and even internationally, whence emerged a steady stream of priests versed in his methods. Although the Council of Trent (1545-63) had called for the foundation of seminaries for the training of priests, none had as yet been founded in France.

The priests of St Sulpice form a congregation similar to that of the Oratory of St Philip Neri. One of their members himself founded a religious order and was one of the most remarkable French educators of the seventeenth century: St John Baptist de la Salle (1651-1719). He founded the Brothers of the Christian Schools in 1684 to provide free education for the poor. The method of St Sulpice provided much of the inspiration for the religious instruction given in their schools. (See Chapter 3, p.64).

Another priest of St Sulpice who played a very important part in the Catechetical Renewal Movement in France was Joseph Colomb (1902-79), (see Introduction p.12).

107. See Chapter 2.

108. Ranwez, Pastorale de l'enfance, p.81.

109. Jean Pihan, Religious Formation in Youth Movements and those for children, Lumen vitae (5) nos.2-3 1950, 438.

parish clergy and their assistants.

(iii) Munich Method

A more recent method for teaching religion came from Germany. It has become known as the Munich method since it originated at a congress held in that city in 1898. A group of German priest catechists met to consider ways of changing the catechetical methods then in use.¹¹⁰ They realised their inefficacy and they were also aware of the conclusions of Johann Friedrich Herbart (1776-1841) and their influence on secular education. They worked on the method over a long period and gradually brought about a change to more active methods. They also saw the need for the special training of catechists.¹¹¹ Boyer gives the movement what may perhaps be an exaggerated importance when he says "it is at the origin of the catechetical movement of this century. Most of the progress realized in the last forty years [he was writing in 1944] started from one or other of its suggestions."¹¹²

This view may be questioned. In the first place it has been shown above (pp.28-29) that Dewey and Montessori and their French-speaking disciples had more direct influence on French education and on the pioneers of the early French catechetical renewal (with the possible exception of Quinet¹¹³) than the Germans did. The more influential catechists such as Fargues and Derkenne do not mention it among influences on their thinking. It can equally well be argued that the French catechetical renewal ran parallel to the German. It will probably never be proved one way or the other though it does seem as if the Munich Movement was the first to attempt to apply the new pedagogical methods to the teaching of religion; a view supported by Gilbert Adler. Speaking of the Activity Method he said, "This renewal touched the teaching of the catechism in Germany (Munich), then in Belgium and in France."¹¹⁴ A final point can be made that religious

110. Boyer Pédagogie chrétienne, p.188.

111. de Bretagne, History of the Catechesis, p.368.

112. Boyer, op.cit., p.191.

113. Quinet's first book was published in 1910, well ahead of all others in France except that of the Christian Brothers (p.37). The latter was strongly influenced by the Sulpician method though Boyer also sees influence from Munich. (See also Chapter 3, pp.64-66).

114. Gilbert Adler, Joseph Colomb, un mouvement, un homme, un héritage, Catéchèse no.80 July 1980, p.30.

education in Germany is school-based whereas in France it is parish-based.¹¹⁵

Conclusion

At the beginning of the present century the catechetical scene remained much as it had been for centuries where "the teaching of religion and religious awareness had become transposed from the truly religious level to that of dogma and morals. Christianity appeared as a collection of doctrines, commandments and laws, rather than the Good News of the Kingdom of God and his Coming."¹¹⁶ It would be the work of the early pioneers of the French Catechetical Movement to change that image. It would be an uphill task not only against the pervading climate of religious indifference, but also censure from Rome. The means were there in the new methods of education and so were the people of vision and ability to apply those means to a timeless Message, that of the Gospel.

115. Interviews with Derkenne and others concerned in the Movement where the question of influence from Munich was specifically put elicited a negative response.

116. Franz Arnold, Revival in dogmatic preaching and catechesis, Lumen vitae (3) no.3 1948, 506.

II

A RESPONSE TO A NEED 1884-1948

The era of education for all inaugurated in France by the Education Act of 1882 brought about certain immediate changes in the teaching of religion. These were not changes in method nor, fundamentally, changes in organization. They concerned rather the greater involvement of the laity, particularly women, in what had previously been largely the affair of the clergy and religious orders. The initiative of two women in Paris brought about the foundation of an association of Women Catechists called the 'Oeuvre des Catéchismes'.¹ This preceded by twenty-one years the call of Pope Pius X for a similar organization to be set up in all dioceses throughout the Roman Catholic Church.²

It is possible to dismiss the work of the Association as having no relevance to the Catechetical renewal movement. The members in the early days were amateurs concerned with maintaining the status quo of catechetical methodology. Later their ranks were joined by women such as Mme Marie Fargues whose contributions to the renewal movement were of immense importance.³ It will also be seen that there was increasing emphasis on the training of the women catechists.⁴

1. The first lady catechists

Very soon after the passing of the Education act a number of young women of both the upper and working classes offered themselves individually to parish-priests as helpers in the catechism classes.⁵

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1. The history of the movement is set out in an unpublished document written by the last secretary-general, Mlle Marcelle Chanon, in 1972, from which much of the material of this chapter is taken. 'Si Varenne m'était conté... survol de l'histoire de l'archiconfrérie de l'oeuvre des Catéchismes 1884-1948', Archives of the Archiconfrérie de l'Oeuvre des Catéchismes, Centre national de l'enseignement religieux, Paris.
 2. Pius X, Acerbo Nimis, Encyclical letter of 15 Apr. 1905.
 3. See Chapters 5 and 7 passim.
 4. Chanon, 'Si Varenne m'était conté' p.2.
 5. Henri Odelin, 'Rapport présenté a l'Assemblée générale du Congrès National Catholique, 2 Dec. 1897' in oeuvre des Catéchismes, Comptes Rendus 1886-1907 (1907), p.7.

Two in particular were to become the foundation stones of the organization, Mlles Marguerite Sorin de Bonne and Aubineau. They had offered themselves to Mgr Maurice d'Hulst,⁶ who sent them into the parish of Ste Marguerite in 1884 where they were given charge of two hundred little boys.⁷ Later they extended their work to another parish and brought in other helpers. D'Hulst asked Sorin de Bonne if that did not satisfy her, but she replied that she would not be satisfied until provision was made for catechizing all the state-school children of Paris. She said she knew many young women who wished to help, so she sought them out. The following year a small association was formed.

2. Oeuvre des Catéchismes

In 1886 the Confraternity of the Oeuvre des Catéchismes was officially constituted and a rule was drawn up for the guidance of members. It received the approval of the Cardinal Archbishop of Paris. Its first president was the wife of a former President of France⁸ and Sorin de Bonne became secretary-general. Two general meetings were held annually, initially at the Cenacle Convent. After the expulsion of the religious orders in 1901, the Confraternity opened its own headquarters in Paris.⁹ Meanwhile it had spread rapidly in Paris and the suburbs and within ten years was established in several other dioceses.¹⁰ As a consequence, in 1893 Pope Leo XIII elevated the

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6. Maurice d'Hulst (1841-96) was a remarkable churchman whose greatest work was the foundation of the Catholic University of Paris (Institut Catholique) in 1876. (See also Chapter 1. p.25).
7. Henri Odelin, 'Vue d'ensemble. Le Passé - Le Présent' in Archiconfrérie de l'Oeuvre des Catéchismes, Compte Rendu du deuxième Congrès National (1912), p.7.
8. Madame de MacMahon, whose husband le Maréchal de MacMahon was President of France from 1873 to 1879. See also Chapter 1, p.18.
9. The house at 19 rue de Varenne belonged to Mlle Heitz, a catechist who later became assistant to, and then succeeded Sorin de Bonne.
10. The following statistics give some idea of the rapidity with which the Oeuvre des Catéchismes spread:

Year	Paris parishes	Suburban parishes	Other dioceses	Paris Women catechists	Paris children catechized
1889	30	8	-	653	9,516
1895	48	21	5?	1,852	19,693
1901	60	43	17	2,613	27,330

The sources of these figures are Chanon, 'Si Varenne m'était conté' passim. Comptes Rendus 1886-1907, passim. The Paris statistics seem to be reliable but those of other dioceses appear to be incomplete and there is disagreement between the sources.

Confraternity to the status of Archconfraternity.¹¹ At its peak, in 1914, some five thousand catechists were catechizing fifty-one thousand children in Paris and the suburbs so that Sorin de Bonne's dream went at least some way towards fulfilment.

3. Auxiliaries of the Parish Clergy

Evaluation of the success of the movement by statistics alone would be misleading without considering its role both in the preservation of the status quo and beyond. In the previous chapter it was seen that the catechism was already parish, rather than school, based. Although belonging to a central organization, the Archconfraternity, the women auxiliary catechists were entirely under the control of the parish priests for their work.¹² The only change brought about, therefore, was that the priests had help which they badly needed since they were no longer able to go freely into schools. They also had to confine their catechetical activities to certain days and times.

(a) Répétitrices

It has been shown, too, that the mainstay of catechetical method had long been the catechism which had to be learnt by heart. Hearing the answers of hundreds of children was a time-consuming business and it was here that the auxiliary catechists could render immediate service to the parish clergy.¹³ This could, of course, have been done by anyone and indeed there are many instances of parish priests making

11. This new status did not confer any authority on Paris. It must be stressed that the terms Confraternity and Archconfraternity signify only a spiritual association for the mutual benefit of members. The fact that Paris really had very little say in the affairs of other dioceses, many of which conducted them independently, may account in part for the unreliability of statistics outside Paris.

12. "The catechists shall consider themselves as humble helpers of the clergy and shall recognise their duly established authority..." (Conseils aux Catéchistes volontaires, 7th.edition undated, probably 1920, pp.12-13). The booklet was first published in 1895 as Conseils aux Dames Catéchistes.

13. "The lady catechists must make the children learn and recite the exact words of the catechism... They will explain clearly and briefly the meaning of words ... they must not give doctrinal explanations which are reserved to the priests in charge." (Réglement de l'Oeuvre des Catéchistes volontaires de La Rochelle (1895), p.8) Though circumstances might vary, ideally each catechist was in charge of a group of five or six children.

use of helpers who were not members of the Archconfraternity.¹⁴ The latter, however, provided an organization for recruitment as well as disposition of classes as set out in the Conseils aux Dames Catéchistes. The booklet contained much other good advice on the maintenance of discipline, keeping of registers, visits to parents, even on what to wear.

(b) Christian Witness

There was a second aspect of the role of the women auxiliary catechists which was of greater significance and which nowadays would be called Christian witness.¹⁵ In 1895 d'Hulst wrote "There must be volunteers who will bring in those to be instructed and make up to them what is lacking in their family life."¹⁶ This was taken up elsewhere in the booklet, "Catechists should help in the children's religious formation in seeking to impress upon them the fear and love of God."¹⁷ In connection with visits to families, "... they will work to extend the reign of God in families by trying to bring back to a Christian life those members who have given it up ... They will do what they can for abandoned and sick children ..."¹⁸ They were encouraged, too, to co-operate with the work of the 'Patronages' (p.37) and to get the children to spend their free time there.¹⁹

(c) Disagreement among the clergy

That there was often conflict in the two aspects of the role of

14. For example, Mlle Françoise Derkenne was one such, (see Chapter 5, p.120). Boyer complained that the Archconfraternity was not well-known, even to priests. (See letter to Paul Lieutier 26 Dec. 1936, File 20, Archives of André Boyer, Pastorale Catéchétique, Maison diocésaine, Dijon).

15. Franz Arnold, Revival in dogmatic Preaching and Catechesis, Lumen vitae (3) no.3 1948, 517. "The role played by the catechist is far more important than that of the catechism ... the word of God ... is not the mechanical reproduction of the biblical text, ... it is ... as reproduced by that of man. It is a witness. Now one can only bear witness to what one has seen and lived. The catechist ... must have seen and lived Christ. The Good News overflows from their soul into another's."

16. Conseils aux Catéchistes volontaires, p.5, Preface of Mgr d'Hulst.

17. Conseils aux Catéchistes volontaires, p.24.

18. *ibid.* p.28.

19. Conseils aux Catéchistes volontaires, p.26. On the following pages it goes even further: 'Il serait à désirer que les Dames Catéchistes puissent établir des leçons de couture pendant les vacances, là où il n'y a pas de patronage afin de continuer leur action sur leurs petites filles des Catéchismes.'

the woman catechist was brought out by a remark made by Sorin de Bonne after a rather patronizing talk by a priest. "There are parishes where we are not expected to be 'mother' but merely 'repeater'".²⁰ It seems there is a choice between the two. One could classify the parishes on the role they expect of the lady catechists." Proof of the good influence exercised by many of the catechists on their charges can be found in the touching letters they received from them when they were grown-up and soldiers at the front.²¹

(d) Devotedness without stint

They were not only treated rather patronizingly by many of the clergy but also ridiculed.²² The devotedness of these women cannot be denied if their effectiveness from the pedagogical viewpoint was limited.²³ They were, for the most part, from the rich upper classes and their willingness to give time to catechizing hordes of rough and often dirty little Parisians presupposed a strong constitution as well as firm convictions.

4. Related Activities

The catechists were expected to escort their charges to Sunday Mass²⁴ and to the Sacraments, as well as to the catechism class during the week.

20. Abbé Cretin, Qualités et Attributions de la Dame Catéchiste, Le Catéchiste no.10 July 1920, p.314. The French word 'répétitrice' means someone who makes others repeat words by heart and is not really translated properly by 'repeater'. The word is only used here for convenience.

21. Such letters are cited in several numbers of the small review that was circulated during the war to keep the women-catechists in touch, Petite Correspondance de l'Oeuvre en Temps de Guerre. For example no.1 Jan. 1915, pp.4-6, no.3 July 1915. Several men wrote saying they remembered their catechist and continued to practice their religion at the front. Also Le Catéchiste no.10 July 1920, p.280, where there are letters in which the men use even more touching expressions: ma chère bienfaitrice, ma chère maman, mère chérie.

In the same number of the review, pp.298-299, Sorin de Bonne spoke of how many catechists had enrolled in the Red Cross, some even leaving their families and going to the front, to be able to help the soldiers spiritually. She recounted several instances of their meeting their own former 'boys'.

22. Abbé Loutil, 'Ce que la Dame Catéchiste ne doit pas être' in Compte rendu du deuxième Congrès National, pp.187-202. In this often amusing article some of the different types of catechist are caricatured, sometimes disparagingly.

23. Boyer, Mouvement catéchistique français, p.27.

24. Conseils aux Catéchistes volontaires. pp.25,23.

(a) Family visits

As has already been mentioned, they were expected to visit the families and encourage them to send their children to catechism.²⁵ This was considered especially important for the younger children for whom catechism was not obligatory.²⁶

(b) Fairground people

Members of the Archconfraternity extended its work wherever a need presented itself. For instance, in 1888 a priest began the instruction of fairground people in Rouen.²⁷ This was soon taken up by the lady catechists and a network of centres was organized where the children could be instructed in the short time the caravans remained in one place. Careful organization was needed to prevent abuses such as making the First Communion twice, for the sake of the good breakfast provided by the ladies.

(c) Bargees' children

Another group catered for, though less successfully, were the bargees.²⁸ They were an even more rapidly itinerant group and often the children only had four or five days instruction before First Communion.

(d) Children with special needs

Backward children were not forgotten, nor were those in

25. *ibid.*, pp.28-9. A whole chapter of the booklet is devoted to 'The Duties of those voluntary catechists who are able to visit the parents'.

26. The catechists "are concerned with two categories of children, those of the two years of preparation for First Communion, (compulsory). For the younger children of six to ten years of age, it is important that they receive a Christian initiation to make up for families that are negligent, or incapable of providing it." (Henri Odelin, 'Rapport présenté à l'Assemblée générale du Congrès National Catholique, 2 Dec. 1897' in Comptes rendus 1886-1907, p.9).

27. Mlle de Blangermont, 'Le Catéchisme des Forains, in Compte rendu du deuxième Congrès national, pp.205-213. This work continued for many years and was mentioned several times in Le Catéchiste. There is a particularly detailed account in no.6 May 1924, pp.184-186.

28. Abbé Delbos, 'Le Catéchisme des Mariniers', *ibid.*, pp.214-226. The lady catechists were less successful in this work as they were apparently not accepted by the boat people. However, nuns were acceptable and so carried on the work.

exceptional conditions such as ragpickers' children.²⁹ They were sought out and given special help with their catechism by the devoted lady catechists.

(e) Prison-visiting

Finally will be mentioned one way in which former pupils who had transgressed were followed up. When it was possible, catechists would visit them in prison. One account speaks of an apostolate extending to families of prisoners and warders.³⁰

5. Training for women catechists

As mentioned above (p.40) there was emphasis on the training of catechists at an early stage.

(a) Examinations and courses

In 1900, religious examinations³¹ were established in the private schools.³² Their organization was confided to the Archconfraternity, most of whose members had been educated at those schools. These examinations were very elementary in nature but they at least meant that the catechists themselves knew the catechism. As time went on, slightly more advanced examinations were introduced and all young catechists were encouraged to take them if they had not already done so before leaving school. To this end courses were arranged³³ and there were general lectures available to all catechists. They were recommended to spend some time in the holidays in further study of the catechism, lives of the saints and other books that would help them in their work.³⁴

29. Conseils aux Catéchistes volontaires, p.27.

30. Le Catéchisme à la Prison, Le Catéchiste no.5 Apr-May 1930, pp.161-164.

31. Chanon, 'Si Varenne m'était conté', p.4.

32. See Chapter 1 p.16. Also Chap.3, pp.64-66, and Chap.5, passim, especially p.102, for some discussion of the role of the private schools in the catechetical renewal.

33. Conseils aux Catéchistes volontaires, pp.33-34.

The elementary examination comprised catechism, scripture and ethics. The advanced examination added liturgy and Church history to the above. Not before 1930 was there any attempt to introduce teaching method and even then the courses were very limited in scope. (See Chanon, 'Si Varenne m'était conté', Annexe III). It was only when Marie Fargues started her Method lectures in 1941 that any serious attempt was made to impart teaching skills, (see Chap.5, p.117).

34. *ibid.*, p.41.

(b) Reviews and books

A succession of catechetical reviews³⁵ was produced which catechists were encouraged to subscribe to and read.³⁶ These contained stories and anecdotes that could be used, as well as useful articles on scripture and other subjects. Eventually a library of books and other resources were organized at the headquarters of the Archconfraternity and much later, a bookshop.³⁷

(c) Ambivalent attitude of the clergy

From the early days of the Archconfraternity, teachers in the private schools had been encouraged to become catechists.³⁸ By the mid-1920s, with better courses and books available, a considerable number of the women catechists were capable of taking on much more of the actual teaching of doctrine. The attitude of the clergy, however, remained ambivalent. Some made considerable use of their helpers and gave them additional training.³⁹ Others would do no more than let them hear the children's catechism. The situation is perhaps best summed up in the following extracts from articles in catechetical reviews. The first is the Archbishop of Rouen writing in 1926: "In what concerns the voluntary catechists let us never only let them hear the catechism."⁴⁰ The second is Archbishop Lamy of Sens in 1939: "One should make use of catechists for supervision and recitation ALWAYS
One should make use of catechists for summary explanations OFTEN
One should make use of catechists for training in piety OFTEN
One should leave them complete independence NEVER
One should leave them relative independence SOMETIMES"⁴¹

35. Chanon, op.cit., Annexe II. The reviews were:

La Voix du Bon Catéchiste (1904-1914)

Petite Correspondance de l'Oeuvre en temps de Guerre (1915-1919)

Le Catéchiste (1919-1932)

Les Cahiers catéchistiques (1932-1939)

Some of these are referred to again in later chapters, especially Chap.5, passim, especially p.12.

36. Conseils aux Catéchistes volontaires, p.12.

37. Chanon, 'Si Varenne m'était conté', p.7.

38. Conseils aux Catéchistes volontaires, p.30.

39. There are notable examples of this, such as Marie Fargues, (see Chap.5, especially p.110).

40. Archbishop of Rouen, Le Catéchiste 8e année no.4 May-June 1927, p.113.

41. Archbishop Lamy of Sens, Cahiers catéchistiques no.69 June 1939, p.651.

6. Related Movements

(a) Societies of Catechists

Loutil's article (note 22), even though a caricature, contains elements of truth. It must be said that some of the lady catechists engaged in the work from superficial and worldly motives. They wished to enhance their good name in society by being seen to be engaged in charitable activities. Others, especially the younger ones, inevitably had family commitments, and were not always able to give as full a service to the work as they would have liked. However, the zeal of Marguerite Sorin de Bonne, Heitz and others would be satisfied with nothing less than total commitment to the Oeuvre des Catéchismes. To this end Sorin de Bonne with d'Hulst founded the Société des Catéchistes de Jésus, filles de St François Régis in 1894.⁴² Its members were wholly dedicated to catechetical work in what was really a form of religious congregation.⁴³ Thus they were able to staff the rapidly increasing secretariat and other activities of the Oeuvre.⁴⁴ Among the other Societies of Catechists modelled on this was one founded in the diocese of Cambrai (later Lille) in 1913, also by

42. This was the first of many similar societies, mostly based in different dioceses, which would arise for similar reasons, and which would be modelled on it. The one founded at Dijon is discussed in Chap.4, pp.89-93, and that at Saint-Dié in Chap.5, p.99. There had been a precedent in the Institution de Filles de l'Instruction or Béates, founded in the diocese of Le Puy in 1668. They were also nurses and child-minders and did much to keep alive the faith in the villages. They were expelled in 1901 with the other religious orders.

43. In legal terms these societies would today be called Secular Institutes. The members make solemn promises (not vows) of celibacy; total dedication to the service of God in works of charity or apostolate under the command of superiors; and poverty comprising a defined and restricted use of temporal goods. They have a rule but no community life though there is a central organization. At the time the Société des Catéchistes de Jésus was founded, most of the above was not clearly laid down but existed in fact as can be seen in the Rules 1933 edition (Archives of André Boyer, File 21). They lived in their own families and on their own financial resources.

44. In February 1924 Cardinal Dubois, Archbishop of Paris, actually laid down that the Secretary-General of the Oeuvre des Catéchismes must be a member of the Society, unless it was absolutely impossible. (Chanon, 'Si Varenne m'était conté', p.6) The three Secretaries-General were Mlles Sorin de Bonne, Heitz and Chanon and were all members of the Society.

Sorin de Bonne. The two later amalgamated.⁴⁵

(b) Men Catechists

From the earliest days of the foundation of the Archconfraternity men had worked side by side with women in the parish catechisms.⁴⁶ In 1887 they are mentioned for the first time in the statistics and in that same year they formed their own committee.⁴⁷ The Secretary-General's report for 1908 says they are appreciated for "difficult children, apprentices and adults."⁴⁸ It was not until 1917 that a separate organization for men was started by Gaston Prouvé-Drouhot.⁴⁹ By 1918 it was known as the Oeuvre des Hommes-Catéchistes and an organization had been set up. Prouvé-Drouhot was joined by a number of others, among them René Bellais. They were followed by students from the Polytechnics. In 1923 Bellais took in hand the practical organization of the movement, sending the men out in groups or 'Escouades' to the parishes.⁵⁰ He edited a bulletin, L'Homme-Catéchiste.

In the view of the founder, the men-catechists could most usefully work with teenage boys.⁵¹ He envisaged organization of games for them

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45. Rules of the Société des Catéchistes de Jésus (1933), p.4. Archives of André Boyer, File 21. The members of the Lille group were called the Servantes de Jésus but on the amalgamation in 1933 the new Society became the Catéchistes-Servantes de Jésus.
46. Gaston Prouvé-Drouhot, Les Catéchistes hommes, Le Catéchiste no.10 July 1920, p.297.
47. Comptes rendus 1886-1907. The report for 25 August 1887 with statistics for Paris simply says "some men". Succeeding Annual Reports are more specific and also show an increase in numbers:
- | | |
|------|---------|
| 1889 | 8 men |
| 1892 | 19 men |
| 1896 | 24 men. |
48. Marguerite Sorin de Bonne, 'Rapport sur l'extension de l'Oeuvre des Catéchismes' in Archiconfrérie de l'Oeuvre des Catéchismes, Compte rendu du premier Congrès national (1908), p.758.
49. There is some disagreement among sources as to the exact date. The factual account given in L'Homme-Catéchiste Oct.-Dec. 1946 is followed here, though Chanon, op.cit., p.5 gives 1918 as the year of foundation. Prouvé-Drouhot's biographer, Canon Chapeau, gives 1916. (Chanoine Chapeau, 'Monsieur Prouvé Drouot [sic], Fondateur de l'Oeuvre des Hommes catéchistes' [1938], private papers of Mme Jacqueline Tassin, Paris).
50. Encyclopédie Catholicisme hier, aujourd'hui, demain, s.v. 'Équipes-catéchistes', by G. Jacquemet.
The name 'Escouades d'Hommes - Catéchistes' by which they were first known was changed in 1949 to 'Équipes-Catéchistes'.
51. Prouvé-Drouhot, loc.cit.

as well as religious instruction. The men catechists were never very numerous, being at a maximum of four hundred in 1939, though they did spread into other dioceses in small numbers. Their book of rules appeared in 1937⁵² and was obviously based on the Conseils aux Catéchistes volontaires.⁵³

In the year of Prouvé-Drouhot's death, 1937, a group of young men formed a community with the intention of devoting themselves wholly to their work as auxiliary catechists.⁵⁴ It followed on similar lines to the Catéchistes-Servantes de Jésus. However it never became very large and disappeared temporarily in 1939 with the war. Bellais died that same year though the work of catechetics was carried on and maintained throughout the war and after.

(c) FCTP

(i) Christian Nurture

The aspect of Christian nurture had from the beginning formed an important part of the apostolate of the voluntary catechists. In 1933 a work was founded which had this as its principal aim. It was not at first part of the Archconfraternity but later became so, which is why it is mentioned here. The 'Formation Chrétienne des Tout-Petits' or FCTP⁵⁵ was founded by Mme C. Louise Damez in the parish of St Pierre de Neuilly. It aimed at trying to create a religious atmosphere for the child, often lacking at home and school.⁵⁶ "Ladies and young women (called, picturesquely, 'Mamans d'âme') went to the homes of the poor on Thursdays to collect five or six children each and

52. Manuel à l'Usage des Hommes-Catéchistes. The text was published in three parts in L'Homme-Catéchiste Nov. 1937, Feb. 1938 and Mar. 1938.

53. In 1934 a new brochure for the fiftieth anniversary of the Oeuvre des Catéchismes was brought out. It mentions the masculine and feminine branches and their organization and goes on to state categorically on p.8: "It is the priest who teaches. Women and men catechists are only there to repeat the lesson already given." (Archiconfrérie de l'Oeuvre des Catéchismes, extrait des Cahiers d'Action religieuse et Sociale 15 May 1934. Published fortnightly by Action Populaire).

54. Paul Lieutier, Des Hommes Catéchistes, Auxiliaires du Clergé (1938), 8 page booklet, passim.

55. Not to be confused with the book of a similar name published ten years earlier by M.M.d'Aubigny, (see Chapter 5, p.118).

56. Georges Delcuve SJ., ed., Où en est l'enseignement religieux? (1937), p.4.

bring them to the centre. There they spent the afternoon usefully and pleasantly occupied." There would be a short lesson, talk about the lesson, singing and manual activities.⁵⁷ The foundress set out her ideas in various publications: "The FCTP is neither catholic kindergarten nor religious École nouvelle. Essentially apostolic, it is concerned in a practical way with religion. That is why it is open to little children from four years old up to eight, in view of the religious deprivation of so many of them."⁵⁸ The work spread in Paris and in other dioceses and was extended to the training of parents through clubs and lectures in parishes.⁵⁹ Excellent in conception there soon arose cause for concern and criticism both from within and without. The movement had its own section in Cahiers catéchistiques and a succession of articles caused Boyer to exclaim in a letter on "the flow of stupidities coming from the FCTP ... such as will serve to discredit the review."⁶⁰

(ii) Confusion and Ignorance

In spite of the assertions of Damez above, a teaching method for the FCTP was published in 1938.⁶¹ In his appraisal of this in Pédagogie chrétienne, Boyer sets out a reasoned and mostly fair criticism.⁶² Damez' later publication did not cause him to change his views.⁶³ While praising the idea and the teaching material produced, his criticisms could be summed up in two words: Confusion and ignorance. These apply to the pedagogical, psychological and theological aspects of the method leading to an overcharged programme for the very young children. Further, there is no clear distinction between the ages, in particular the age of reason, and little attention is paid to the psychology of child development. He quotes several

57. Encyclopédie Catholicisme, s.v. 'Formation Chrétienne des Tout-Petits' by M.P. Sève.

58. [Cécile Louise Damez], 'Le vrai visage de la FCTP' [1945], Notes p.1, note 1, Archives of André Boyer, File 21.

59. Stanislas de Lestapis SJ., Catechetical training of the parents, Lumen vitae (1) no.3 1946, 579.

60. André Boyer to Paul Lieutier, 5 June 1937, Archives of André Boyer, File 20 Paris I Correspondence et Documents.

61. FCTP, Plans d'enseignement, méthode fondée sur la vie intérieure centrée sur la Messe, concretisée par le chant, les travaux manuels (1938).

62. Boyer, Pédagogie chrétienne, pp.277-279.

63. Cécile Louise Damez, Comment faire jaillir la vie (1946).

examples of inconsistencies arising from muddled thinking.⁶⁴

(iii) More criticisms from without and within

Marie Fargues, too, had misgivings about the method from the psychological and pedagogical viewpoints, while finding the conception excellent. "It was a movement, excellent in itself, to free from the textbook those less than seven years old and to form them to a spirit of prayer. Nevertheless one of its essential parts was a programme of teaching ... that was too extensive and too abstract ..." ⁶⁵ She had expressed this and much more in a long letter to Mme Damez, in particular pointing out the need for collaboration between the FCTP and the catechists who would take on the children at the next stage. ⁶⁶

Damez, it seems, persisted stubbornly in her views. She hit back at Boyer's criticisms by suggesting that if he visited one of the sessions of the movement he would find out how much good it was doing. ⁶⁷ To Fargues "...she insisted, They [the children] understand." ⁶⁸ Her helpers had their own fears. In a letter to Fargues in 1945 one of them wrote "Madame Damez' method does not change. My position at the FCTP has become very critical." ⁶⁹ Mlle Jeanne-Marie Dingeon who became Damez' assistant and later successor was fired with enthusiasm when she first became involved in 1942: "The FCTP was highly organized. Madame Damez, foundress and directress, gave sessions all over France. Her training of the 'Mamans d'âme' was carried out with great dynamism, faith, apostolic zeal and much conviction." ⁷⁰

64. Correspondence between Boyer and Canon F.Cau, director of religious instruction for the diocese of Lille, 3 and 5 Dec.1949, Archives of André Boyer, File 21 Paris II Correspondance et Documents. Both considered the method more appropriate to middle-class believers (rather than the dechristianized working class). Cau found Damez extremely repetitive. Boyer refused to allow the movement in Dijon.

65. Fargues, How to teach religion, p.21.

66. Draft of a letter to C.L. Damez, 3 Oct. 1941, Archives of Marie Fargues, Institut Catholique, Paris. The context of this letter is interesting set, as it is, against the newly-instituted method lectures Fargues was giving to women catechists. (See Chapter 5, p.117). Her concern was that the somewhat haphazard methods of Damez would mean that the children were unsuitably prepared for the next stage in their development and training.

67. [Damez], 'Le vrai visage de la FCTP', Notes p.1, note 2.

68. Fargues, loc.cit.

69. From Françoise Vallin, 4 Dec. 1945, Archives of Marie Fargues.

70. Jean Vimort, Des témoins nous parlent de Joseph Colomb: Interview de Jeanne-Marie Dingeon, Catéchèse no.80 July 1980, pp.104-105.

Later, Dineon became concerned at the role of parents and the over-heavy programme for the four-year-olds. However Damez' personal zeal apparently carried more weight than the method used. Eventually her intransigence brought her into conflict with the hierarchy and she resigned in 1955.⁷¹ In 1937, long before this event, the FCTP, together with the Escouades d'Hommes-Catéchistes had been incorporated into the Archconfraternity.⁷² From the beginning the FCTP had had its headquarters in the same building and this represented an attempt to unify the different catechetical organizations.

(d) Religious Instruction of Adults

(i) Oeuvre Sainte-Catherine de Sienne

At the opposite end of the scale arose another catechetical organization under the general aegis of the Archconfraternity. This was the Oeuvre Ste - Catherine de Sienne for the religious instruction of adults. Though remaining somewhat specialized and never becoming very large it is nevertheless another example of the initiative of a woman catechist. From 1934 Mme Poulet, catechist in the parish of St Ferdinand des Ternes, began to specialize in the work of instructing adults, with the encouragement of her parish priest.⁷³ She was struck by the number of people seeking for truth and soon brought in others to help with the work. Those coming for instruction included "unbelievers, the ignorant, heretics, schismatics, Jews."⁷⁴ The work grew quite rapidly so that in less than three years there were thirty catechists engaged in it in several parishes. In 1936 the group received the official approval and backing of the Archconfraternity in the person of its Director-General, Canon Lieutier. In that same year thirty-eight adults were instructed and brought to the sacraments. The number increased to sixty-seven the following year.⁷⁵

71. This affair was one of the causes contributing to the crisis in the French Catechetical Movement which occurred in 1957. Damez aligned herself with the Intégristes, the traditional Catholics, and thus against the Centre national de l'enseignement religieux. (See also Chapter 4, p.76, note 31). Further discussion of the issue falls outside the scope of this work.

72. Chanon, 'Si Varenne m'était conté', Annexe VI p.2.

73. Paul Lieutier, L'Oeuvre Ste-Catherine de Sienne, Cahiers catéchistiques no.51 Oct. 1937, pp.77-81.

74. *ibid.*

75. Publicity leaflet: Oeuvre Ste-Catherine de Sienne [1939]. Archives of Marie Fargues. This also mentions the instruction of Muslims.

(ii) Training and follow up

The catechists engaged in this work were carefully selected and thoroughly trained.⁷⁶ It is evident that they gave the instruction themselves, while remaining under the control of the parish priests.⁷⁷ They had frequent meetings among themselves to discuss problems.⁷⁸ They also held small informal meetings on Sundays for groups of catechumens who wanted to learn more about the Christian way of life. There were discussions of the Mass and the Gospel and books were lent from a special library.⁷⁹ The catechists were recommended to keep in touch with their pupils and help them in any way they could once the formal instruction was over. Above all they should introduce them to Christian families and to movements such as the Jocists, Christian trade unions and others as appropriate.⁸⁰ Mme Poulet died in 1940 and was succeeded by one of her collaborators Mme de Mazenod.⁸¹

(iii) Precursor of the catechumenate

It will be noted that the word catechumen is used of the adults under instruction. This expression had largely ceased to be used in the Christian Church from the fifth century though surviving to some extent into the ninth.⁸² This is perhaps one of the earliest instances of the revival in the Roman Catholic Church of what was to become an important movement following the directives of the Second Vatican Council.⁸³ Fargues considered it the "precursor of the catechumenate

76. Groupe Ste-Catherine de Sienne, Pour être catéchiste d'adultes (1938), p.6. There were weekly lectures for doctrinal and pedagogical formation. These included instruction in the beliefs of Orthodox, Protestants, Jews and Muslims. They were completed by study circles on the kind of questions their pupils would ask them from what they had read in books and newspapers.

77. *ibid.* p.7, where, for example, it speaks of "...individual teaching of the catechumens..." On p.15 it says "...never ask for word for word memorization... give pithy instructions... make them clear and interesting..."

78. *ibid.* p.5.

79. *ibid.* p.8.

80. *ibid.* p.17.

81. La Lettre du Centre, Sept. 1941.

82. de Bretagne, The History of the Catechesis, p.363.

83. 'The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy' in Austin Flannery OP., ed., Vatican Council II, The Conciliar and Post-Conciliar Documents (1975), p.21.

of Father Coudreau."

7. The End of the Archconfraternity

(a) Contributory factors

The rapid growth of the Archconfraternity from its foundation to its maximum just before the First World War has already been mentioned (pp.41-42). Its spread into other dioceses was undoubtedly stimulated by the appearance of the papal encyclical Acerbo nimis of 1905.⁸⁵ There was a decline during the war as might be expected and a slow recovery afterwards to a new peak just before the Second World War.⁸⁶ The final stimulus to growth was probably the decree of Pope Pius XI Provido Sane of 1935.⁸⁷ Paradoxically it was that same decree that helped to bring about the demise of the Oeuvre des Catéchismes. Probably the Second World War delayed it as there had been insufficient time for the reorganization called for by the Pope.

The end of the work could not be foreseen immediately and its activities continued unabated through the war.⁸⁸ Indeed the Archconfraternity managed to keep in touch with its members in spite of all the difficulties and restrictions of the German occupation.

(b) The first professional catechists

It was during this difficult period that a further significant step took place which would also contribute to the end of the Arch-

84. She wrote these words across the top of the publicity leaflet found among her papers and mentioned above in note 75.

François Coudreau has described his work as director of the Catechumenate for the diocese of Paris in an article: François Coudreau, The Experiment of a Catechumenate, Lumen vitae (18) no.2 1963, 290-304.

Further consideration of the matter falls outside the scope of the present work.

85. Boyer, Mouvement catéchistique français, p.17. There existed 19 diocesan confraternities before 1905 but 44 new ones appeared from 1905 to 1909. Chanon, 'Si Varenne m'était conté', Annexe I, agrees with these figures.

86. The only statistics available are in Cahiers catéchistiques no.55 Feb. 1938, p.393. For the year 1936-37, 4,612 catechists catechized 77,375 children. However, statistics after 1933 are uncertain as that was the year the school-leaving age was raised to 14.

87. This decree called for the setting up of a catechetical office in each diocese. It also reiterated parts of the encyclical Acerbo Nimis of 1905, such as the establishment everywhere of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine of which the Oeuvre des Catéchismes was the French equivalent. See also Chapter 4, p.83.

88. Chanon, 'Si Varenne m'était conté', pp.10-12 describes a full programme of meetings, lectures and training days.

confraternity. This was the training of the first professional catechists in Paris. The concern of Marie Fargues, herself a member, that there should be properly trained catechists has already been mentioned.⁸⁹ Even before the war, as will be seen in later chapters, an increasing number of women had become specialists in the catechetical field and had published books and articles. Not all belonged to the Archconfraternity but already they were beginning to exercise considerable influence on it and on priest catechists. Françoise Derkenne, a non-member, has already been mentioned. She, like Fargues, Mme Hélène Lubienska de Lenval (p.120) and Mme Germaine Gathelier⁹⁰ would remain close to the centre of the Catechetical movement long after the end of the war.⁹¹

A gradual change was taking place in the minds of those in charge. In 1944 Canon Lieutier, Director-General of the Archconfraternity, in consultation with the Secretary-General and her advisers, saw the need for trained catechists.⁹² He launched an appeal to the bishops as a result of which three women came forward for training. They followed a course of studies at the Institut Catholique and two of them became the first professional catechists trained in Paris.

(c) Prejudice

It was a beginning, but there was still much prejudice to overcome. In 1946, Mlle Marcelle Chanon became assistant to the Secretary-General, Mlle Heitz.⁹³ Already well-qualified, Chanon was asked in 1948 to enter the Institut Catholique to study for a degree in the faculty of Theology, newly-opened to women.⁹⁴ Bishop Leclerc, in charge of catechetics in the diocese of Paris, said to her, "You will follow the courses and take the examinations but at the end you will not have the right to a degree. The award of a theology degree is for clerics only."⁹⁵ By this time, however, the Archconfraternity in its

89. See note 66 above, and also Chapter 5, p.117.

90. Mme Germaine Gathelier was a collaborator of Mme Fargues and a strong advocate of individualized teaching in catechetics.

91. See Chapter 5 for a discussion of the work of Fargues and Derkenne, especially pp.107-117 (Fargues) and pp.120-125 (Derkenne). Chapter 7 is also devoted to the work of Fargues.

92. Chanon, 'Si Varenne m'était conté', p.12.

93. Heitz had become assistant to Sorin de Bonne in 1931, and Secretary-General on the latter's death in 1935.

94. Vimort, Interview de Françoise Derkenne, p.99.

95. *ibid.* Derkenne followed in Chanon's footsteps the following year.

original form had disappeared.

(d) Evolution from 'répétitrice' to 'catéchiste'

Before this happened, there was a final re-edition of the booklet Conseils aux Catéchistes.⁹⁶ A rapid glance at it shows immediately the influence of Fargues, Derkenne, Lubienska de Lenval, Gathelier and Chanon herself. The approach is practical and pedagogical, designed to guide not only those who were trained catechists, but others who would also be teaching religion with less formal training. The first page sets the tone and shows the influence: "The catechism lesson is more than a class. It is initiation into a way of life, the Christian life. It is to prepare the whole of the Christian life. The catechism lesson is concerned with

- making them understand in order to learn
- teaching them to love so that they will pray
- helping them to persevere."⁹⁷

These points are developed in succeeding pages of the brochure and indications are given of appropriate gospel passages to be used and methods of approach. There is little mention of the catechism book but a good deal of use of scripture and liturgy. The importance of individualized teaching and of testing the children's understanding is stressed.⁹⁸

(e) The National Catechetical Centre

After the war, the French hierarchy decided to establish a national catechetical office in Paris, as was called for by the decree Provido Sane.⁹⁹ This was opened in October 1947 with Canon André Boyer

96. This booklet was first issued in 1895 under the title Conseils aux Dames-Catéchistes, and re-edited about 1920 under the title Conseils aux Catéchistes-volontaires. (See also p.42, and note 12 above). This edition was published in 1947.

97. Conseils aux Catéchistes, p.5.

98. *ibid.*, pp.11-13. See Chapters 5 and 7 where the methods developed by Fargues and Derkenne are discussed. It is important, however, to remember that by 1946 when the brochure was being prepared, the influence of Joseph Colomb was becoming increasingly felt. Two important works appeared that year: La Grande Pitié de l'Enseignement chrétien (1946) and Aux Sources du Catéchisme: Histoire Sainte et Liturgie, 3 vols (1946).

99. Boyer, Mouvement catéchistique français, p.165.

as director.¹⁰⁰ The question now was whether a group of relatively independent laywomen could find a place in the new organization. "The reply of the National Centre was no, the responsibility for religious instruction rests solely in the hands of the ecclesiastical authorities."¹⁰¹ Chanon continued "The Oeuvre des Catéchismes went out of existence though the personnel of the secretariat continued to serve the catechetical organization for the diocese of Paris." The remaining funds were used to provide bursaries for the training of professional catechists.

(f) Aftermath

Chanon played an active part in the catechetical movement during the next twenty years. She was the first directress of the Paris School for Catechists on its foundation in 1948, a project that fulfilled the dream of another member of the Archconfraternity, Marie Fargues.(151) Even so, there are not nearly enough professional catechists and voluntary catechists still play an important part. However they have become collaborators of the clergy rather than helpers and they teach their own classes.

Conclusion

Times have changed and the Oeuvre des Catéchismes as originally conceived is outmoded but it deserves a place in the history of the early catechetical renewal movement. It contributed to the preservation of the Christian faith by the example and devotedness of its members. It provided continuity through a long and difficult period including two major wars. Though its influence was not very extensive it provided a seedbed in which ideas that were later to become influential were able to germinate.

The somewhat negative attitude of the majority of the clergy may be in part to blame for the passive part the Archconfraternity played in the catechetical renewal. It must, however, be remembered that the Church of the time was more paternalistic than nowadays. There were many more priests available and, given the method in use, it was easier to use the lay catechists to make the children repeat the catechism.

100. The post-war catechetical organization falls outside the scope of the present work but there will be some further mention of it in Chapter 10.

101. Chanon, 'Si Varenne m'était conté', pp.14-15.

Most of the women were well-educated for their sex, by the standards of the day, but these did not measure up to modern ones; nor were they trained to teach.

On the positive side the Archconfraternity provided an organization and system of recruitment which parish priests could call upon. It also provided aids to teaching and courses for self-improvement as well as library facilities.

III

EARLY INITIATIVES

The Archconfraternity of the Oeuvre des Catéchismes and its work, as described in the previous chapter, in no sense represented a renewal of catechetical methods. Indeed the Education Law of 1882 itself did not really bring about any change in the method of teaching religion, merely in the external circumstances in which it took place.¹ Increasingly it was recognized that existing methods were inadequate so that new ideas and a fresh approach were needed.

It was suggested that "two main facts caused attention to be focussed on the whole question of religious education:

- the progressive abandonment of religion by the masses,
- the pedagogical renewal in secular teaching."²

The latter point provided the impetus or, as Father Duperray put it more forcefully, the detonator of the catechetical movement.³

The exponents of the new progressive theories and methods in education were to be found both in Europe and the United States.⁴ However, before the new methods could be adopted in religious teaching, adaptation was necessary. Mme Marie Fargues wrote later "The psychologists of childhood, Claparède, Piaget ... -unbelievers- could scarcely help in drawing up a table of ... dominant religious interests..."⁵ Many of the new ideas themselves had not even been published in book form and were hardly known abroad. Those who would be responsible for the adaptations were removed less than a generation from the educational innovators.⁶ They were assimilating and trying

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1. Interview with Georges Duperray, Lyons, 1 June 1979.
 2. Pierre Ranwez SJ., et L.Godin SJ., 'Pré-catéchisme et catéchisme' in Delcuve, ed., Où en est l'enseignement religieux? p.3.
 3. Duperray, loc.cit.
 4. Some account of these will be found in Chapter 1, p.31.
 5. Fargues, How to teach religion, p.25.
 6. For example, Mme Montessori was born in 1870, Décroly in 1871 and Claparède in 1873. Their published works began to appear in the first decade of the twentieth century. Fargues was born in 1884 and began to publish her catechetical method in 1922.

out the new methods in their own teaching, but an older and experienced generation was also beginning to make its voice heard.

1. A Voice raised in a Paris parish

There were no doubt many priests in Paris who were disturbed by the lack of success of teaching religion by the time-honoured question and answer method of the catechism. However, only one, apparently, took concrete steps to remedy the situation. In 1904 Father L. Poulin started a small review which he addressed not only to priests and woman-catechists but also to parents and Catholic teachers. He called upon all to work together at the "methodical and progressive evangelization of children."⁷ He promised to include explanations of the catechism, Bible history, poems, stories and other useful material. Two years later in another number he came out with a forthright condemnation of present catechetical methods and called for improvements. He complained of lack of clarity in the catechism, abuse of theological terms and answers that had lost meaning and relevance through fifty years of repetition. He bemoaned the children's ignorance of the Gospel. He suggested that the meaning be explained before the words were learnt, that there should be exercises with maps and written accounts. Finally, he wanted illustrations, but good ones.⁸ It is, perhaps, curious to note that the following year in the same review of which he was still editor, there appeared an article praising the English Roman Catholic Catechism of which a complete translation was given in successive numbers during the next two years.⁹ This modest little book bereft of explanations, illustrations and scriptural quotations would hardly seem to epitomise the kind of catechism envisaged above.¹⁰ However, a year later, the review published an account of a catechetical conference in which Archbishop Amette of Paris commented on the project then underway to produce a single catechism for the eight dioceses of the Province of Paris as "a stepping-stone towards the often demanded single catechism for the

7. L. Poulin, Notre Programme, Le Bon Catéchiste no.1 1904, p.1 (It was only in the third number that the review began to be called by its full title).

8. L. Poulin, À propos de Méthodes, La Voix du Bon Catéchiste 3e année 1906-7, p.225.

9. Le Catéchisme anglais, La Voix du Bon Catéchiste 4e et 5e années, 1907-1908, 1908-1909, passim.

10. A Catechism of Christian Doctrine, (1898).

whole of France."¹¹ It was, perhaps, on account of its uniqueness that the English catechism was so esteemed.¹²

Though these early efforts do not seem to us nowadays to amount to much, they nevertheless represent an attempt to do something positive to improve the religious lesson and bring it closer into line with secular teaching. A more significant consequence is pointed out by Marcelle Chanon. The publication of the review represented the first step in the evolution of the role of woman catechist from someone who merely made the children repeat the words of the catechism answers until they were word perfect to someone who actually taught the lesson.¹³ It at least tried to ensure that the catechists were themselves better informed about their religion and able to underline the explanation given by the priest where necessary. It would be another fifteen years before regular courses were organized for them and another twenty before they would be taking full responsibility for lessons in religion.¹⁴

2. A Voice raised in Dijon

In the same year, 1906, that Poulin "was campaigning for better pedagogy"¹⁵ in the catechism, Bishop Dadolle was appointed to the see of Dijon. He, too, was dissatisfied with the state of religious instruction and saw the urgent need for a new catechism radically different from the old. He decided to initiate a project for a new diocesan catechism and he confided it to Father Louis Bordet, lecturer in the Major Seminary.¹⁶ He wanted it to be illustrated, "more gospel-based, concrete and better adapted to present conditions... [It] would differ profoundly from the traditional catechism in plan, content,

11. L. Poulin, Les Mots et les Idées difficiles dans le Catéchisme, La Voix du Bon Catéchiste 6e année, 1909-10, p.179.

12. Thirty-four years later, however, a reviewer castigated the English Catechism for not having illustrations, and went on, "In France there has never been so small a catechism, even in times of greatest penury." Catéchismes et Catéchistes (Documentation Catéchistique) August 1944, p.45.

13. Chanon, 'Si Varenne m'était conté', p.2.

14. See later chapters, especially 4 and 5.

15. Chanon, loc.cit.

16. Bishop Dadolle himself drafted a catechism which survives in manuscript in the Archives at the Maison Diocésaine, Dijon. It could almost have been written today so far ahead of his time was its author.

method and vocabulary."¹⁷ Interspersed with the questions and answers were extracts from the Gospel and explanations. "Technical terms were excluded from the vocabulary as far as possible."¹⁸ In short, the new catechism broke away from the old tradition of learning by heart a text based on analytical and deductive logic, to offer one more in line with the new thinking in child psychology.

The bishop had Bordet's text printed and sent copies to all the parish priests of his diocese, asking for their comments. These were for the most part unfavourable and some positively rude. Most of the priests said they would prefer an improved version of the existing catechism. All the criticisms were noted by the author¹⁹ who also sent his work to certain priests outside the diocese whose judgement he respected. Here again most of the comments were unfavourable. An altogether more positive and encouraging reply came from Father Pierre Petit de Julleville. Himself director of a seminary, he revealed that two years previously he had sketched an outline for a new catechism with some of his students and intended to continue the work in the course of the current year.²⁰ In spite of this, it was evident to Bishop Dadolle that the time was not ripe for such radical thinking. The project for a new catechism was abandoned for the moment, but the seed would bear fruit later. In the years between the two world wars there would come from that same diocese of Dijon one of the strands of the catechetical renewal in France.²¹ The bishop died in 1911 without seeing the fulfilment of his hopes. He must have known that his catechism had been denounced to Rome though he did not live to hear of

17. Boyer, Mouvement catéchistique français, p.19.

18. Boyer, Mouvement catéchistique français, p.20.

19. *ibid.*, pp.20-21. The complete dossier of this correspondence is to be found at Dijon, in the Archives of André Boyer.

20. *ibid.*, pp.21-22.

It is noteworthy that Petit de Julleville would become Bishop of Dijon in 1927. In 1945, as Archbishop of Rouen and President of the National Commission for the Catechism, he would present a developed version of his catechism for consideration with that of Quinet and Boyer. This subject is treated in some detail in Chapter 9.

21. This is discussed in Chapters 4 and 8.

its "condemnation by the Index in the context of the Modernist crisis."²²

3. The first books published

(a) The Catechist's Handbook

As so often before and since, private schools with their greater freedom and often greater resources were in the van of the new movements in education. The place of these schools in the educational scene in France has already been mentioned (p.16). Their importance in the catechetical renewal will become evident in subsequent chapters. It will emerge that much of the work of adaptation of the new methodology to the teaching of religion was done there, as was pointed out by Duperray.²³ It is not surprising, therefore, to find that the first book which, "in the French catechetical movement refers explicitly to the new pedagogical ideas"²⁴ should come from this area. It was published by the Christian Brothers in 1907 under the title The Catechist's Handbook.²⁵ The method it presents is a kind of half-way house showing evidence of the influence of the earlier Sulpician method as well as that of the more recent Munich method.²⁶ The latter was in line with the inductive approach now becoming apparent in secular teaching. As Ranwez put it, the author "was inclined towards this method."²⁷ Boyer felt that "The Munich method exercised an influence on the author and incited him to a limited but clear orientation towards a more inductive method."²⁸ One quotation from the handbook may illustrate the point: "Appeal to the children's observation

22. See Chapter 1, p.23 for some discussion of Modernism. The whole correspondence with Rome is locked in the Diocesan Archives at Dijon but the affair is mentioned in Guide des Archives diocésaines françaises by Jacques Gadille (1971), p.25, "Affaire de la condamnation par l'Index du projet du catéchisme de Mgr Dadolle à Dijon en 1912 dans le contexte de la crise moderniste."

23. Interview with Duperray, Lyons 1 June 1979.

24. Adler, Joseph Colomb, p.30.

25. The name of the author is not given. The full title of the book is Manuel du Catéchiste, méthodologie de l'enseignement de la religion (1907).

The Brothers of the Christian Schools were founded in France by St John Baptist de la Salle in 1684. Their schools are now to be found all over the world.

26. Both these catechetical methods are outlined in Chapter 1, pp.36-38.

27. Ranwez, Pastorale de l'enfance, p.8.

28. Boyer, Pédagogie Chrétienne, p.248.

whenever possible and to their imagination as the most natural way to reach their minds and hearts."²⁹

In his two succeeding volumes the author leans even more towards the new method. The first of these, published in 1909, was an abridged version of the original book specifically for voluntary catechists. This was a significant dedication in view of the efforts of Poulin and the comments of Chanon above (p.62). The second book was called The Catechism for Infants³⁰ in which the author set out his conception of an intuitive method taking as its point of departure concrete objects, pictures and stories."³¹

(b) Practical Catechism Lessons

Not all the authors who have written of the development of the catechetical renewal in France have recognized the significance of the work of the Christian Brothers. However all without exception speak of the important role of Father Charles Quinet in the movement, beginning with his first book published in 1910³² and continuing unabated for the next forty years.³³ He, too, was closely linked with the private schools but as a diocesan priest in Rheims and Paris he was also involved with parish catechetics.

In the title of the book Practical Catechism Lessons following secular teaching methods are to be found the two main preoccupations of all his books. These were firstly, his concern to give catechists something of immediate practical help. Secondly, he was concerned to adapt the latest ideas in pedagogy to the teaching of religion. The latter he set out in the book he wrote in collaboration with Father L. Henin and which appeared two years later: Catechism methods for the guidance of clergy and catechists³⁴ and which purported to be the theoretical basis of his handbook. In the forward he wrote "... we are going beyond abstract theories and generalizations to something that is

29. Manuel du Catéchiste, p.110.

30. Le Catéchisme de petits-enfants (1910).

31. Boyer, Pédagogie chrétienne, p.249.

32. Charles Quinet, Exercices Pratiques de Catéchisme conformément aux méthodes pédagogiques de l'enseignement profane (1910). Cours élémentaire et Cours moyen.

33. See Chapter 5, p.102 et seq. for details of Quinet's later activities.

34. C. Quinet et L. Henin, La pédagogie du catéchisme à l'usage du clergé et des catéchistes volontaires. (1912).

practical and useful..."³⁵ Further on we find "... we consider the time has come to give religious teaching the benefit of the progress that has been made in the secular field, partially based on child psychology..."³⁶

Quinet's first books, like those of the Christian Brother, can be seen as stepping-stones or bridges between the old and the new methodology. As Fargues put it, writing of Practical Catechism Lessons

The little exercises that the books proposed to children obliged them to reflect, to review important notions, and if they were well-endowed, to grasp the link that exists between the doctrine learned and the Christian life lived. That was new. It was not an escape from the textbook ... but was a better use of it; not an active method in the sense that we understand it today, but at least an appeal for a more conscious participation of the child in his own instruction ... Abbé Quinet was a precursor; we must render him that justice.³⁷

These books contained the essence of Quinet's thinking but they are only the beginning of his contribution to the catechetical renewal. His most important work was to come between the two world wars.

Conclusion

The outbreak of war in 1914 put a brake on catechetical activity to some extent. Nevertheless the ground was being prepared for the next phase. A younger generation was gaining vital experience, the new methods in education were being tried out. It would be a long time before the catechism could be banished as the mainstay of religious education, but Fargues felt that the war helped to hasten its demise. She wrote that French educators

were satisfied with despising it. Catholic parents ... no longer believed in the textbook or the institution. Many priests did not believe in them either.

Because the catechism was artificial, boring, ineffective, no one any longer expected much from it. But this was never said ... The War hastened the awareness of it.³⁸

35. *ibid.*, p.11.

36. Quinet et Henin, La pédagogie du catéchisme, p.13.

37. Fargues, How to teach religion, p.14.

38. *ibid.*, p.15.

IV

DEVELOPMENTS IN DIJON

Among the early initiatives in changing the approach to the teaching of religion cited in the previous chapter was that of Bishop Dadolle (Ch.3, p.62). He was the first of a remarkable line of bishops of Dijon who saw clearly the need for a radical reform in catechetical methods. They worked zealously, though largely unsuccessfully, to achieve it and have undoubtedly merited a place in the history of the early catechetical renewal movement.¹ Indeed the names of Landrieux and Petit de Julleville are to be found in most comprehensive accounts of it as well as that of André Boyer, one of the diocesan clergy during all three episcopates. Their contributions must now be examined in some detail.² First, however, it may be helpful to situate geographically where these developments were taking place.

The centre of the diocese is the university city of Dijon, situated some two hundred miles south-east of Paris. It was the ancient capital of Burgundy, a city of great beauty and historical importance with a cathedral dating from the twelfth century. Nowadays it is a city somewhat larger than Norwich but considerably smaller than Newcastle, and of no very great industrial importance. The diocese of Dijon is largely rural in character and by no means one of the largest in France. This brief description will perhaps serve to highlight the fact that it was not the importance of the place but the quality of the people that counted in the movement.

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1. One of those who has written an account of the French Catechetical movement is Canon André Boyer, director of Religious Instruction under Bishop Petit de Julleville. His viewpoint is inevitably biased but this is offset by his ability to provide details that others cannot since he was at the heart of the activity in Dijon. It has also been possible to check his statements against some of the original documents in the Archives at Dijon and against other contemporary and subsequent accounts.
 2. A fuller account of the work and influence of André Boyer will be found in Chapter 8.

1. Landrieux, visionary

(a) Priestly experience

Born in 1857, Maurice Landrieux was ordained priest for the diocese of Rheims in 1883. He does not appear to have had very considerable experience as a parish priest because he was appointed secretary to Cardinal Langénieux, Archbishop of Rheims. He accompanied the Cardinal to Rome for the historic conclave of 1903 which elected Pope Pius X.³ The contacts made on this occasion with priests and Cardinals from all over the world helped to broaden his vision from the parochial to the ecclesial dimension the significance of which will become apparent later.

Landrieux was a prolific writer of books aimed above all at bringing to life the Gospel,⁴ a central theme of all his writing. He was an experienced catechist who saw only too clearly the decline in religious practice and the ineffectiveness in checking it of the current methods, based on the seventeenth century one of St Sulpice (p.36). He was also ruefully aware of the way in which this work of catechesis, of central importance in his eyes, could be given second place. He wrote in 1908 of the sometimes poor facilities available for teaching children the catechism. Money that could have been used for improvements was too often spent on less important things.⁵

(b) Bishop of Dijon

Landrieux became Bishop of Dijon in 1916, at the age of nearly sixty, while the First World War was at its height. He lost no time in bringing to the notice of his diocesan clergy in a pastoral letter what he saw to be their future task, concern for the family and the parish.⁶ The echoes of this letter reached beyond the frontiers of France in spite of the war.⁷

Landrieux was aware of tentative beginnings of catechetical

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3. Encyclopédie Catholicisme, s.v. 'Landrieux, Maurice', by Jean Duplacy.
 4. Some of the titles of Landrieux's books: *Au pays du Christ*; *Courtes gloses sur les évangiles des dimanches*; *L'Histoire et les histoires dans la Bible*; *Jésus dans l'Évangile*.
 5. Quoted by Joseph Colomb, Plaie Ouverte au flanc de l'Église (1954), p.17.
 6. La Tâche de demain: la Famille, la Paroisse (1917).
 7. Encyclopédie Catholicisme, s.v. 'Landrieux, Maurice'.

renewal elsewhere in France and he encouraged initiatives. For instance, there was his appreciation of the work of Mlle M. Gahéry who published a catechetical method for small children called La plus belle histoire. She was Froebel-trained and the first person to start a kindergarten in Paris.⁸ In essence her book was a sequence of bible stories following the order of the liturgical year illustrated by pictures with moveable cut-out figures. There were backgrounds representing the sites of the great biblical scenes and as the story unfolded, the figures were pinned to the background. Marie Fargues commented that as far as she knew this was the first specific religious teaching material to appear in France.⁹ That Bishop Landrieux had followed the development of the method and the production of the book is evident from the letter he wrote to its author in 1920: "You had the idea of using a very ingenious pictorial method to illustrate a story, the most beautiful story, our religion, Christian doctrine, the Bible and the Gospel, which it would be wrong to give as a lesson. I followed too closely your first attempts not to be able to rejoice now at seeing your work in print at last."¹⁰ He wrote again two years later: "Your pictures so full of life make La plus belle histoire come alive and will leave a lasting impression."¹¹

(c) 'Sinite Parvulos'

The experience gained in six years as a diocesan bishop allied to his previous experience had convinced Landrieux of the need for radical re-thinking in catechetical methods. In common with the other French bishops he had written annual pastoral letters,¹² but it was the one of 1922 on the Gospel as the primary source for the teaching of religion,¹³ that made such an impact. It reverberated not only in France but far beyond so that it came to be called "the manifesto of the catechetical movement."¹⁴ Quite exceptionally for such a document it was printed in full in the following number of Documentation

8. André Boyer, Pédagogie chrétienne, p.253.

9. Marie Fargues, D'Hier à demain le Catéchisme (1964), p.21.

10. Boyer, Mouvement catéchistique français, p.40.

11. *ibid.*

12. Notably, since the letter of 1917 (see above p.68), that of 1919 Conditions d'âge et de préparation à la Communion Solennelle.

13. 'Sinite Parvulos' - Le premier enseignement par l'évangile. (See Appendix II).

14. Delcuve, ed., Où en est l'enseignement religieux? p.15.

Catholique¹⁵ with sub-headings. It was also reproduced in the official review of the Archconfraternity Le Catéchiste.¹⁶ The following year it was reprinted with additional notes and bibliography.¹⁷ It is rare enough for something to catch on so quickly, rarer still for it to be talked about nearly sixty years later. Reviewing the early history of the catechetical movement, Adler wrote, "Let us recognise that in 1922 Bishop Landrieux of Dijon in his Pastoral Letter ... showed uncommon lucidity and courage."¹⁸

(i) The Causes of Failure

In his letter the Bishop called for nothing less "than a complete re-shaping of the whole catechetical method."¹⁹ Having looked briefly at the failure of so much effort put into the religious instruction of children, he then sought the cause. There was no doubt in his mind which was the major one, "Could it not be the method and the book, the Catechism, that is given to the children too soon?"²⁰ Well aware of the storm that broke around Bishop Dadolle's head, he added "I am aware that I am embarking on a very delicate subject and I would only wish to speak of it with the utmost reserve". Instead of presenting his clergy with a new catechism for their comments as Dadolle had done (Ch.3, p.63), Landrieux spent his first six years in the diocese discussing the matter with them and listening to them. He wrote, "... in the course of the discussions I have had with the parish priests on my pastoral visits I have often brought up this subject and my conclusions ... have been welcomed." Perhaps, too, subconsciously some of Dadolle's ideas may have taken root.

From this position the Bishop launched an attack on the catechism and the catechetical methods currently in use and suggested remedies.

a The Catechism

The attack on the Catechism itself caused rejoicing among lay-catechists who did not dare call in question that little book but, as

15. Documentation Catholique (8) no.168 14 Oct. 1922, 580-588.

16. Le Catéchiste 4e année no.1 Nov.-Dec. 1922, pp.5-13; no. 2 Jan. 1923, pp.36-41.

17. Published by Publiroc, Marseilles 1923, under the same title.

18. Adler, Joseph Colomb, p.32.

19. Ranwez, Pastorale de l'enfance, p.8.

20. 'Sinite parvulos', translation by present writer, (Appendix II), passim.

Fargues put it, "Landrieux, a bishop, could do so..."²¹ The bishop was by no means purely negative in his approach. He indicated the good points of the old method including the Catechism: "... an excellent little book, a methodical presentation of doctrine and summary of theology couched in precise, abstract, dry terms..." but he concluded "... quite beyond their [the children's] uneducated minds." "No," he continued, "the Catechism is not a suitable book for beginners nowadays; it is beyond them, it is a burden to them and it puts them off." He felt it could still be used in secondary and boarding schools and even in big city parishes, noting that it "has stood the test of time. With this tool, such as it is, our forebears did good work." It could also be used in the last two or three years of catechism to formalize what has been inculcated for the previous two or three years by other methods. "It is not ... a question of giving up the Catechism ... we must get to it ..." but "...we only postpone it in order to return at a more propitious moment with greater profit."

b The Method

As far as catechism organization was concerned, Landrieux felt that the old method of St Sulpice with its varied activities had a certain amount to recommend it. Present-day conditions, however, have caused it to be more or less abandoned, "Recitation [of the Catechism] is laborious, but one has to insist on it otherwise it would lapse altogether. It is painfully prolonged. The result is that the explanation is shortened, the homily ... and singing, characteristic of St Sulpice are omitted."

His attack on catechetical methods was three-pronged:

1. They do not take into account fifty years of dechristianization and consequent changes in the family and school;
2. They do not take into account recent discoveries in child psychology and developments in pedagogy;
3. They do not leave space for the Gospel.

(1) Dechristianization

In support of his contention that the methods currently in use did not take into account "the particular, abnormal problem arising from half a century of secularization" Landrieux makes the following points:

21. Fargues, How to teach religion, p.17.

- family and school, which ought to help us, for the most part hinder us,
- formerly the children grew up in a Christian atmosphere ... the seed was sown ... by the parents' example ... there was a foundation,
- the children of today have nothing ... the Catechism, which could have been used to continue religious instruction already started, is not the right tool for a first initiation,
- we have not changed our methods while everything around us has changed, the family background, the attitude of the school and the children's mentality, [influenced in turn by home and school].

(2) New Pedagogy

"We proceed with an inconceivable ignorance of child psychology" was how Landrieux summed up his second contention. As was seen in the previous chapter (p.64-66), only Quinet and the Brothers of the Christian Schools had begun to adapt the new pedagogy to catechetics before the war and now, after it, there were still very few authors who had published works on the subject. Gahéry has already been mentioned, (p.69), Fargues' first book²² was published in time to be included in the extended bibliography of the 1923 edition of the bishop's letter and others were in preparation.²³ He did not accept this as a reason for not adapting catechism lessons: "Cannot this work of adaptation be carried out by the teacher who knows his pupils? ... Let each one make his own plan so as to grade his teaching from one year to the next..." However he goes further than this in suggesting that catechism lessons be replaced by Gospel stories for the younger children and beginners. "The Catechism is ... a lesson. The Gospel is a story. Why should we want to teach as a lesson what we can teach as a story? ... A child does not listen to a story as we do ... he enters into it ... with imagination and feelings," and it is in this way that the early religious teaching should be impressed on the child's mind. Instead of which "so soon we impose sustained efforts of intellect with reflection on texts and formulae whose meaning and even words are beyond his very restricted understanding and vocabulary. Instead of quite simply going in by the open doors of the child's imagination and sensibility, we persist in knocking at the still closed doors of his understanding and judgement." The bishop stresses the importance of an early instruction that is "interesting and not wearying for them, so that they may find

22. Marie Fargues, Choses Divines et petits enfants (1922).

23. M.M. d'Aubigny, Formation Chrétienne de mes tout-petits, came out the following year, 1923. (See Chapter 5, p.118).

it attractive ... for if the first contact with religion is laborious, the first impression disagreeable, if we start by imposing too heavy a burden they will reject it and always have an unpleasant recollection of it."

However, he does not wish to impose a burden on his clergy. Nevertheless, he will authorize any experiments they may wish to make along these lines, only asking for a report at the end of the year "and if the results correspond to our hopes, we will take appropriate decisions in the light of this experience."

(3) The Gospel

"Can one imagine a practising Catholic who has never read the Gospel?" asks Landrieux; "it is the case with the majority." It is hardly surprising that in this Pastoral Letter he makes a strong case for the Gospel-based catechesis of the early Church; for the youngest children he advocates the primitive oral catechesis of apostolic times. As he points out, "until printing was invented, children probably never had a book in their hands... One must carry on for a long time ... with oral teaching grafted on to the Gospel story." He laments the fact that the Catechism, which, after all, only came into being in the later middle ages, has now taken up practically all the time in religion lessons leaving no space for the Gospel. He considers this requires reversal, "one could be perfectly instructed in the faith if one only knew the Gospel because the essence of the Catechism is in the Gospel. But the reverse is not true, the Gospel is not in the Catechism." This is really the central theme of all the bishop's thought as has been suggested above (p.68). Not only did he elaborate on it elsewhere in the Letter but he underlined it in an address he gave before the Archbishop of Paris, to a gathering of priests and catechists the following year.²⁴

(ii) The Remedy

"We must speak first, and at length, of Our Lord. We must put before their eyes scenes from the Gospel so as to make them know and love the Divine Master before presenting his teaching in a formal manner ... going through him to the Father..."

24. Maurice Landrieux, Discours à la Journée Catéchistique, 3 July 1923, Le Catéchiste 4e année no.7 (numéro spéciale) 1923, pp.222-224.

Returning to the necessity for lightening the burden of religious instruction for the children, taken, all too often, out of the time of recreation, he sees the shorter, more attractive Gospel - story lesson as being the best method of initiation for the first year or two. For the seven and eight-year-olds he dares to suggest that "... we dispense with all catechism lessons ... Thus they will come to us joyfully [and] freely ... to hear the beautiful and noble story of our Lord without the added burden of homework to cast a shadow over these first impressions." He sees this less rigid framework as leaving greater freedom to the catechist to develop and nurture the children's faith in a variety of ways. The bishop advocates the use of the Church itself, and its contents, as teaching aids; liturgical feasts and seasons could be used

to put into relief certain great and fundamental truths... Bible History must not be forgotten... It, too, is the story of our Lord... The Old Testament, the book of promises, prepares for the book of realization, the Gospel; they follow on like two chapters in the same book... From the very beginning we must let them perceive our Lord through the Bible. Later, we can isolate and throw into relief the Messianic idea to make them understand the true meaning of Bible History.

The main lines of Bishop Landrieux's thought have been given above. However the whole letter really needs to be read to appreciate fully the masterly and tactful way in which he presented these novel and radical ideas to an audience very set in old ways. They were not all predisposed to involve themselves in the amount of effort adaptation to his suggestions would require. Nevertheless these evidently struck a chord in the minds of many people thanks to the clear-sightedness of an editor who saw that the Letter was disseminated to a much wider public than in the diocese of Dijon through the pages of the national catholic review Documentation Catholique.²⁵ More people were aware of new methods in education generally and welcomed suggestions for improving the religion lesson. As has been said above,

25. See above, p.69. Normally, bishops' pastoral letters are printed privately for distribution in their own dioceses and original copies of this one are to be seen in the diocesan archives at Dijon. They were also generally summarized, or at least briefly alluded to, in the following number of Documentation Catholique. This semi-official and authoritative Church review was widely read throughout France by clergy, religious, and informed layfolk, including catechists. It was also sent abroad. It seldom carried a complete Pastoral Letter except for those of the Archbishop of Paris. Hence may be gauged the singular importance of Landrieux's letter. The demand for individual copies was great enough to make the Marseilles publishers, Publiroc, bring out a new edition the following year.

the Archconfraternity invited Landrieux to address one of their study days the year after the Letter's publication (p.73), but he added nothing new. Within a very few years, however, these ideas would bear fruit.

(d) The Catechism through the Gospel

Before he died in 1926, Bishop Landrieux put in motion his scheme for a new gospel-based catechism; he asked Father Eugène Charles, a well-known catechist and lecturer, to undertake the project. Charles himself, after the Catechism was published, spoke of his contact with Landrieux in a lecture given at Dijon.

I want to pay my tribute of gratitude to Mgr Landrieux, Bishop of Dijon, to whom I owe Le Catéchisme par l'Évangile. I only had the privilege of meeting him three times in my life ... to speak with him about the subject he had put so well in his pastoral letter... He had said it all ... in incisive, penetrating terms... Because we are so deeply conscious of it, we have sought to bring to fulfilment the idea he had so magnificently brought out into the open.²⁶

In the introduction to the priest's volume he spoke of seeing Bishop Landrieux for the last time on his deathbed in Paris and added that "now, fortified by his encouragement we have undertaken this long and exacting labour, following his indications, which we offer ... to our colleagues in the ministry, to parents and catechists, and to our children."²⁷

The novelty of the book lay in its "historical presentation of the Christian Mystery, setting out a gospel text in simple language and using it to illustrate the truths to be believed, the sacraments to be received and the commandments to be observed."²⁸ To that summary Adler adds the comment that Charles' catechism met with opposition in the Church and was never accepted as an 'official' text. In witness Charles recounted the remark of Cardinal Verdier, Archbishop of Paris when he presented his book to him, "Good, but it is Charles' catechism ... what we want is the Church's catechism: Dogma, Morals and Sacraments."²⁹ So ended Charles' dream of his catechism becoming the single

26. Eugène Charles, Lecture of 6 Mar. 1932, Persévérance (1) 1933, p.720.

27. Eugène Charles, Le Catéchisme par l'Évangile (1931), livre du Prêtre p.ix. There were also the children's book and the book for parents and catechists which incorporated the children's book. They appeared in 1930.

28. Adler, Joseph Colomb, p.32.

29. Quoted in Boyer, Mouvement catéchistique français, p.78. Charles was Cardinal Verdier's secretary.

catechism for the whole of France which was then under discussion, and in which he was involved as secretary of the editorial board.³⁰

Cardinal Verdier had, however, welcomed the appearance of Charles' catechism in an introductory letter in which he recalled the memory of Bishop Landrieux. He wondered whether "we have not, perhaps, rather forgotten the bishop's words that 'all the Catechism is in the Gospel.'³¹

(e) Further repercussions of the pastoral letter

It is impossible to assess accurately, except in a few cases such as that of E. Charles, the extent of the influence that Bishop Landrieux's letter had on the catechetical movement in France and elsewhere; it was undoubtedly extensive judging by the frequent references to it in other works.³² In his letter the bishop foreshadowed the use of a centre of interest in teaching religion. In her book La Vie et la Joie au Catéchisme published in 1935, Françoise Derkenne develops this method fully.³³ She was also influenced by current teaching methods, but by her application of these to the religion lesson could be said to be developing Landrieux's ideas.

Evidence that the letter was known abroad can be obtained from a number of sources. The Belgians Ranwez and Delcuve have already been cited (p.69). From the English-speaking world, Houle devotes consider-

30. The subject of the unified catechism for France is dealt with in Chapter 9.

31. Charles, Le Catéchisme par l'Évangile (1978), p.ix. It is interesting to note that the book was reprinted almost unchanged, nearly fifty years after it had first appeared, by the integrists in support of their own ends. It had long been superceded by more recent publications of the catechetical movement.

The integrists (or integralists as they are also called) form a group within the modern Roman Catholic Church which, under pretext of maintaining the integrity of Catholic doctrine, in fact rejects attempts at adaptation to the conditions of modern life. To some extent they have now spread to other countries including Britain. Their campaign against the catechetical renewal began about 1953 and played a part in the crisis of 1957. It continues to this day (see Georges Duperray, 1957: l'Affaire du Catéchisme, Catéchèse no.80 July 1980, pp.46,66,67). The movement is also mentioned in Chapter 1 above, p.19. Further discussion of the matter is outside the scope of the present work.

32. e.g. Fargues, How to teach religion, pp.16-17
Germain, Langages de la Foi, p.205.

33. Derkenne's contribution to the catechetical movement is considered in Chapter 5, p.120 et seq.

able space to it in his article on the French catechetical movement.³⁴
From Italy, L. Csonka mentions it in his article on André Boyer.³⁵

Most people consider that the real catechetical renewal in France took off in 1946 with Colomb.³⁶ Those who have studied the development of the movement from the end of the First World War put Landrieux and his vision of a gospel-based catechesis, and Charles with his attempt to bring that vision to life, in the direct line of antecedence. Duperray expresses it thus, "He [Colomb] did more than introduce the Bible into the catechism in the tradition of ... a Dadolle and a Landrieux."³⁷ Elsewhere, the same author sees the alliance of the gospel movement preached by Landrieux and Charles with the new movements in education to be the ultimate cause of its success.³⁸

2. Petit de Julleville, organizer

(a) A fruitful collaboration

Landrieux's successor as Bishop of Dijon, Pierre Petit de Julleville, was above all a man of action. He, too, was concerned at the ineffectiveness of the catechetical methods in use. As was seen in the previous chapter (p.63) he had already attempted to prepare the outline of a catechism; he was to become involved later in the revision of the French catechism.³⁹ Thus it is not surprising to find that his nine years in the diocese were marked by the achievement of an organization for religious instruction that elicited admiration in other dioceses. Only too well aware of increasing dechristianization in France "he wanted to put into effect an organization such as is found in mission countries."⁴⁰ In this he was to find an able lieutenant, sympathetic to his views, in André Boyer, curate in the parish of Châtillon-sur-Seine, about fifty miles from Dijon, at the northern extremity of the diocese. Some idea of Boyer's admiration for

34. Cecil Houle, The catechetical movement in France as shown in recent pastoral letters, Journal of Religious Instruction (3) March 1937, 592-593.

35. L. Csonka, L'Oeuvre catéchistique du Chanoine André Boyer, Orientamenti pedagogici An.6 no.5 Sept.-Oct. 1959, p.773.

36. See Introduction, p.12, and Chapter 10, p.174.

37. Duperray, 1957: l'affaire du catéchisme, p.64.

38. idem, Le contenu de la catéchèse, Catéchèse no.49 Oct. 1972, p.489.

39. See Chapter 9, passim.

40. Nouvelles des diocèses, Le Catéchiste no.7 July 1929, p.160.

his superior may be gleaned from the remark once let fall by Bishop Petit de Julleville in the hearing of another priest, who later spoke Boyer's panegyric, "... he never added a comma to an important document without asking my opinion..."⁴¹

(b) An initiative

Though born in Dijon in 1876, Petit de Julleville spent most of his priestly life as a lecturer in seminaries in the Paris area. On his return to the diocese as bishop he began by visiting all the parishes and wrote of his impressions in the newsletter he started. On the one hand there was "hope and confidence in finding everywhere a fervent élite at work" but also there was sadness in thinking of those either steeped in ignorance of, or indifference to, religion.⁴² He signalled out the parish of Châtillon-sur-Seine where there was a variety of religion courses available. The older age groups were encouraged to continue with religious instruction after they had passed the obligatory age, which in Dijon was twelve. They were encouraged to work for a certificate and also to help with instructing the younger age groups. Furthermore a duplicated correspondence course was sent each week to those who found it difficult to come to the classes; written work was sent in for correction at regular intervals. A small lending library of books, magazines and slides was available as well as a duplicating service, all these activities being run by the young pupils themselves under Boyer's watchful eye. It appears that at that time, that is from about 1927, there was no similar organization anywhere else in France. As noted above (p.67) much of the detailed history of this phase of the catechetical movement was written by Boyer himself though it is possible to check some of it from other sources.

Bishop Petit de Julleville encouraged these initiatives and helped Boyer to develop them. First he arranged for the weekly duplicated sheets to become a printed monthly bulletin which was distributed all over the diocese. The interest and attention to detail of the bishop are shown in the questions and comments recorded by Boyer in

41. Père Leneuf, 'Le Chanoine André Boyer (1889-1976)' panegyric preached at Boyer's funeral, 19 Aug. 1976, Diocesan Archives, Dijon.

42. La Vie diocésaine no.1, quoted in Boyer, Mouvement catéchistique français, p.46.

notes he made of an interview with Petit de Julleville.⁴³ The bishop enquired about production costs and numbers of subscribers. To the reply that there were about a hundred of these he said that was not enough for survival. He had already expressed appreciation of the first number of the review which had appeared a few days earlier and he repeated it in the interview. Then he went on to discuss ways of extending the membership and getting it better known. The discussion must have borne fruit for the 32-page review called Persévérance survived up to 1940 when the German occupation put an end to all periodicals. It was re-started again afterwards.

The meticulous attention to detail and organization so characteristic of Boyer can also be seen here, as well as his unbounded admiration for his bishop. There remain among his papers records of numerous important interviews with Petit de Julleville and his successors, all carefully filed away in order with correspondence on the same subject or with the same person.

(c) Development of the organization

The second move made by the bishop was to bring Boyer into Dijon itself, relieving him of parish responsibilities and appointing him chaplain of a boys' school. This left him more freedom of movement and enabled him to widen the scope of his catechetical apostolate.⁴⁴ These are the bare facts, but there is a suggestion in unpublished notes and correspondence that there may have been other factors and that Boyer's difficult character, of which more will appear later, was beginning to be felt. In a further section of the manuscript notes previously referred to, Boyer discusses his parish priest and the latter's attitude to his (Boyer's) catechetical work, not for the first time, it would seem. The impression gained is that they did not get on well,

43. 'Visite à Mgr: 11 mars 1931', Archives of André Boyer, File 62. This seven-page manuscript deals with a number of other matters which will be referred to later in this chapter. It is interesting in its revelation of the character and relationship of the two men.

44. The facts of Boyer's life have been assembled principally from three sources:- the Panegyric (see note 41 above);
- a short autobiography he wrote in answer to an enquiry (Archives of André Boyer, File 116, letter to Sr Marie-Pia, 2 May 1967);
- his book Mouvement catéchistique français

He was born in 1889 near Dijon; ordained priest in 1917 in Paris. He then returned to the diocese of Dijon to serve successively in two parishes. He went to the second of these, Châtillon-sur-Seine, in 1923.

indeed that the parish priest would as soon have seen the back of his curate. Boyer had profited by a suitable opening (as he thought) to speak of the possibility of having his duplicated sheets printed, but the parish priest ignored the question. On a later occasion, Boyer had shown him one of the newly-printed bulletins; again there was no comment. However in an interview with the bishop, the parish priest had spoken well of his curate, though he ended with the somewhat enigmatic remark that he would have made an excellent Director of a seminary. Nevertheless Boyer seemed to feel that his parish priest was more disposed to talk about him behind his back than to his face; worse, he seemed to suspect him of channelling funds given for the new bulletin to other purposes. There is no other evidence in the case and the bishop himself was careful not to take sides, so it may be an early example of a trait in Boyer's character which was to bring him into conflict many times in later life.

This interview, in March, may account in part at least for the fact that the decision to move Boyer to Dijon appeared to have been taken rather hastily and without consulting him. He seems to have reacted quite vigorously to the letter from the Vicar General in July, notifying him of his appointment. This can be gleaned from a letter from the bishop in reply to one from Boyer, which is not preserved. In his letter Petit de Julleville said that he had not thought of moving him until the question of the school chaplaincy came up. He had decided on it because he could not leave him as curate much longer, yet a change of parish would compromise the work he was doing. A return to Dijon in a post leaving him more time would enable him not only to carry on his work but to increase it. He ended the letter by saying "Above all I was thinking of you, to put you in a position to show what you are capable of in your present work."⁴⁵ Further letters show the extent of the personal interest the bishop took in Boyer's affairs; he organized his lodging,⁴⁶ advised him on whether or not to teach some philosophy in the school,⁴⁷ promised to look into his salary⁴⁸ and arranged office accommodation for him.⁴⁹

45. 13 July 1931, Archives of André Boyer, File 62.

46. Pierre Petit de Julleville to André Boyer, 21 July 1931, Archives of André Boyer, File 62.

47. 23 Sept. 1931, *ibid.*

48. 24 Oct. 1931, *ibid.*

49. 5 Nov. 1931, *ibid.*

(i) Diocesan enquiry

Once he had installed him in Dijon and was thus assured of his close co-operation, the bishop appointed Boyer director of the work of the voluntary catechists. The next six years were to see the development of the remarkable organization for religious instruction in the diocese which was to make it a model for the others. It also served as Boyer's apprenticeship for the much greater task that lay ahead, the creation of the National Catechetical Centre in Paris in 1947 (Ch.10 p.175). His appointment as its first director was one of the last acts of Petit de Julleville's life.

Before making detailed proposals for implementing his plan to put the catechetical effort of his diocese on a missionary footing (p.77), the bishop wished to know the exact state of affairs with regard to the number of voluntary catechists in each parish and the functions they fulfilled, so he commissioned Boyer to set up an inquiry towards the end of 1932. All 280 parish priests sent in their replies. The bishop summarized them and set forth his future plans in a pastoral letter on The Organization of Catholic Action in the Diocese. Some of his findings are extremely interesting when compared with the general practice in the Archconfraternity in Paris where catechists merely made children repeat catechism answers (Ch.2 p.42). With very few exceptions they did not give instruction themselves but left it to the priests.⁵⁰ He found there were 826 catechists, used in 201 out of the 280 parishes of the diocese, 147 of them in Dijon itself.⁵¹ Of these 826, 157 were actually instructing the children, and this is a high proportion indeed for that time. Most of the catechists were aged between thirty and sixty, from all classes and walks of life, though a few were under fifteen or over eighty.

(ii) The Centre

The bishop's aim now was to provide for all the children on the lines pioneered by Boyer at Châtillon. This meant practical and pedagogical as well as spiritual support. Boyer's aim was to involve

50. Two important exceptions are known. Françoise Derkenne was given sole charge of a group of children in 1931, (Vimort, Interview de Françoise Derkenne, p.97, note 1). Marie Fargues was given a similar charge in 1932, (Fargues, How to teach religion, p.27). It must be noted that neither of these was in the diocese of Paris itself, but within the archiepiscopal province of Paris. (See also Chap.5, p.105).

51. Boyer, Mouvement catéchistique français, p.54.

as many of the catechists as he could in as much of the instruction as possible. As he saw it, the organization went far beyond providing people to hear the children's catechism or even to explain it. There was need for a strong support system based on a catechetical centre in Dijon itself. This would include a library both for catechists and children, with books, slides and pictures. Gradually, as space became available, rooms were organized for exhibitions of children's work, and the library was extended to include books and visual aids from abroad. A secretariat was needed to take care of correspondence, typing, duplicating and accounts; also to receive visitors and show them around. Voluntary, part-time help could cover a good deal of the work of the library, exhibitions and secretariat, but there was need for someone full-time to co-ordinate the work and look after the centre when the director was away. Boyer was very fortunate in having the services of Mlle Suzanne Frontière who had been one of the catechists at Châtillon and associated with him from the beginning of his work there.⁵² She moved into Dijon with him and became secretary of the catechetical centre, though her name is never mentioned in published accounts of the centre's work.

(iii) Subsidiary centres

Since many catechists would be unable to get into the city it was necessary to establish subsidiary centres in other parts of the diocese. These were generally manned by part-time volunteers; there were others with more time and means of transport who visited catechists at home to help and encourage them and tell them about publications that might be useful.

(iv) Meetings and courses

Regular monthly meetings with the director and as many catechists as could come from all over the diocese were organized; other meetings were held in the different deaneries in turn. There were also the annual study days to which a well-known speaker was generally invited.

52. The elements of Suzanne Frontière's biography have been traced through the meticulous records Boyer kept throughout his life and which are all preserved in the Archives of André Boyer at Dijon. An interview with Mlle Monique Housse, at present assistant director of the Catechetical Centre there, added other details. These included the touching story of Mlle Frontière's devotedness to him as his housekeeper at the end of their long lives and their deaths in 1976 within a week of each other. She was four years younger than him.

Boyer noted that it was Fr Eugène Charles in 1933 and Fr Charles Quinet the following year.⁵³ There were weekly and monthly courses in Dijon to prepare for the series of examinations available for catechists which, for the first time in 1934, included one for a degree;⁵⁴ there were correspondence courses for those unable to come in person.

Finally, the spiritual formation of the catechists was catered for by an annual retreat and days of recollection.

(d) Influence of Dijon

This organization of which one might say Petit de Julleville was the architect and Boyer the builder was comprehensive. It envisaged nothing less than the availability of religious instruction for every child in the diocese, even those beyond the age where it was obligatory, and slow-learners. The bishop had said he wanted a type of organization comparable to that in mission countries in order to reach the tremendous number of the ignorant and the indifferent (p.77). Boyer put all his considerable organizing ability into the project and within five years not only was the catechetical work at Dijon known all over France but abroad as well. Largely through the spread of the bulletin it was even known as far away as India.⁵⁵ In the visitor's book of the centre are to be found not only the names of the Bishops of Bourges, Sens, Soissons, and many other dioceses in France, but also visitors from Morocco, Switzerland, Italy, Belgium, and other countries.⁵⁶ It should be remembered that the decree Provido Sane of Pope Pius XI ordaining that there should be a catechetical office in each diocese and appropriate organization, was only published in 1935. There had been a previous call for a better organization of religious

53. Boyer, Mouvement catéchistique français, p.55.

54. The degree course was the first to be devised for catechists although it did not appear to be validated by a university and contained no study of theology as such, this not being allowed to women at that time. It was only in 1948 that the Institut Catholique de Paris at the instigation of Boyer started a degree course which included theology. (See Vimort, Interview de Françoise Derkenne, p.99). The Dijon degree course was not confined to people of the diocese.

55. Letter to André Boyer from Rev. E. Harrison SJ., St Mary's College, Kurseong, India, 14 July 1936 with an article to be published in an Indian educational journal detailing the work of the Dijon centre. (Archives of André Boyer, File 98).

56. Boyer, Mouvement catéchistique français, pp.60-61. In 1935 alone there were more than two thousand visitors, though obviously many of these were catechists and local clergy.

instruction by the same pope in 1923,⁵⁷ but it had to a large extent been disregarded. In a letter to Eugène Charles in 1933⁵⁸ Boyer said as much, going on to lament the way in which religious instruction was neglected in schools, even in minor seminaries. Above all he felt there was no leadership, no centre where ideas and action could be co-ordinated. When the new decree appeared, causing a flurry of activity in other dioceses, there was at least somewhere to look for advice.

(e) Publications

Bishop Petit de Julleville wrote two pamphlets about the work being done in his diocese though he had moved on to the Archdiocese of Rouen before the second one appeared in 1936.⁵⁹ He also wrote introductions to all Boyer's early books, the first of which, Carnet de Documentation catéchistique, appeared in 1933. Written in response to an immediate practical need, this booklet was simply an organized bibliography for catechists. There was a minimum of information and criticism and it was not immune to the kind of nightmare error suffered by many authors.⁶⁰ One curious omission from it, considering the diocese where it was published, was Landrieux's Pastoral Letter of 1922; Boyer received a severe letter of criticism for this and other omissions.⁶¹ The second pamphlet appearing in the same year, Guide-Programme des examens d'instruction religieuse, was also a purely practical and explanatory guide for candidates for the religious examinations. La Bible des tout-petits came out in the following year. It contained a method for teaching small children to go with a set of cut-out wooden figures designed and produced by Mme J. Le Tourneur. There were nine scenes from the old testament and nineteen from the

57. 'Orbem Catholicam, motu proprio on religious instruction', 29 June 1923.

58. 17 Apr. 1933, Archives of André Boyer, File 57.

59. Pierre Petit de Julleville, Un essai d'organisation de nos catéchistes volontaires (1934).
idem, Notre Secrétariat diocésain des catéchismes (1936).

60. One of the addresses given in the booklet of a supplier of religious pictures turned out to be one of pornographic pictures. Boyer was informed of this by a correspondent who sent for the pictures. (From M.G. Jacquemet, 29 Jan. 1935, Archives of André Boyer, File 57).

61. From Dr Rendre, 25 Oct. 1934, Archives of André Boyer, File 20.

new. The work proved popular and ran to three editions.⁶²

Boyer's major work of this early pre-war period was Catéchisme vivant which ran to two editions,⁶³ five thousand copies and was translated into Portuguese. It was based on a lecture he gave in Paris in 1934 and so impressed Eugène Charles that he insisted on its publication. The latter introduced the author to the publishers Desclée who included the book in a series on Problems in Education.⁶⁴ Approximately one-third of the book is taken up with an exhaustive bibliography listing all the books, pictures and other aids that might be useful to catechists.⁶⁵

In the first part of the book Boyer sets out frankly the problems facing the catechist and the deficiencies of the present system. He

62. Boyer was at pains to point out that the ideas for the method were his and that the Le Tourneur material was made to his specifications. Fargues had mentioned it in the bibliography of her book Les Méthodes Actives dans l'enseignement religieux (1934) p.132. She described it as Le Tourneur's Method and added, "a booklet, La Bible des tout-petits, helps in using the material." Boyer asked her to make a correction in a later edition of her book for "Le Tourneur's Method does not exist, but my method, which is called La Bible des tout-petits of which I am the sole author and for which Mme Le Tourneur's material was made as illustration according to my indications and following my plan..." (Draft of letter to Marie Fargues, 5 Dec. 1934, Archives of André Boyer, File 20). However, in her reply, Fargues points out that Le Tourneur had brought out her wooden cut-outs the previous year when they had been described in Fargues' bibliography L'Éducation religieuse des petits enfants (1933), as L'Évangile en scènes mobiles. (Letter from Fargues, 7 Dec. 1934, *ibid*). It therefore seems likely that Boyer had in fact got the idea for his method from Le Tourneur.

The wooden cut-outs were evidently expensive and Boyer wanted something cheaper in paper. He asked Eugène Charles' advice as to which publisher might undertake such a cheap edition so as to reach a wider public. (Letter to Eugène Charles, 15 Dec. 1934, *ibid*, file 57). In his reply Charles does not mention the matter, though he answers the other parts of Boyer's letter. (Letter from E. Charles, 23 Jan. 1935, *ibid*). The cheap edition was finally brought out in 1938 as Album de la Bible des tout-petits par A. Boyer, avec la collaboration de Mme Le Tourneur.

63. Letter to Marie Fargues from the publishers Desclée, 3 Nov. 1937 in which they asked her private opinion of Boyer's book to help them judge whether it was worth reprinting. Her answer does not remain but it must have been favourable as a second edition appeared in 1938. (Archives of Marie Fargues).

64. Boyer, Mouvement catéchistique français, p.61.

65. In a letter to Eugène Charles Boyer writes of the approaching publication of his book and asks advice on how best to update the bibliography, whether by getting the publisher to issue monthly addenda, or by publishing them in Persévérance or in Cahiers Catéchistiques. (28 Jan. 1935, Archives of André Boyer, File 57.)

then goes on to put before his readers the remedy which he sees as a careful and detailed organization of catechism classes following a meticulously planned programme based on active methods. Among these he includes what he prefers to call 'Centre of Orientation' rather than the more usual 'Centre of Interest' for the youngest children.⁶⁶ The whole book is of admirable clarity and precision, theologically and pedagogically sound and up to date, but one finds there little that is original or inspirational. However as one commentator remarked, at least it is a step away from the traditional methods and will be of enormous practical help to catechists.⁶⁷ Ranwez⁶⁸ felt that through his book Boyer exercised a considerable influence by putting some order into the many and varied methods that were beginning to appear by discouraging what had no future and putting forward what he thought would endure.

(f) Lectures

André Boyer was much in demand as a speaker at this time and there are records and notes of innumerable talks given in different dioceses up and down France. Many of the talks were repeated in a slightly different form, updated where necessary but they were always full of practical advice for catechists and those concerned with organization. Some of them were printed in more or less expanded form and all show signs of the meticulous care he brought to everything he did; he seemed to have read everything written on whatever subject was in question. As Petit de Julleville wrote in the preface to one of Boyer's later

66. Boyer justifies his use of the term Centre of Orientation in a letter to Françoise Derkenne, "quite simply because I think religious education has not only a mission to interest but also to orientate ... even the little ones. If it seems to be in contradiction to Rousseau and his followers ... it is the command of the Master." (There is some mention of the method in Chapter 1, p.31). In answer to Derkenne's remark that she concentrates all the interest of her children on the person of Jesus as someone living and in whom they must live through the Liturgical year, he replies that he would never make Jesus the centre of interest in the methodological sense though events in his life might be taken. The person of Jesus "is at the centre of all interest in religion, obviously, but that is another matter." (From Françoise Derkenne, 18 July 1935, To Françoise Derkenne, 22 July 1935, Archives of André Boyer, file 20). In his otherwise very favourable review of the book Jean Rimaud finds the distinction too subtle to be useful "for at that age, interest is anticipation and hence orientation, attitude to the future." (Études (228) no.16 20 Aug. 1936, 530).

67. Letter from M. de Paillerets OP., to Marie Fargues 17 July 1935, Archives of Marie Fargues.

68. Ranwez, Pastorale de l'enfance, p.20.

books, "he has read and analysed everything and has then put forward his recommendations objectively."⁶⁹

The first lecture given in the diocese in December 1931 was entitled Psychology of the baptized. Four major ones were given in 1932 and 1933, for the first time outside the diocese of Dijon, and in 1934 he addressed the Archconfraternity in Paris on Why do adolescents not persevere? This talk was summarized in La Croix, the French Catholic daily newspaper, and provoked a vitriolic attack on the French clergy in a letter to Boyer.⁷⁰

Each year the number of lectures increased, with several given before large national congresses and many more given in individual dioceses; all this was on top of his regular courses in Dijon.⁷¹

69. Pierre Petit de Julleville, Preface to Pédagogie chrétienne, by André Boyer, p.vi.

70. This is an interesting and revealing letter by what appears to be a Catholic, upper class laywoman. In it she cites several examples of what she considers to be a certain opting out, a lack of courage, in the French clergy, partly responsible for the falling off in religious practice, "... it is admitted ... by Catholic laity as well as by the clergy, that once you have made your first Communion, you have finished." She considers the clergy should either resign or re-establish sanctions. She accuses them of breaking the backs of voluntary women catechists who are doing their best, and of condoning wrong-doing. Finally she threatens to stop her subscription to La Croix and ends, "It is not a question of organizing congresses but of applying the laws of the Church." There is no record of any reply by Boyer. (From I.de la Taille, 16 May 1934, Archives of André Boyer, File 20).

71. One week in his diary for March 1938 shows the punishing schedule to which Boyer subjected himself:-

Dimanche	6 mars	Départ Dijon 1209	Arrivée Avignon 1727
Lundi	7	<u>Avignon</u> 1ère Conférence à 9h30 (petits)	
		2ème	à 15h. (9-12 ans)
Mardi	8	Départ 1745 ou 1948	Arrivée Nîmes 1834 ou 2037
		<u>Nîmes</u> 1ère Conférence à 9h30 (petits)	
		2ème	à 15h (9-12 ans)
Mercredi	9	Départ 1604 ou 1820	Arrivée Toulon 1908 ou 2110
		<u>Toulon et Marseille</u>	
		Conférence Toulon 9h30 (9-12 ans)	
		Départ 1257 Arr.Marseille 1359	
		Conférence aux Catéchistes 15h (9-12)	
		Conférence aux Séminaristes à 1800 (spécial)	
Jeudi	10	<u>Aix</u>	
		Départ en car, (tous les 15 minutes, trajet 50min)	
		conférence à 14h. (9-12 ans)	
		Départ de Marseille 17h35 ou 20h25	matin 5h25
		Arrivée Montpellier 21h19 ou 23h22	8h05
Vendredi	11	<u>Montpellier</u> 1ère Conférence 10h (petits)	
		2ème	14h30 (9 à 12 ans)
		Départ 1734 Coucher à Avignon	arrivée 1930
Samedi	12	Départ 8h14	arrivée Dijon 1349.

It is hardly surprising that he fell seriously ill in the summer of 1939.

(g) Articles

A few articles by Boyer date from these years before the Second World War, for the most part in reviews read by priests; his books were reviewed in national journals as they appeared. One article with a much wider circulation was in a special number on 'The Catechism' of La Vie Catholique, a popular, weekly, illustrated magazine with a considerable readership. In the special number there were also articles by Fargues, E. Charles, Quinet and others in the catechetical field. Boyer's subject was the use of visual aids in the teaching of religion.⁷²

Probably his most important journalistic effort at this time was his almost monthly contribution to the Cahiers catéchistiques, edited by Quinet and closely linked with the Archconfraternity, thus read by many catechists all over France.⁷³ There were articles such as A full Christian education by means of the Catechism,⁷⁴ and, for a time, a

72. André Boyer, *Illustration de l'enseignement, projection, exposition, musées, jeux, etc.* La Vie Catholique, 14 Dec. 1935, p.12.

73. Cahiers catéchistiques was a catechetical review published monthly in Paris from 1932 until the war in 1939. It is considered in more detail in Chap.2, p.47, and Chap.5, p.104 et seq.

74. André Boyer, *L'éducation chrétienne totale par le catéchisme*, Cahiers catéchistiques no.9 June 1933, pp.641-647; no.10 July 1933, pp.727-735; no.13 Dec. 1933, pp.161-171; no.15 Feb. 1934, pp.321-329.

monthly review of activities in other dioceses.⁷⁵ He wrote book reviews, some of them so scathing that they could not be published, though there is evidence in his letters that he was not aware of how harsh he sometimes sounded.⁷⁶

3. Sembel and the founding of the Parish auxiliary Catechists

At the end of the nine years of his tenure of the see of Dijon, Petit de Julleville could look with some satisfaction on the highly efficient organization for religious instruction that he had created

75. The monthly review Chronique de la Province first appeared in Cahiers Catéchistiques for Nov. 1933, but Boyer threatened to give it up almost at once because of a supposed overlap with contributions from the Archconfraternity. Quinet managed to persuade him not to do so, but the whole affair extended to a correspondence of seven letters over the period 27 Nov. to 13 Dec. 1933 involving Mlle Heitz, Secretary-General of the Archconfraternity, as well as Quinet and Boyer. It illustrates Boyer's touchiness and over-reaction to any slight, real or imaginary.

There was a repetition of the affair over a year later and another lengthy and acrimonious correspondence from 13 to 21 Apr. 1935, involving the same people. At the end of it Boyer resigned and the monthly review stopped for the whole of the academic year 1935-6. While also illustrating the same point as above, the comparison between the way Boyer reported the event in his book Mouvement catéchistique français some thirty years later and what actually transpired in the correspondence reveals something not only of his intransigence but also of his bias as a historian.

Altogether it would seem that he could not endure to admit being in the wrong but always sought to justify himself. (Archives of André Boyer, File 57).

76. Boyer reviewed Fargues' Le Pain Vivant, a book of short meditations for children, in Persévérance (see above p.79) of which he was editor. He took exception to two points on theological grounds and discussed them with the author. (Memo [undated draft] Boyer to Fargues; letter Fargues to Boyer, 4 June 1934, Archives of André Boyer, File 20). He published the criticism which was on the whole favourable and did not specify the two points. It brought a mild reproof from Petit de Julleville in a letter of 8 Aug. 1934 (ibid., File 62), "I noted the little dig at Mme Fargues. The scratch is small..." In his reply Boyer seemed surprised "I had not meant to scratch however slightly... I was thinking of my readers. I know too well the damage wrought by thoughtless criticism to practice it myself."

He also sent a review of one of Fargues' later books Introduction des enfants de neuf ans au Catéchisme to Quinet for inclusion in Cahiers Catéchistiques with a covering letter dated 28 Nov. 1936, (ibid., File 20). The review was never published, hardly surprisingly since it was almost totally destructive. Only towards the end does he admit that some of the children's worksheets are good, but he ends by saying "I cannot recommend the book." Yet other critics spoke highly of it and it became extremely popular. It is one of Fargues' seminal works and is analysed in some detail in Chapter 7.

with the aid of Boyer. He was to see amply fulfilled a remark made in a note to the latter about a year before he left the diocese, "I am convinced that in a few years' time our initiatives will have spread to several dioceses."⁷⁷ One can also, perhaps, detect a slight complacency in his reply to Canon Paul Lieutier. Newly appointed director-general of the Archconfraternity, Lieutier wrote offering his and the Archconfraternity's services in developing the work of the catechists in the diocese.⁷⁸ The Bishop replied that they were already organized and he did not think there was anything he needed from the central organization.⁷⁹ There was, however, one project which had been under discussion for at least six years, but which Petit de Julleville had to leave in the hands of his successor, Guillaume Sembel, when he was transferred to Rouen in September 1936; this was the foundation of the Association of Parish Auxiliary Catechists.

As was seen in Chapter 2 (p.48) there were precedents for Societies of Catechists, notably in the dioceses of Paris and Lille. At the time of the first discussions on the matter in Dijon there were already about six such societies in existence and five more came into being at much the same time as that at Dijon.⁸⁰

(a) The Union

The initiative for the foundation in Dijon appears to have come from Boyer, though his idea of forming his catechists at Châtillon into a group for spiritual and practical support may not have got as far as Petit de Julleville took it. In his earliest letter on the subject in 1930 the Bishop said "I am very interested in the extension of your first grouping and believe I can see the hand of Providence just at the time I want to develop the organization of catechism classes. I can, perhaps, see further towards a society (though not necessarily a congregation) of rural missionaries."⁸¹ Through the meticulous records

77. 17 Sept. 1935, Archives of André Boyer, File 62.

78. 26 Nov. 1935, *ibid.*, file 57.

79. Reply to above quoted in letter to André Boyer, 27 Nov. 1935, *ibid.*

80. It is difficult to be precise as to how many of these societies there were at any given time as there were cases where two fused to become a new one and others where they had lapsed and been re-founded. Others again had other apostolates as well as parish catechetics and so were not always listed with the rest. Yet others were vaguely attached to some religious order and so were not strictly diocesan as were most of them.

81. 20 Dec. 1930, Archives of André Boyer, File 62.

Boyer kept in black, bound notebooks it is possible to trace the genesis of a group at Châtillon as early as 1923.⁸² The name of Suzanne Frontière (p.82) recurs frequently, and is listed, with others, as having passed successively the various catechetical examinations. She was a member of this early group called the Union⁸³ and already in 1929 she was in full overall charge of the services available at Châtillon; she even had to light the boiler before the Thursday evening classes. She gave up her teaching post in a private school to work full-time for Boyer and practised, in his words, "total obedience, heroic poverty and complete self-effacement."⁸⁴ She was by then thirty-eight and evidently wished to devote herself entirely to God in working for the spread of the faith.

(b) Beginnings of a Society of Catechists

In another section of the same interview mentioned above (note 84), Boyer speaks of four young women who have lived a rule of life for a year. He gave a copy of the rule to Petit de Julleville who professed himself extremely interested and felt there were probably

82. Two in particular of the large number of manuscript notebooks in the Archives provided the information. They were labelled: 'Châtillon-sur-Seine Catéchisme de Persévérance et cours de religion du Collège', 'Catéchisme de Persévérance Organisation'.

83. In a document in his own hand dated simply 1924, Boyer set out the aims and objects of the 'Union des "Correspondants"' where it can be seen that this was a loose association of people whose life was centred on the diocesan catechetical activities. The Union gave them spiritual and moral support through regular monthly meetings, study days and days of recollection. There is a duplicate of the document in Frontière's hand, undated, but obviously written later. It ends with the following: "Actual state of the Union: It began in 1924 with three young women. It has now reached 126 members. Out of this number there are some who are following the same rule as the Bishop has..." This referred to the beginning of the Association of Catechists. (Archives of André Boyer, File 62).

84. Notes of interview with the Bishop, 'Visite à Mgr: 11 mars 1931', already cited above pp.79-80, *ibid.*

others who would join them.⁸⁵ In fact there had already been several who had signified either to Boyer or to Frontière or to other priests their interest since the matter had been mentioned in the catechist's bulletin.

(c) The Association of Parish Auxiliary Catechists

Details of the next few years are sparse, but the Union and its bulletin continued⁸⁶ and the ground was being prepared for the foundation of the Association. The first draft of a rule of life was dated 1937 and the records contain a typed list of the trousseau required as well as a Directory for the members, though these are undated. Sembel became bishop of Dijon in the summer of 1937 and in August the Association of Parish Auxiliary Catechists was founded officially. A printed leaflet dated October 1938⁸⁷ sums up their aims and way of life within the two degrees of membership.

(i) Way of life

Their spirit was to be one of pre-occupation with evangelization in co-operation with the clergy. Their life was to be one of obedience and self-sacrifice in which no opportunity was to be lost of instructing others, and in which their own personal religious formation must be advanced.

(ii) Full members of the First Order

The members of the first order or full members, were virtually

85. This evidently refers to the same group as is mentioned by Frontière (see note 83, end, above). There is another document in the same place in Boyer's hand setting out in more detail what he said to the bishop. It includes biographical details of the four young women and refers to the rule. Notes made by Boyer in 1940 (Archives of André Boyer, File 64) when he had ceased to be Director of the Society of Catechists, name them and give more details. Mlle Frontière was not a full member probably because of her age, which was forty-four when the Association was officially founded. The earliest copy of the provisional rule specifies an age limit of thirty. She was an affiliated member and her name appears in a list of affiliées dated 13 Apr. 1938. (Archives of André Boyer, File 63).

86. Copies of the bulletin from 1932-36 are extant. Mention of the Union as a flourishing concern occurs in a letter from Petit de Julleville to Boyer, 13 Apr. 1933, (ibid., File 62).

87. 'Diocèse de Dijon, Association des Catéchistes Auxiliaires des Paroisses'. 4pp. At the end is stated: "Permis d'Imprimer: Dijon, le 7 Octobre 1938. + Guillaume, Evêque de Dijon." In a footnote to page 4 Boyer is named as Director, to whom all inquiries should be addressed. (ibid., File 64).

like members of a religious congregation. They had a form of religious profession, community life and a simple modern habit with veil. They were obliged to make the usual spiritual exercises of religious, including Mass, meditation, spiritual reading and an annual retreat.

(iii) Associate members of the First Order

The Associate members formed a sub-division of the First Order. They were able to live at home if family reasons required it. Otherwise they had to fulfil as many as possible of the obligations of the full members except that they were not obliged to wear the habit when at home though they had to do so while engaged in catechetical work.

(iv) Affiliated members or Second Order

The members of the Second Order or affiliées had their own simple rule with far fewer spiritual obligations and no habit. They lived at home, but took an equally large part in the work of religious instruction as the full members.⁸⁸

(v) The Director

André Boyer was put in charge of the Association by Bishop Sembel and carried out his duties in his usual conscientious fashion. Unfortunately, there is evidence in a very voluminous correspondence in the archives of clashes of personality. Many of the difficulties that arose in the early days came from lack of experience and perhaps a too rigid application of the rules, not always taking into account family circumstances. In the notes of 1940 cited above (p.92) Boyer admits that the first full members were launched into their apostolic work without the religious formation in a noviciate that would be normal in any religious congregation, and without a mistress of novices to train them. The one who was appointed superior apparently had to refer to Boyer for every detail, or at least she did so. Another had to be dismissed because, among many other things, the children complained that she hit them. There is much more besides to reveal a story of human weakness which God nevertheless made use of to do his work. A crisis arose as a result of clashes and misunderstandings which made the bishop deem it advisable to relieve Boyer of his charge as Director

88. There have been modifications in the Association but it still exists, though there are only seven members left. One of them is assistant director of the religious education centre at Dijon.

of the Parish Auxiliary Catechists in February 1940.⁸⁹

Conclusion: Contribution of the diocese of Dijon to the Catechetical
Renewal Movement

With all his faults and in spite of all the clashes brought about by his difficult character it cannot be denied that Boyer was a remarkable organizer and that working successively with his bishops he served the cause of religious education well. In Fargues' words, "The diocese of Dijon with Abbé Boyer was the only one to have done something for this problem [the formation of catechists]: a centre of documentation, various types of meetings, a course of studies, examinations, diplomas."⁹⁰ The judgement of a later generation also considers his organizational ability more important than his catechetical writings.⁹¹

In an address⁹² given before Bishop Sembel, André Boyer paid apt tribute to the four bishops of Dijon he had known, and to their contributions to the catechetical renewal:

"Bishop Dadolle was the first to attempt to modify the leprous little book bequeathed to us by tradition. He experienced ... opposition in

89. Boyer was very hurt at this turn of events and reacted strongly in a letter to Sembel of 6 Feb. 1940 saying that he felt he had been betrayed. He set out his version of the story in a long memo. (Archives of André Boyer. File 64). It is touching to read a letter of 1951 in the same file, from the person (A.C.) he felt had betrayed him, in which she thanked him for all he had done for her in her youth. In his letter of 13 Feb. 1940, Sembel says this was not behind the decision to relieve him of his post.

A letter of 10 Sept. 1969 from another of the early members spoke appreciatively of his welcome thirty-one years before, mentioned difficulties and sorrows, among them the departure of certain sisters (including A.C.). She also spoke of her confidence in the Association, of which he was the father, and that it must go on as it is God's work. A final footnote to the affair was a cutting from a local newspaper of 8 July 1970, in which A.C., now a nurse, was mentioned.

90. Fargues, How to teach religion, p.38.

91. Adler, Joseph Colomb, p.33.

92. 'L'Oeuvre des Catéchismes' [by André Boyer, 1949]. Archives of André Boyer, File 65.

The text of the two-page address is unsigned and undated but it was found between two documents both dated Apr. 1949 so that is its presumed date. It may be supposed to be by Boyer from stylistic evidence, e.g. the expression 'lépreux' referring to the catechism also occurs in his book Pédagogie Chrétienne on p.302. Further, there is no mention of Boyer himself in the address. Sembel was Bishop of Dijon from 1937-1964

trying to make a Christocentric catechism, in wanting to speak to children in their own language. Do not let us forget that he started the catechetical organization in the diocese.

Bishop Landrieux's pastoral letter 'Sinite Parvulos' was at the origin of the gospel-based catechism...

Bishop Petit de Julleville was the creator of our secretariat and catechetical exhibitions but was also pre-occupied with the idea of a Christocentric, gospel-based catechism...

You, your Excellency, have added ... another stone to the building ... Your predecessors thought in terms of catechism whereas you thought in terms of catechist... You called the members of the Association you founded... Parish Auxiliary Catechists with the idea that no matter what apostolate they exercised, they should be teachers, witnesses to Christ..."

DEVELOPMENTS IN PARIS AND ELSEWHERE

In previous chapters some mention has been made of the Enseignement Libre¹ and of the Archiconfrérie de l'Oeuvre des Catéchismes.² In connection with the latter certain names were mentioned which would become well-known in the Catechetical Movement, most notably Mme Marie Fargues but also Mlle M.M.d'Aubigny and Mme Louise Damez. In examining the contribution of these and others, including Canon Charles Quinet³ the important role of the private schools as a testing ground for new ideas will become evident. The wealth of material coming from the diocese of Dijon, remarkable though it was,⁴ was being matched in the period between the two world wars by much of comparable soundness but greater originality from elsewhere. These developments in Paris and some other dioceses would influence profoundly the later catechetical movement.

Boyer writing of the period⁵ uses expressions such as "scattered efforts" and even "chaos", but he also notes that it was a time of "effervescence" pedagogically-speaking. One can understand this view if one realizes that there was no co-ordinated national catechetical effort at the time and not even a single national catechism.⁶ Nevertheless there was no lack of ideas and initiatives, the majority from layfolk, especially women catechists. When, after the Second World War, a central organization was set up there were many strands available to be woven into a unified structure to form the foundation

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1. The system of private schools which constitutes the Enseignement Libre of France caters for the education of approximately one-fifth of the school population, mainly in denominational schools. (See Chapter 1, p.16 and Chapter 3, p.64).
 2. See Chapter 2, passim.
 3. See Chapter 3, p.65 where Quinet's first books are considered.
 4. See Chapters 4 and 8.
 5. Boyer, Mouvement catéchistique français, pp.27, 53, 73.
 6. See Chapter 1, p.35. France was not the only country in this situation. In England, for example, there was no nationally co-ordinated Roman Catholic catechetical effort, though there was a single catechism.

of the modern catechetical renewal movement.

1. In the Dioceses

The Bishop in each diocese was responsible for religious instruction in his diocese, delegating the responsibility to the parish priests in their own parishes. It would therefore be instructive to look round the dioceses to see if there was any co-ordinated effort within them. A branch of the Archconfraternity was established in most dioceses by the end of the First World War and a table published in its official organ⁷ shows that in many of them a priest was named to be in charge of religious instruction in the diocese. It is evident from the table alone that many of these priests held this charge as only part of their work. Boyer confirms this⁸ from the records he compiled while writing a monthly review of what was going on in the dioceses.⁹ According to these, only about ten out of ninety dioceses had a full-time or almost full-time director for Religious Instruction.¹⁰ Only about five dioceses had a library and some kind of secretarial help and again only about five produced a bulletin that was specifically catechetical in content. Arras and Nancy will be considered as examples of dioceses that appeared to be more active and better-organized than most, leaving aside Dijon and Paris which receive more detailed treatment in other chapters.¹¹

(a) Arras

In spite of its geographical position in the north of France where there had been severe fighting in the First World War and heavy bombardments, no time was lost in restoring and even improving the organization after hostilities ceased. The diocesan director, Canon

7. Archiconfrérie des Catéchismes, Tableau des organisations diocésaines, Le Catéchiste 3e année no.4 May-June 1922, pp.108-115.

8. Boyer, Mouvement catéchistique français, p.66.

9. This was the Chronique de la Province in Cahiers Catéchistiques which he wrote from 1933-39 with a break in 1935-36, (see Chapter 4, pp.88-89). In his book he also gave some statistics for the earlier years, (Boyer, op.cit. Chap.7 passim).

10. *ibid.* pp.67-69. Figures are approximate only as there were fluctuations over the twenty-year period and also the records are incomplete.

11. See Chapter 4 for developments in Dijon. Much of the organization in Paris revolved round the Archconfraternity which is considered in Chapter 2 and further developments are discussed below (p.102 et seq).

P. Hoguet, started a monthly bulletin for catechists which continued right through to 1939.¹² He also set up an organization in the different deaneries with parish representatives. He organized study-days and conferences as well as days of recollection for the catechists, of whom there were more than a thousand in the diocese. Hoguet's name appears in lists of those attending conferences and meetings of diocesan directors in Paris.¹³ News of Arras was sent regularly for publication in Le Catéchiste and later Cahiers catéchistiques. Boyer evidently held Hoguet in high esteem and considered him competent.¹⁴

(b) Nancy

The diocese of Nancy in Lorraine, only a hundred miles from the German border, had also suffered in the war. It, too, had a competent director, Fr Henri-Jean Houbaut, and proper organization for the thousand and more catechists of the diocese. Houbaut started a bulletin, La Bonne Semence, which only ceased publication in 1932 when he joined the editorial board of the newly-founded Cahiers catéchistiques. Appointed Bishop of Bayonne in 1935, his work at Nancy was continued by Fr Gégout. The latter was replaced two years later by Fr M. Zaepfel who started a new monthly bulletin for catechists, Grain de Senevé. Unfortunately this did not last long, being cut short by the war in 1939.¹⁵ The presence of the Director for religious instruction for Nancy is noted at successive meetings of the diocesan directors in Paris ending in 1938 when he is reported as saying that the "Oeuvre des Catéchismes is in full activity with annual meetings at the chief town of the diocese and study days at other important centres."¹⁶ News of these and other activities were also published in

12. Fargues received the Bulletin and some forty numbers are in the Archives of Marie Fargues at the Institut Catholique in Paris.

13. Chanon, 'Si Varenne m'était conté', Annexe V. "Compte-Rendu de la Réunion des Directeurs diocésains" 28 Jan. 1936. Hoguet gave a detailed account of his organization to this meeting. Apart from those of Dijon, Paris and Rouen, none of the other eighteen diocesan directors present had anything to report.

14. Boyer, Mouvement catéchistique français, p.68.

15. The complete set (except for one number) is in the Archives of Marie Fargues.

16. Chanon, 'Si Varenne m'était conté',
Annexe V Compte rendu 28 Jan. 1936
Annexe VI Compte rendu 3 Feb. 1937.
Annexe VII Compte rendu 2 Feb. 1938.

Le Catéchiste and in Cahiers catéchistiques which replaced it.

Doubtless much solid catechetical work was being done in all the dioceses but there is little sign of clear direction, co-ordination and originality. Help for catechists was limited though it must be remembered that in the first part of the period under consideration, the years after the First World War, the catechists were priests, with few exceptions. They relied on their seminary training in theology¹⁷ to see them through and for the most part were quite ignorant of, and uninterested in, the new pedagogical methods coming into use in schools.

(c) A Parish in Saint-Dié

Among those who held different views was Canon E. Bogard, parish priest of Thaon-les-Vosges in the diocese of Saint-Dié. In 1924 he had founded a society of parish auxiliary catechists;¹⁸ with their help he had developed and published a catechetical method. The method was completed with a series of classroom pictures and background books based on their own experience and was in widespread use for some twenty years outside their own diocese as well as within.

2. The Recurring Theme of Ignorance and Suggested Remedies

There was, apparently, no lack of awareness of the need to improve the situation in catechetics and of dire warnings from both priests and laity. The theme of ignorance of religion as the cause of dechristianization¹⁹ recurs constantly. For example at a general meeting of the Archconfraternity in Paris in 1920 a woman catechist said "In 1914 we bemoaned the growing ignorance of the children ... in 1920 ... [there is] total ignorance of religion."²⁰ Addressing the same meeting, Abbé Bombardier, curate in a Paris parish, quoting Cardinal Pie said much

17. This situation was to change within a few years. At the meeting of diocesan directors mentioned above (note 13) of 29 Jan. 1936, several described courses in modern catechetical methods and supervised teaching practice for seminarians.

18. This was a similar association to those described in Chapter 2, pp.48-49, and Chapter 4, pp.89-94. The Parish Auxiliary Catechists of Thaon became known as les Soeurs Bernadettes and the method was called the Méthode Bernadette. (Boyer, Pédagogie chrétienne, p.279.)

19. Interview with Georges Duperray, Lyons, 1 June 1979, where the theme was pointed out to the present writer.

20. Mme de Langre de Lac, *Differents buts de l'Oeuvre des Catéchismes: social, moral, patriotique, religieux*, Le Catéchiste no.10 July 1920, p.276.

the same thing, "The cause of our miseries is that from the highest to the lowest in society no one knows their religion."²¹

(a) Bombardier's Analysis

In a long and carefully-worded address, Bombardier went on to give a very full analysis of the situation and to make concrete proposals for improvement. "Do all our efforts obtain the result they merit? No ... a better method is needed." He felt that the time had come to teach in different groups children from homes where religion was practised and those from homes where it was not. He wanted more of the Gospel introduced into the catechism lessons and he suggested the use of slides and other visual aids but his vision did not really extend beyond the catechism itself. His main suggestion was that there should be a single catechism at least for all the dioceses of the Paris region and if possible for the whole of France. He wanted a commission to be set up to look into these matters. Cardinal Amette, Archbishop of Paris, who presided at the meeting agreed to this request on the spot and appointed Canon Georges Audollent, editor of Le Catéchiste, to head the commission.²²

(b) More Catechisms

These warnings and others produced a new crop of catechisms all more or less on the same lines.²³ There was still the "dominant preoccupation of explaining the catechism literally"²⁴ and a dearth of fresh ideas. Audollent and Bombardier were among those who produced explanatory catechisms. One of the most significant was that of Fr Léon Mury who published in 1924 one of the first catechisms following the Gospel.²⁵ It was more a modernizing of the Method of St Sulpice (p.36) than the radical re-thinking of method called for by Landrieux and realized by Eugène Charles. (p.75) Seven years after publishing his catechism Mury brought out a pamphlet in support of Landrieux's

21. Abbé Bombardier, Où en sont nos méthodes de formation chrétienne? Le Catéchiste no.10 July 1920, p.317 et seq.

22. The theme of ignorance continued to recur in the writings of many authors, e.g. Fargues, Boyer, Colomb, but over the years there was a change of perspective as to its cause and as to how it might be combated. (See, for example, Colomb in the Report of the International Congress of Religious Instruction, Rome, 1950, p.213)

23. Adler, (Joseph Colomb, p.31), referring to the mass of publications appearing at this time, says they "copy each other."

24. Boyer, Mouvement catéchistique français, p.73.

25. Léon Mury, Le Catéchisme dans l'Évangile (1924).

criticisms of catechetical method and content and his call for reform.²⁶

(c) Return to the Gospel

Positive suggestions had been made by Petit de Julleville's predecessor as Archbishop of Rouen several years before Mury's pamphlet.²⁷ "To develop a child's faith it must be taught to pray and to love God, it must be nourished ... on the Gospel" he wrote, after noting that "our catechism lessons are more of a class than a preparation for life. The Catechism itself is dry, didactic and cold."

3. Directives from Rome

However, bishops and clergy alike were galvanized into action by directives issued from Rome in the decree Provido Sane of 12 January 1935 though not actually published in France until 25 May.²⁸ The Pope's call for a better catechetical organization could not be ignored. The following year a number of bishops issued pastoral letters discussing the teaching of religion and the organizing or re-organizing of it in their own dioceses.²⁹ It was also in that same year that appeared the special number on the Catechism of the weekly magazine La Vie Catholique previously mentioned (p.88).

26. Léon Mury, Graves reflexions sur l'enseignement du catéchisme (1931). There were two subsequent editions. Landrieux's Pastoral Letter is analysed in Chapter 4, pp.69-75.

27. Compte rendu, Journée catéchistique du 22 mars 1927. Le Catéchiste 8e année no. 4 May-June 1927, pp.112-113.

28. Pius XI, 'Provido Sane, decree on catechetical instruction, 12 Jan. 1935'. It was published in France in Documentation Catholique no.751. (See also Chapter 4, p.83).

29. Among the Lenten Pastoral Letters of 1936 were:

'How to explain the "failure" of our catechizing' by Bishop Clement Mathieu of Aire and Dax.

'On religious instruction' by Bishop Elie-Antoine Durand of Montauban.

'On the catechism' by Bishop Marcel Fleury of Nancy (where he signals the excellent work of Fr Houbaut, see above, p.98).

'On the teaching of the catechism and religious formation' by Bishop Patrick Flynn of Nevers (who recommends books by Fargues, Derkenne, Quinet and Boyer, but he was still considered too wedded to the catechism and too traditional by M. de Paillerets (Letter to Fargues, 20 Jul. 1936 in Archives of Marie Fargues).

These were followed on 7 Oct. 1936 by a Pastoral Letter 'On the catechism' by Cardinal Suhard, Archbishop of Rheims (later Archbishop of Paris). This, too, followed traditional lines, insisting on the catechism being learnt by heart, but also showing some recognition of the need to centre religious teaching on Christ and to teach the catechism through the Gospel.



According to Boyer,³⁰ the decree did not have as much effect as it should have done: "Study of it should have led to greater clarity and co-ordination." After thirty years he wondered how much it really had guided French catechetics.

4. Paris

In the archdiocese of Paris two kinds of organization are to be found in the period immediately following the First World War:

- The Archconfraternity of catechists with its priest-director, Canon Henri Odelin,
- the inspectorate for religious instruction in the private schools headed by Canon Georges Audollent with Canon Charles Quinet as collaborator.

All three priests were appointed by the Archbishop. In principle the organizations they headed worked in separate areas but in practice there was overlap as well as ambiguity and confusion. The Archconfraternity, as was seen in Chapter 2, really only had authority over the Paris woman catechists. It was a spiritual organization serving to keep its members in touch, rather than a pedagogical one. One of the ambiguities stemmed from the fact that its priest-director was also director of religious instructions in the archdiocese and as such had some say in the catechetical activities of the parish clergy, but only within the diocese. Further ambiguity arose from the fact that the editor of the official bulletin of the Archconfraternity from 1919-32, Le Catéchiste, was Audollent, of the Enseignement libre. In 1935, after the promulgation of Provido Sane, Canon Paul Lieutier was appointed Director-General of the Archconfraternity by the Assembly of the Cardinals and Archbishops of France, (ACA), on the recommendation of Cardinal Verdier. His mandate was to co-ordinate the activities of the Archconfraternity in all dioceses, Canon Albert Pasteau being director of the Archconfraternity in Paris. It was an initial attempt to create a more centralized organization which, in spite of the backing of the senior members of the hierarchy, was not wholly successful.³¹

(a) Quinet, a Pioneer Catechist

The involvement of the private schools with Le Catéchiste and later the Cahiers catéchistiques is of considerable significance in the

30. Boyer, Mouvement catéchistique français, p.91.

31. See Chapter 4, p.90, where Bishop Petit de Julleville of Dijon makes it clear that he felt no need for a central organization; admittedly his diocese was better organized than most others.

development of the early catechetical renewal. In their visits to these schools Audollent and Quinet saw new teaching methods being tried. Quinet especially used the reviews as a medium for diffusion of these ideas as they could and should be applied to the teaching of religion. From the beginning he had taken up the ideas of the new pedagogy wholeheartedly and in the period 1929-39 produced a series of books for both teachers and children. They were used in private schools and parish catechisms and he wrote many articles in support of his ideas, mainly for the catechetical reviews mentioned. He concentrated more on the practical side than on theory; on improving the catechism lesson rather than on modifying the catechism book.³² He was much sought after as a lecturer and from 1925-40 gave regular weekly courses at the headquarters of the Archconfraternity. From 1936 Quinet was also responsible for correspondence courses for catechists.

(b) "Ready-to-wear" catechetics

Quinet's most important book, Carnet de préparation d'un catéchiste³³ was based on his courses for catechists. It set out in detail a complete series of lessons based on the catechism including indications for the use of the blackboard. It was mainly directed towards private schools but was widely used in parishes as well and remained popular for many years.³⁴ Two comments sum up the author's approach in this book. A contemporary woman catechist, Fargues, wrote, "It was a presentation of doctrine, excellent of its kind. Its aim was to make the theological formulas understood..."³⁵ A member of the younger generation, Adler, remarks that Quinet was

... a specialist in 'ready-to-wear' catechetics... He was well aware of the gap between the concrete of a child's life and the abstract of the formulary which, in its references and language was moving away from the cultural surroundings of those for whom it was destined. 36

He felt, however, that Quinet's clerical training caused him to give pride of place to the authoritarian teaching of doctrine rather than to more modern methods of learning.

32. Later Quinet was to become involved in the revision of the catechism, (see Chapter 9, p.165 et seq).

33. The work appeared in three volumes successively in 1928, 1929, 1930.

34. Équipes catéchistes no.6 Oct. 1950 recommended it to men catechists.

35. Fargues, How to teach religion, p.21.

36. Adler, Joseph Colomb, p.31.

These comments could also be applied to Quinet's other works; they were useful and used, practical, but all along similar lines. However his place in the early catechetical renewal should not be underestimated. Fargues paid tribute to the promptitude with which he began to apply active methods to catechism lessons (p.66). Derkenne acknowledges his influence on her and speaks of him as one of "the pioneers of the catechetical renewal."³⁷ Chanon said that he saw what was needed but he also saw the need to go gently and was very amenable to work with.³⁸ The latter reflection was in marked contrast to Boyer whose correspondence with Quinet has already been mentioned.³⁹ He is somewhat scathing about the essentially utilitarian character of Quinet's work "which only seeks to facilitate the user's task without considering necessary reforms."⁴⁰ He was even more scathing about Quinet's next, and probably most important undertaking, the Cahiers catéchistiques.

(c) Cahiers catéchistiques

Quinet saw that the French catechetical movement needed coherence and unity. As a first step he conceived the idea of founding a new periodical in Paris to replace two existing ones, Le Catéchiste, official bulletin of the Archconfraternity, and La Bonne Semence of Nancy (p.98). It would appear under the patronage of the Archbishop of Paris and of most of the other Archbishops and Bishops of France. It would have a distinguished editorial board headed by Quinet and including Pasteau (p.102) to represent the Archconfraternity, Eugène Charles⁴¹ and Houbaut (p.98).

In the editorial of the first number⁴² Quinet set out the programme:

- it will seek to harmonize catechism teaching with the child's present needs, habits and mentality,

37. Vimort, Interview de Françoise Derkenne, p.99.

38. Interview with Marcelle Chanon, pioneer catechist and former Secretary-General of the Archiconfrérie de l'Oeuvre des Catéchismes, Paris, 28 Dec. 1978.

39. Chapter 4, p.89, note 75.

40. Boyer, Mouvement catéchistique français, p.74.

41. Chapter 4, pp.75-76. There were later changes in the editorial board, but Quinet remained until the review ended in 1939, with the war.

42. Programme des "Cahiers Catéchistiques," Cahiers Catéchistiques no.1 Oct. 1932, p.1.

- it will apply pedagogical principles based on child-psychology, emphasising practice rather than theory,
- it will make known new methods and seek to become a source of information and documentation for all catechists.

Quinet felt the time had come to produce a teacher's magazine such as was already available in the secular field,⁴³ though it would be restricted to religious instruction and there would be little for the upper secondary age group.⁴⁴ By the time of the first appearance of the Cahiers catéchistiques, laity, particularly women, were already being entrusted with catechetical instruction by the more enlightened clergy.⁴⁵ The review, therefore, envisaged both clergy and laity. There were difficulties and disagreements; in particular Quinet was accused of allowing other members of the editorial board little say in the running of the review. In the end this caused Charles to resign,⁴⁶ but the review continued to flourish⁴⁷ until the war put a stop to it, in common with most other publications.

Within the limits of the programme set out above, the review can be said to have fulfilled its aims. It was the vehicle through which the new methods of teaching were presented to catechists in a form in which they, mostly untrained as teachers, could use them in their catechism classes. Through its pages the names of Marie Fargues, Françoise Derkenne, Louise Damez, Marguerite d'Aubigny, Quinet himself, Charles and Boyer, to mention some of the more important ones, became

43. Quinet took as model the review L'École of the Enseignement Libre, as he says in the editorial cited above. L'École was a weekly review founded in 1909 by Audollent (p.100). It covered all subjects, all age ranges, and contained useful practical information for teachers as well as a certain number of more general articles.
44. The magazine appeared monthly and was divided into sections according to the various age groups, 4-6, 6-9, 9-12 and 12-14 years. It was issued unbound so that catechists could file the sections they needed, though this procedure was later abandoned. Then there were sections of general interest and, as it was the official organ of the Archconfraternity and related organizations, it contained sections of news for these (see Chapter 2, passim).
45. Derkenne and Fargues, two of the best-known, began in 1931 and 1932 respectively (See Chapter 4, p.81 note 50).
46. He announced this to Boyer in a letter of 23 Jan. 1935, "Quinet has accepted my resignation..." (Archives André Boyer, File 57).
47. In 1936-37 there were three thousand copies printed of each issue. (Report to meeting of diocesan directors, 3 Feb. 1937, Chanon, 'Si Varenne m'était conté', Annexe VI, p.3). In all there were seventy issues from Oct. 1932 to July 1939.

widely known in catechetical circles. Their expertise was shared in many articles and book reviews.⁴⁸ Inevitably there were weaknesses and it could not please everybody. A fitting epitaph might be the following two comments. The first was from one of the diocesan directors speaking on behalf of his catechists, "Would it be possible to have a less erudite review?"⁴⁹ The second was from Boyer in a letter to Charles, "The review has no longer any pedagogical interest. It is just nonsense..."⁵⁰

5. The Women Catechists

It is hardly surprising that the earliest literary efforts of the quite considerable number of women catechists who published books and articles were directed towards small children, those under seven generally, but sometimes up to nine years. The main reason was because there was the possibility of greater freedom for the younger children; one could get away from the catechism itself and use more illustrations and Bible stories. When they reached the age for compulsory catechism, normally nine years, they were subjected to the catechism till they were twelve. Gahéry (p.69), and Le Tourneur (p.84), have already been mentioned and there were others whose articles appeared in Le Catéchiste and in the Cahiers Catéchistiques. A number of books were written by women, Cécile Bruel⁵¹ and Leo Emmelia (pseudonym for Marthe Soyer)⁵² being two of the names found in bibliographies of the time. Their aim was to improve the religion lesson by means of illustrations, and the use of Bible stories and liturgy. In this they were successful, and they helped to spread some of the new teaching methods without, however, making any really original contribution to the catechetical renewal.

48. Fargues alone contributed eighteen articles or book reviews which was more than almost any other author except Quinet. She also read the review carefully and almost every copy in her archives was marked by her, many being annotated with very pertinent comments.

49. Chanon, loc.cit.

50. 15 Dec. 1934, Archives of André Boyer, File 57.

51. Bruel's first book was Catéchisme à l'école de notre Seigneur ses paroles, son exemple, sa méthode (1931). It was followed by others, and she also wrote for Le Catéchiste.

52. Marthe Soyer taught in a private school and published a series of children's books illustrated by M. Laroche of which the first was L'Enfant et la Messe (1932).

(a) Marie Fargues, an inspiring personality

The contribution of the private school system to the catechetical movement has already been mentioned (p.96) and this can be seen most completely in Mme Marie Fargues. No-one disputes the important and central place she holds in the movement, though she is not without her critics as will be seen. Duperray wrote of her,⁵³ "She was the inspiration for many things ... she maintained permanent contact with all the people and institutions whose influence was paramount in the French catechetical movement..." Adler comments⁵⁴ that with her "new life was manifested. Coming from the teaching profession she quickly understood that the catechism as it stands would not get anywhere with a child."

Born in 1884, Fargues lived to be nearly ninety and was still writing and lecturing in catechetics at eighty. At the same time she kept up a very considerable correspondence with those who followed in the movement, in fact she was affectionately known as the "grand old lady of Christian education."⁵⁵ Educated in a private school she then went on to art college with a view to becoming a teacher.⁵⁶ However she married, but was left a widow with a child within two years so she then took her teaching certificate. During the 1914-18 war she ran a small boarding school for war orphans. She had worked as a catechist in Paris since before her marriage.

(i) First articles

In 1919 Fargues published her first article Le Problème de la première formation religieuse,⁵⁷ encouraged by Fr A.-D. Sertillanges OP., a Dominican priest who exercised a considerable influence on French catholicism throughout his long life, and to whom she acknowledges her debt. She had discussed with him her views on what she considered the positive harm being done by the catechism, so he asked her for a series of articles for the review of which he was the

53. Georges Duperray, Personal letter, 3 Nov. 1978.

54. Adler, Joseph Colomb, p.31.

55. Catéchiste toute sa vie. Le souvenir de Marie Fargues, La Croix (Paris) 8 Dec. 1973.

56. The elements of Fargues' biography have been compiled from the Encyclopédie Catholique, s.v. Fargues, Marie', by G. Jacquemet, supplemented by personal communication from her daughter, Mme Guy Charpentier, and her own book How to teach religion, passim.

57. Revue des Jeunes (22), 1919, 297-310.

editor, "that would present to the Christian public the problem of the first religious formation as I saw it. It was thus he put into my hand an instrument that I had desired since childhood - a pen."⁵⁸ In her article she asked,

Must the unchangeable Catholic religion adhere to an unchanging method of religious education without making use of the enrichment in other branches of education brought about by progress in psychology and close attention to the continually changing conditions in which the child of today has to develop? ... it is a sad fact that ... catechetical method is too static and that the religious education of our children is degenerating.⁵⁹

(ii) First books

Three more articles followed in the next two years, then came Fargues' first book, Choses divines et petits enfants.⁶⁰ Again it was written with the encouragement of Sertillanges "who wanted a sort of model for young mothers"⁶¹ and was well received and favourably reviewed.

(iii) Formative years

It was while the book was in the press that Marie Fargues took up an appointment at the École des Roches⁶² as housemistress and teacher. Starting with the six-and-seven-year-olds, later with the eight-and-nine-year-olds, a formative period of nine years began which would be of much significance in her life. Because it was a private school she had greater liberty and more time than she would have had in a state school. Here she was able to gain experience, develop and test her

58. Fargues, How to teach religion, p.16. In the draft of a letter to Fr F.M. Chatelain OP., of 31 Aug. 1932 (Archives Marie Fargues) she speaks of the influence Sertillanges had on the direction of her life soon after she was widowed. "No-one who was not in their twenties between 1900 and 1910 can imagine the difficulty of struggling to keep their faith. In 1912 Fr Sertillanges helped me to join the forerunners of the Catholic renewal in which people of my background lagged behind."

59. Fargues, Le problème de la première formation religieuse, p.297.

60. First published in 1922, it was later expanded into a series of books under the same general title and published in Marseilles by Publiroc in 1931-32.

61. Fargues, How to teach religion, p.16.

62. The École des Roches was founded in 1899 by Demolins on the model of Abbotsholme and Bedales (La Nouvelle Éducation no.146 June 1936). Fargues, (How to teach religion, p.15) says "to prove that examinations, so dear to every French heart, are not imperilled by forms of education that were more human than ours. He [Demolins] was scarcely imitated." Georges Bertier was director during the time she was there. (See also Chapter 1, p.32).

ideas in a stimulating and sympathetic atmosphere. Here, too, she met many of the well-known figures in the new movement in education whose influence on her she acknowledges⁶³ and with some of whom she maintained a considerable correspondence. One of them was Dr Adolphe Ferrière⁶⁴ whose letters show he treated her as an equal. In one of them⁶⁵ he speaks of reviewing her work, asks for the text of a lecture she gave in Paris, and continues,

your way of thinking is closer to mine than anyone else at present ... our denominational starting point is different ... you are perhaps more prudent, more classical, whereas I am more boldly dynamic and scientific. But these are only shades of difference due to our education and temperament. The fundamental direction is the same.

He goes on to discuss various points she had evidently made in her letter. While agreeing with the need to put God at the summit of education, he continues with an observation that would find an echo later in her own writings and those of others involved in the catechetical renewal

... Was it not religion imposed on people in a way that did not respond to their deepest mystical needs that caused, ... especially in France, the rationalist and materialist revolt? People who have come back to their religion ... have all remarked to me: if they had not been saturated as children by instruction that did not respond to their spiritual needs, they would not have been impelled into the long crisis of aversion and estrangement that they had to overcome to return to the faith.

During this time at the École des Roches, Fargues was teaching all the usual school subjects as well as religion. Most of her writing reflected a general view of new teaching methods rather than anything specifically religious. From this period came some fifteen articles in a variety of journals both French and Belgian, Catholic and non-denominational.⁶⁶ There were also three books in two of which she set out

63. Fargues, op.cit. pp.15 and 18. where she mentions Claparède, Piaget, Montessori, Decroly, Dewey, Binet, Théodore Simon, Cousinet and Ferrière (See Chapter 1, p.31 et seq.). Her private library, now at the Institut Catholique, Paris, contains some of the principal works of these authors, annotated by her, and there are many references to them in her own writings.

64. See Chapter 1, p.31. She was in contact with Ferrière from 1927-34 and they exchanged books and articles.

65. 18 April 1928, Archives of Marie Fargues. Her side of the correspondence is missing.

66. The journals included *Revue belge de pédagogie*, *Revue pédagogique*, *L'École et la vie*, *Le Correspondant*, *Lumen*. The best of the articles were published in book form in 1929: *Les tendances actuelles en éducation*.

her ideas on education through the medium of the novel.⁶⁷ The third was a presentation of Montessori methods based on her own experience.⁶⁸ That she had already acquired something of a reputation as an authority on new teaching methods is shown by an invitation to lecture on them at the Institut Catholique of Paris in 1928.⁶⁹ She was aware of certain dangers inherent in the ideas propounded by some of those concerned in the new movement. One of the journals to which she subscribed and for which she wrote, La Nouvelle Éducation, was edited by Cousinet, a well-known atheist.⁷⁰ There was also a suggestion that the École nouvelle suppressed "the notion of authority" which engendered a warning for parents in the Revue des Jeunes.⁷¹

(iv) Catechetical specialist

In spite of all this activity, Fargues still kept on some parish catechetical work. However in 1930 she left the École des Roches in order to specialize full-time in matters of religious education by action, writing and speaking. It is impossible to detail all that she produced in the next ten years⁷² nor is it really necessary as there was a good deal of repetition. However she was always on the lookout for new ideas, so certain key works will be pointed out where a new direction was taken.

On leaving the school Fargues settled at Rouen and threw herself with enthusiasm into parish catechetics. It was here that she crystallized her method. The parish priest, Fr E. Maubec,⁷³ was not only sympathetic but he was of the more enlightened clergy who saw the potential of lay catechists and wanted to make the fullest use of them. He gave her full responsibility for a class of fifty to sixty girls in

67. Monsieur Cornouzières au coin de son feu (1928). Zabeth (1929).

68. La redaction chez les petits (1931).

69. 'Voyage à vol d'oiseau à travers la pédagogie nouvelle'. It was later published as Chapter 1 in Les tendances actuelles en éducation.

70. See Chapter 1, p.33.

71. Albert Chérel, Informations familiales, Revue des Jeunes (2) 1924, 215.

72. Marie Fargues' principal works are listed in Appendix IV. To this period belong some nine books and twenty-six articles as well as a number of major lectures. However, three of the books are collections of articles and some of the lectures were also published.

73. See Chapter 1, p.27, note 62.

their first year of catechism, that is, nine-to-ten-year-olds.⁷⁴ She had assistants but was free to use her own methods so she could change the usual order of presentation according to the catechism and only bring it in later, when the point had been understood. Maubec expressed himself satisfied, the children knew, and what was more important, loved and practised their religion, though they did not know their catechism. In fact they were put off by it and preferred making their own in a loose-leaf notebook.

Fargues herself was not wholly satisfied with the results but she repeated the method the following year. What was perhaps more important was that she gave it to one of her friends to try out in a different parish. Only then did she begin work on her most important book, The Introduction of Nine-year-olds to the catechism, which enshrined her whole method.⁷⁵ Before the book appeared she had moved to Meudon, near Versailles, where Françoise Derkenne had been working on her own method resulting in La Vie et la joie au catéchisme (p.120). They worked together for a time and then Fargues moved to Paris.

(v) Success and failure

In Paris the open-minded parish priest of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, Fr Gardette, gave her charge of all the nine-year-old boys for catechism. She set about the task with her usual enthusiasm and sent out a circular to all her assistants inviting them to a preliminary meeting with the parish priest. They evidently did not share her enthusiasm for across her copy of the circular she wrote "No-one came."⁷⁶ This is one example out of many setbacks and failures. Another is that she was not a good teacher and could not hold her class, but she did not let that deter her.⁷⁷ She wrote later, "How many of us have felt the bitter taste of disdain, even of contempt. If only there had been a model to show, a fine catechism programme that had been successful!"⁷⁸ Quinet had once said to her "They will follow

74. Fargues, How to teach religion, pp.27-30.

75. See Chapter 7 for a discussion of this work and its evolution through two major revisions involving a subtle change of title.

76. 3 July 1938, Archives of Marie Fargues.

77. Interview with Marcelle Chanon, Paris, 28 Dec. 1978, borne out, perhaps, by Fargues' statement, "I had to give up having a tidy classroom, irreproachable discipline..." (Fargues, How to teach religion, p.36).

78. Fargues, How to teach religion, p.36.

you when you are dead"⁷⁹ and though this is perhaps an exaggeration, as with most such statements, there is truth in it.

(vi) Study groups

Running parallel with her catechetical activity from about 1935 was Fargues' involvement with two study groups. The first, the "'Study Group for Research in Collective Tests for Catechism Classes' developed, experimented with, criticized, revised, and finally published a collection of questionnaires..."⁸⁰ The initiative was hers and the members included Derkenne, Soyer, de Paillerets and Chatelain, and they met once a term. The frequent, simple testing of understanding in religious lessons as in all others formed a very important part of her method, as also of Derkenne's.⁸¹

The other study group was one founded by Fr Lajeunie OP., for the study of method in religious teaching and included Quinet, Derkenne and Chatelain, among others. It began in 1936 and continued meeting into the 1950s.⁸² It recruited a good many of the younger generation of catechists, both priests and laity and much fruitful discussion and interchange of ideas took place.⁸³

(vii) Correspondence

A third activity pursued by Fargues during all this period was her immense correspondence. Some of her correspondents have already been

79. *ibid.*, p.35.

80. *ibid.*, p.34.

81. *idem.*, Des services qui peut rendre au catéchisme la méthode des tests, Cahiers catéchistiques no.41 Oct. 1936, pp.1-8
no.51 Oct. 1937, pp.15-28.

This paper contained her early ideas on the use of tests in catechism lessons. The main result of the study group's work was only published after the war: Tests collectifs de catéchisme (1945). The group continued working and published a second volume in 1951 and a second edition of volume 1 in 1954. It was one of Fargues' best-selling books and was translated into Spanish and Italian.

82. Nothing appears to have been published as a direct result of this group's meetings but notes of a number of papers given by Fargues are to be found in her archives as well as minutes of meetings; her daughter acted as secretary to the group.

83. There is a good deal of evidence of this in Fargues' very abundant correspondence at this time. To cite one example, André Jouin was a young priest, ordained in 1937, who maintained a correspondence with her throughout the war and continued to attend meetings afterwards. He was a great admirer of her methods which he used in his catechism lessons until expressly forbidden to do so by his parish priest, (A. Jouin to M. Fargues, 25 Sept. 1938, Archives of Marie Fargues).

mentioned and there were hundreds more in France and abroad. There were priests, teachers, catechists and ordinary people who asked for her help or wished to discuss something in one of her books or articles. Perhaps two of the most interesting are Célestin Freinet (p.33) and M. Delaunay both well-known anti-clerical educators. In a lecture in 1936 on L'École nouvelle she pointed to Freinet as one of its leaders, but warned he was sectarian, though a remarkable pedagogue. She also warned against too close involvement in the movement because of the danger as a Catholic, unless of strong personality, of being swept off one's feet.⁸⁴ She carried out a detailed study of his writings though only notes remain. She wrote to him calling in question some of his views and sending him one of her own books to review. In this same year, 1932, there was an exchange of books and criticisms with Delaunay; while neither side conceded an inch, the correspondence was conducted with perfect courtesy and complete open-mindedness.

(viii) Active Methods in Religious Education

Of the nine books (note 72) that appeared between her leaving the École des Roches and the outbreak of the war, Fargues herself pointed out the three she considered to be the most important.⁸⁵ They represent a new phase in her literary output consonant with her now total dedication (apart from family commitments) to religious education. Les méthodes actives dans l'enseignement religieux is her first attempt to set out her ideas on the way catechism should be taught using active methods. It incorporated a children's book, which could also be obtained separately.⁸⁶ An article had preceded it which then formed Chapter One of the book.⁸⁷ It was not meant to be a complete course as it only covered a limited number of topics; indeed

84. Lecture of 11 Dec. 1936, Archives of Marie Fargues.

85. The biographical article on Marie Fargues in the Encyclopédie Catholique (note 56) was in fact written by her, as appears in correspondence with G. Jacquemet over whose name the article appeared. (April 1954, Archives of Marie Fargues). In it she listed her principal works and for the period 1930-39 these are:
Anne de Guigné (1932)
Les méthodes actives dans l'enseignement religieux (1934)
Introduction des enfants de neuf ans au catéchisme (1936)

86. Pour travailler avec le bon Dieu, le livre de l'enfant. The complete book included an extensive bibliography.

87. Marie Fargues, Les surprises d'une leçon de catéchisme, Vie Spirituelle (40) no.2 Sept. 1934, 179-194.

it suffered from a certain lack of coherence. This was due to its being based on two different types of experience, that of a private school and of a parish catechism class, with children of a rougher and less Christian background. Because of this Jean Rimaud in his review feels an "impression of uncertainty as one goes from one chapter to the next,"⁸⁸ but later he says that "what is appreciated above all is the book's truly active interpretation of active methods. Though this assertion may seem paradoxical, there is a way of understanding activity which empties it of all effort of the intelligence." Among the exercises in the children's book are included copying and learning scripture texts, answering short questions, completing unfinished sentences, drawing and sticking in pictures. Perhaps her most characteristic adaptation to religious lessons is the way she sets out to develop the religious personality of the child. She insists "that a child is not wax to be moulded but a person who must be helped to become conscious of himself and his destiny. The true artisans of religious education are the Holy Spirit and the subject himself, the teacher is only their helper, at their service."⁸⁹ So we find in the introduction to the children's book that she invites them to make their own religious exercise book or file. She tells them that they have the right to keep it for themselves alone and do not have to show it to anyone.⁹⁰ The reason is evident enough, for among the exercises suggested are invitations to write their own prayers and make short meditations. The children's book included passages for reading and meditation and she considered it important that they should be allowed freedom and silence to reflect on these.

(ix) Other books and articles

The general dearth of what she considered to be suitable simple reading matter for children prompted Fargues to write several books at this time to fill the gap, of which she considered Anne de Guigné to be

88. Rimaud, *L'enseignement du catéchisme*, pp.532-533. Fargues wrote to the reviewer (3 Sept. 1936 Archives of Marie Fargues) saying she had dreaded the review but felt it was fair.

89. Encyclopédie Catholique s.v. 'Fargues, Marie'.

90. Fargues, Pour travailler avec le bon Dieu, p.7 and passim.

the most important.⁹¹

Of the twenty-six articles from this pre-war period of Fargues' life, twelve appeared in Cahiers catéchistiques. They were mostly short, practical articles for catechists, many of them abridged versions of others that had come out earlier elsewhere. Three of them treat of the method of tests in religious education. Three more treat of another favourite topic of hers, the use of games in religious education.⁹² Of the others two are worth pointing out as being early expressions of preoccupations which would be with her for a number of years. In the first it was the question of too much learning by heart which she reckoned overtaxed children's minds and for which she suggested the use of mnemonics and a careful layout of what was to be memorized.⁹³ In the second she was concerned with the training of catechists, a subject severely neglected in her view.⁹⁴ She offered a number of practical suggestions for the bettering of the situation which seem to have been largely disregarded until after the war.

(x) A snub

One more article will be mentioned,⁹⁵ less for its intrinsic importance than for its illustration of another type of setback not to say humiliation Fargues suffered at the hands of certain of the clergy.

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91. This is the true story of a child of average intelligence whose short life was dogged by ill-health which she bore with great courage in a truly Christian spirit. It was written with the full co-operation of the child's mother, as is attested by correspondence in the archives. Anne is still somewhat of a cult figure in the Roman Catholic Church, mainly in France. The book was very popular and was re-edited in 1965. It elicited invitations from mothers in similar situations which were politely but firmly refused by Fargues. (Letters of June 1931).
92. Fr Clement Colin produced the first game specifically for use in catechism lessons in 1930, as Fargues acknowledges. It was a kind of lotto. She herself also published one privately: 'Petit jeu catéchistique'.
93. Marie Fargues, La mnemotechnie contre surmenage, L'Éducation no.6 Mar. 1931, pp.329-335. She would offer a better remedy in the second edition of her book Introduction des enfants de neuf ans, see Chapter 7.
94. idem, La pré-formation des catéchistes auxiliaires, Vie spirituelle (41) no.1 1934, 84-103. Only Boyer had done anything about the problem (see Chapter 4, p.94).
95. idem, La Rénovation, Vie spirituelle (26) Jan. 1931, 78-93.

It concerned the subject of the Communion Solennelle,⁹⁶ a controversial one in France to this day. In the first instance she sent the article to the Jesuit periodical Études and after a long delay received the following reply, "I regret to have to return your very interesting article but we cannot publish it for a reason you will easily understand. Priests and religious, naturally we cannot allow a lay person to write on a subject of this nature, ... if the subject has to be treated, in Études it can only be done by one of ourselves..."⁹⁷ The article aroused considerable interest as evinced by the number of letters she received.⁹⁸ It was also mentioned in a pastoral letter.⁹⁹ The snub she received on this occasion was evidently not an isolated example for twenty years later a priest was to begin a very appreciative letter to her with the words "I think there are few women who could have put up with what you have had to suffer at the hands of the clergy and to have come out of it so well..."¹⁰⁰

96. Up until the beginning of the present century there were no clear fixed rules in the Roman Catholic Church for the age of the first reception of Communion. Traditionally, twelve years or later had become accepted in the Western Church, with the East retaining the primitive custom of Communion in infancy, after Baptism. In the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in France a ceremonial grew up around the event echoing various parts of the ceremony of Baptism. Then, in the decree 'Quam singulari' of 8 Aug. 1910, Pope Pius X laid down that children must be admitted to First Communion as soon as they had reached the age of reason, normally at about seven years. The decree, accepted in the Roman Catholic Church as a whole, raised peculiar difficulties in France. There the Communion Solennelle had become a kind of social event, even among non-practising Catholics, and one of the few contacts with the Church that they maintained. For this reason the clergy were reluctant to change as they feared that many children would not come to catechism class after their Communion at age seven. In practice little changed. In the more fervent families children made their first private Communion at seven and their solemn one with due ceremony at twelve. Attempts were made to shift the emphasis and change the name of the latter but the fact remained that two-thirds of the children did not receive their first Communion till the age of twelve.

97. From the business manager of Études, 9 Jan. 1930, Archives of Marie Fargues.

98. Mme S. Flocard to Marie Fargues, 1 Jan. 1931, was one of the most detailed and interesting. Among other things she accused many French priests of being slow to implement the decrees of Pope Pius X on First Communion (in particular that of 8 Aug. 1910, Quam Singulari). (Archives of Marie Fargues).

99. Bishop Alfred Flocard of Limoges, 'La Sainte Communion', Pastoral letter, Lent 1931.

100. From Fr Léon Rouyer, 3 Mar. 1951, Archives of Marie Fargues.

(xi) Lectures

Nevertheless Marie Fargues was becoming increasingly well-known¹⁰¹ and although there do not seem to be records of many speaking engagements there were at least two invitations outside France; to Brussels in 1933¹⁰² and to Geneva in 1935.¹⁰³ This may have been partly due to the fact that she was not a good speaker, according to her daughter, and was hesitant.¹⁰⁴ She prepared her lectures down to the last word, drafting and re-drafting, and appeared to be very dependent on her script.¹⁰⁵ It was only at the end of this period that she began to give a regular course of lectures for catechists.¹⁰⁶ Just previously to that she had addressed the National Congress of Catholic Action for catechetical instruction in Paris, sharing the platform with Françoise Derkenne on 'Catechetical methods'.¹⁰⁷

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101. Albert Ehm. 'Sur les nouvelles méthodes d'éducation' (D. ès Lettres thesis, University of Paris, 1935). References are made to her initiative in the introduction of active methods into religious education on pp.154 and 187 and some of her books and articles are in the bibliography.
 102. Marie Fargues, 'Les tendances actuelles de l'éducation et l'âme de l'enfant', Lecture given to the Ligues Ouvrières féminines Chrétiennes de Belgique in Brussels and repeated at Liège, Easter 1933. Published in La Femme Belge, May 1933.
 103. idem, 'La Formation religieuse des enfants du peuple dans le milieu déchristianisé', Lecture given to the Association Cardinal Mermillod at Geneva 21 Feb. 1935. It was expanded with practical notes and a bibliography and published as a book of the same title later in the year.
 104. Interview with Geneviève Charpentier, daughter of Marie Fargues, Versailles, 1 July 1978.
 105. Letter from Fr J. Jaouen, 4 May 1933, Archives of Marie Fargues. After the Belgian lecture Fargues had evidently asked for comments and these she received in much detail. Among the good advice are two pertinent comments: first, he thought it better for her to keep to her script but that given the great difference between spoken and written styles, it would be better to write her lectures in the spoken style. Secondly, he took the occasion to point out a certain lack of clarity apparent in her writings at times.
 106. Fargues, How to teach religion, p.41. Chanon ('Si Varenne m'était conté', p.11) corroborates that this course was begun on the initiative of Fargues.
 107. 23-26 Feb. 1939. Reported in Cahiers catéchistiques nos. 66 and 67, Mar. and Apr. 1939. The two women were addressing the women catechists at the same time as Boyer was addressing the clergy.

(b) M. d'Aubigny

A little older than Fargues, M.M. d'Aubigny had been a catechist in northwest France since 1897. Her book, Christian Formation of my little ones, published in 1923¹⁰⁸ is based entirely on her experience and observation of the small country children among whom she worked. She noted the fact that so many of them could barely read and write and that very few received any knowledge or love of their religion from their parents. This led her to insist on the need for a year of initiation before the catechism was put into their hands, for "without the foundations it is impossible to make a solid and lasting building."¹⁰⁹ The children must be presented with the idea before the formula of the catechism and she used the simple method of explaining a picture from one of the large format catechisms in pictures.¹¹⁰ The other characteristic of her method was, by observation and judicious questioning, to check the children's grasp of what they had been taught. She continued to make her views known during the next thirty years by letters to influential people,¹¹¹ by articles in reviews¹¹²

108. M.M. d'Aubigny, Formation chrétienne de mes tout-petits (1923). Extracts were published in Le Catéchiste 7e année no. 1 Nov.-Dec. 1925. A second volume followed in 1933. There was a new edition in 1952. Fargues reviewed it very favourably in Revue des Jeunes (40) no.7 1924, 225-227.

109. M.M. d'Aubigny, op.cit. Vol.1, p.14.

110. Two in particular were used:
Catéchisme en images (1908),
Abbé Moutarde, Grand Album d'images en noir pour l'explication du Catéchisme (1912).

To modern eyes many of the black and white pictures are crude and some are positively frightening but the format was large enough to be seen by the class.

111. Examples of her persistence can be seen in the following:

(a) Letter to Fargues 25 Jan. 1939, (Archives of Marie Fargues) in which she asked her to bring her views on the need for a kind of pre-catechism to the National Congress she would be addressing in Feb. (see p.117 above).

(b) Letter and eighty page document sent to Cardinal Suhard, Archbishop of Paris, 22 Aug. 1946, (Archives of André Boyer, File 20).

(c) Letter from d'Aubigny to Canon Boulard, (editor of Cahiers du clergé rural), 24 Mar. 1954, found inside library copy of Formation chrétienne (1952), Institut Catholique, Paris.

112. M.M. d'Aubigny, Importance des premières leçons de catéchisme.

Cahiers catéchistiques no.18 May 1934, pp.583-587.

no. 19 June 1934, pp.653-659.

idem, Le Baptême. Cahiers catéchistiques no.29, June 1935, pp.657-665.

and by addressing meetings of catechists.¹¹³ She also called for special liturgies for children with simple prayers and explanations.

(c) M. Tribou

An interesting initiative which first appeared at the beginning of the school year 1934-35 was a serialized catechism.¹¹⁴ It was the idea of Mme M. Tribou, a catechist of the diocese of Cambrai in northern France. It took the form of a pamphlet posted weekly to the child's home for the thirty-six weeks of the school year. A picture was used to illustrate the point of doctrine and on the facing page were short explanations and simple questions. The series followed the approximate order of the catechism and made allowance for the seasons of the liturgical year. The idea behind La Mîche de Pain was that it should be studied at home by the family with the child, hence the name, alluding to the family meal, and thus help in rechristianizing families. Unfortunately the illustrations were not always good and the phraseology was sometimes unfortunate.¹¹⁵ In pointing these out, Boyer wondered whether, with very irreligious families, there might not, in fact, be more harm than good.¹¹⁶ It was intended for the youngest children and proved immensely popular. It was still in use in the 1950s. The original series was followed by a weekly Bible history where the illustrations, at least, were an improvement on the first series. These were succeeded by further series for older children. By and large La Mîche de Pain was a successful venture in spite of its weaknesses.

113. She addressed the National Congress of the FCTP (Formation chrétienne des tout-petits, see Chapter 2, pp.50-53) in June 1938, reported in Cahiers catéchistiques no. 61, Oct. 1938, pp.19-23
no. 62, Nov. 1938, pp.97-101.

114. M. Tribou, La Mîche de Pain, catéchisme populaire (1934).

115. There was a considerable correspondence between Tribou and Fargues on the subject from 1933-38. (Paris, Archives of Marie Fargues). It includes three pages of detailed comment by the latter with comments such as (after an example in the book) "N'apprenons pas à de petits enfants à juger leurs parents..."

116. Boyer, (Pédagogie Chrétienne, p.277) says that it is "impossible à l'enfant de saisir que Dieu est un esprit, si on le lui représente sous les traits de Charlemagne."

In a letter to Fr Mugnier of 1936 who had asked his opinion about the series, Boyer suggests that the best advertisement for it would be to improve the illustrations with better drawings and fewer angels and devils. (Archives of André Boyer, File 20).

(d) Françoise Derkenne and the liturgical movement

Another central figure in the catechetical movement and one of the most highly qualified academically, was Mlle Françoise Derkenne.¹¹⁷ She belonged neither to the Enseignement libre nor to the Archconfraternity but was a teacher in the state system who offered herself to the parish priest as a catechist. In fact she began as a catechist soon after leaving school, about 1925, simply hearing the children's answers as was normal at the time (p.42). She obtained a degree in philosophy and a diploma as a kindergarten teacher and went on to a teaching post in one of the state infant schools (Écoles maternelles). She was thus brought under the influence of Pauline Kergomard, who was later to be the subject for her dissertation (p.30). She was also influenced by other pioneers such as Decroly (p.31), Montessori, Ferrière, Piaget, Dottrens, Dewey and Freinet (p.33). In the catechetical movement she acknowledges her indebtedness to Quinet (p.102), Boyer (p.77), Fargues (p.107) and Mme Hélène Lubienska de Lenval,¹¹⁸ though only Quinet had published his most important work before Derkenne wrote hers.¹¹⁹

(i) Evolving the method

In 1931 the Bishop of Versailles allowed priests to confide groups

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117. Vimort, Interview de Françoise Derkenne, passim, for the elements of Derkenne's biography, supplemented by an interview, Paris, 29 June 1979.
118. Adler, (Joseph Colomb, p.33) says that Lubienska de Lenval's work made "important and original contributions to the catechetical renewal." She was a collaborator of Montessori and wrote on general educational subjects before the war, while applying new methodology to catechism lessons. The importance of this work can be gauged by the times she was called on to address sessions for catechists in the immediate post-war period, e.g. Chanon, 'Si Varenne m'était conté', Annexe XI, Sept. 1946, and Annexe XII, Mar. 1947. Her published books and articles on catechetical subjects also date from that period, e.g. L'Eveil du sens religieux (1946), which concerns the use of liturgy in the religious education of children from 4-12 years. It is cited by Fargues in the bibliography of the 1947 edition of Introduction des enfants. Ranwez mentions her in Pastorale de l'enfance. She lived in Nice which may perhaps explain why Boyer does not mention her at all.
119. Françoise Derkenne, La vie et la joie au catéchisme (1935). It therefore appeared in the same year as André Boyer's Le Catéchisme vivant. In fact he took the title she had planned to give her book which then had to be changed at the proof stage. (Letter from F. Derkenne to A. Boyer 25 Jul. 1935, Archives of André Boyer, File 20) Fargues' Introduction des enfants de neuf ans au catéchisme came out the following year.

of children to suitably qualified women catechists. Derkenne was a catechist at Meudon in that diocese at the time and so was given charge of the first year of catechism by the parish priest, Fr Charles Collin. There were about a hundred eight-to-nine-year-old boys and girls of ordinary working class families and of a very de-christianized milieu. For the next three years she worked on her method, revising it in the light of experience. "After the catechism lesson I made a criticism of it with my assistants and then we considered together how to prepare the next one."¹²⁰ She had not originally intended to publish her method but one day Collin asked her if she wrote out her lessons. When she said she did he told her to publish them. Apparently the children coming out of these classes were not quite like the rest.¹²¹ Her book was, therefore the result of three years trial in the classroom; it had been 'lived', each lesson written and given at least three times. The exercises and drawings were done by several generations of children and only what was of value was selected.¹²²

(ii) Life and Joy in the Catechism class

Having given the first year lessons a thorough trial, Derkenne started on the second year classes for the nine-to-ten-year-olds. This too was tried out for three years and by the end of that time war was looming. Collin urged her not to delay publication though he himself did not live to see the book in print.¹²³ The two books were soon out of print. Because it was wartime they could not be reprinted though the pedagogical introductions of the two were reprinted in one volume.¹²⁴

In 1940 Derkenne took up an appointment as director of the French Lycée in Barcelona. As Fargues put it, she was lost to catechetics in France until 1949,¹²⁵ so she did not complete her course by the

120. Vimort, Interview de Françoise Derkenne, p.98.

121. Françoise Derkenne, La vie et la joie au catéchisme, 2e année (1939) Forward, p.V.

122. *ibid.*

123. *ibid.*

124. Françoise Derkenne, La vie et la joie au catéchisme: Introduction pédagogique (1943). There is a re-numbering and slight rearrangement of chapters in this edition.

125. Fargues, How to teach religion, p.41.

addition of the third year book until much later.¹²⁶

(iii) Characteristics of the method

The title of an article Derkenne wrote in 1938 gives the key to her method: 'Catechism and liturgy'¹²⁷ She saw the Church's liturgy as the way to present the living Jesus to children. She "centred all her teaching on the Person of Jesus not only as an historical figure but as someone living in the soul of every Christian and whose life is relived each year in the Mystical Body."¹²⁸ In the interview already cited (p.121) she said she was moved by two essential convictions,

first, that all the catechism is in the missal. I wanted to put the children in contact not with abstract truths but with the person of Christ actually alive, and whose mysteries are relived each year in the liturgical cycle. This is the teaching the Church gives continually to adults and it was also what I lived myself all the year round, at home and in the parish and it was what I wanted to make living for the children.¹²⁹

Derkenne's second conviction "was the need to stimulate the children by active methods,... not to be content with explaining a lesson while they sat motionless, then making them recite it, but also letting them write, draw, model, act, etc." She shared this conviction with Fargues, though they apparently did not meet till 1936.¹³⁰ It was

126. After the war the teacher's and children's books for the first and second years were reprinted. In the years following her return to France Derkenne largely re-wrote them under the influence of Colomb and followed the new edition with the third year books. The title was slightly altered in the revised edition:

Vie et Joie au Catéchisme 1st year revised (1956)
2nd year revised (1957)
3rd year (1960).

There were also three books of accompanying documents. The whole work went into six editions and was in use at least until 1968. Derkenne's further involvement in the catechetical movement is mentioned in Chapter 10, p.176.

127. Françoise Derkenne, Catéchisme et vie liturgique, Vie Spirituelle (57) 1 Nov. 1938, 200-205.

128. M.-P. Sirot OP., Preface to La vie et la joie au catéchisme.

129. Françoise Derkenne, Interview of 29 June 1979, spoke of the influence of her mother whose bedside books included the four volumes of Dom Guéranger's Liturgical Year. She also spoke of the liturgical writings of Dom Gaspar Lefèbvre (see Chapter 6, p.134).

130. This is the date given by Derkenne in the interview with Vimort, p.99. Fargues (How to teach religion, p.31) says they first met at Cambrai in 1934 at a meeting of teachers in private schools. Derkenne's date seems the more likely as she would have been unlikely to have been at the meeting as she was not a teacher in a private school. Also, 1936 is the date corresponding to the time when both were at Meudon (p.111).

the children's acting that so impressed Fargues when she saw the liturgical plays Derkenne produced at Meudon at Christmas and Easter.¹³¹ She was able to produce in her classroom what was also undoubtedly Fargues' ideal for she "did not consider these activities merely as the means for acquiring knowledge about religion but also as an hour of Christian life that the children, my assistants and I spent together in friendship."¹³²

Even after the appearance of Eugène Charles' Le Catéchisme par l'Évangile in 1930 (p.75), the ideas of Bishop Landrieux were not acceptable in the majority of parish catechism lessons. Derkenne, therefore, could not get away from the catechism, much as she abhorred it, and in a way this restricted her. Fargues has a perceptive comment, "Perhaps at that period her lessons were lacking on constructive unity. The manual, from which she did not believe she could free herself, was probably responsible for this in obliging her to make premature syntheses."¹³³ She would only find freedom later, with the help of Colomb.¹³⁴

In a masterly introduction to her book, Derkenne explains her method based on the centre of interest.

In the first year you do not want a logical course in dogma and morals but simply a pathway to bring the children to a Christian understanding, taking as centre of interest for the whole year the life of Jesus in the Gospel, in the liturgy and within their souls.¹³⁵

She explains with great clarity and in detail the meaning of the term 'centre of interest' and its application. She then gives necessary practical details about apparatus, rewards and punishments, tests, allocation of time to the different activities that constitute the lesson. Finally, the thirty lessons for the year are set out in full detail. The wisdom of experience is scattered throughout these

131. Fargues, How to teach religion, p.33.

132. Vimort, Interview de Françoise Derkenne, p.98.

133. Fargues, op.cit., p.32.

134. Vimort, op.cit., p.101. In the 1950s Derkenne attended Colomb's lectures and found that she "was freed from this abstract doctrine of the catechism ... Colomb had understood that there could be no catechetical renewal without ... a change in the content of the instruction..."

135. Derkenne, La Vie et la joie au catéchisme, 1^{er} année p.4. Boyer did not agree with her terminology, (see Chap.4, p.86, also Chap.1, p.31).

introductory pages, for example, "Never make the children recite prayers they do not understand - use improvised ones."¹³⁶ "Be careful not to put pious words to profane tunes, one day the mixture will explode!"¹³⁷

In the second year the same general plan is followed but it is possible to go more deeply into Christian truth. The liturgical year is only followed in broad outline but the teaching is centred on the person of Jesus living now in the soul of every Christian.¹³⁸ Derkenne again emphasizes the need to create a Christian atmosphere to compensate for the rest of the week when the children live in a more or less pagan one. In this year more lesson time is allowed so forty lessons are provided.

She took the liberty of departing from the accepted order of the catechism, picking questions and answers that suited her liturgy-based order of presentation, but always using one or two, sometimes three as a summary of the lesson learnt. In this Derkenne said she "was guided by a sentence of Canon Dupont that I found in the Cahiers catéchistiques...' The method consists in concluding with the catechism text instead of starting with it and then explaining it."¹³⁹

The whole presentation, lay-out and attention to detail in both teachers' and pupils' books and the supplementary booklets bear the hallmark of a gifted and experienced teacher. Their clarity and terseness of expression assure them of a place among the best catechetical works produced at that time; their quality in these respects is superior to those of Fargues.¹⁴⁰ There would seem to be no justification of a later criticism that "they contained excellent things but in

136. *ibid.*, p.19.

137. *ibid.*, p.20.

138. *idem*, La vie et la joie au catéchisme, 2e année, *passim*.

139. Vimort, Interview de Françoise Derkenne, p.98. Canon Dupont's method is treated in Chapter 6, pp.129-130.

140. [Cécile Louise Damez], ('Le vrai visage de la FCTP' note 4) speaking of both Fargues and Derkenne says "while she also introduces active methods into catechism lessons, Mlle Derkenne always puts the children in the presence of Christian REALITIES. That is why in reviewing Life and Joy in the catechism class we did not hesitate to write that she was at the head of the religious renewal."

an indigestible verbiage and full of repetitions."¹⁴¹

Conclusion

While the diocese of Dijon undoubtedly presented a remarkable model of organized catechesis in the ten years before the Second World War, many original ideas were to be found elsewhere. Many came from the ranks of catechists, particularly women, working for the most part independently. Adler has well named this period as that of the pioneers¹⁴² who prepared the ground for the foundations of the later catechetical renewal to be laid by Colomb. The works of all of them continued into the later period in which Derkenne in particular, and Fargues, played no small part. Rimaud's comment at the end of an article in which he reviewed the work of these and other authors¹⁴³ perhaps sums up as well as any the state of affairs in those pre-war years.

Reading these books ... leaves a consoling impression, the conviction of progress in catechetical instruction. No matter how difficult the conditions for this instruction at the present time, the ambition for and desire of adaptation and progress are reasons for hope... There is a living catechism ... which leaves the child with a souvenir of joy... Does this mean that the problem of religious education has been fully and finally resolved?

Regretfully, Rimaud does not think so and he ends with the sobering but inescapable conclusion "... if methods of teaching young children have made remarkable progress, those for the older ones ... have made none... This is the next task which must be tackled without delay."¹⁴⁴

141. Mgr Lusseau, Littérature Catéchistique, Revue des Cercles d'étude d'Angers Mar. 1957, quoted in Georges Duperray, 1957: l'affaire du catéchisme, p.59.

142. Adler, Joseph Colomb, p.29.

143. Rimaud, L'enseignement du catéchisme, pp.535-536.

144. ibid., p.537.

VI

INITIATIVES FROM BELGIUM

In his article on the French catechetical movement Adler speaks of research into the use of liturgy in catechesis running parallel to the use of the Gospel,¹ and he continues "it is in Belgium that we meet the pioneers of the liturgical renewal in catechetics." Mention of this was made in the previous chapter (p.122); Mlle Derkenne in particular acknowledged her indebtedness to the Benedictine monks Guéranger and Lefèbvre.²

Another area of Belgian influence has also been touched upon, namely, the catechetical method of Canon H. Dupont (p.124). In this regard it was perhaps more a question of parallelism to France. Adler speaks of the so-called active methods in education³ and their effect on the teaching of catechism in Germany, Belgium and France.

1. Belgium

(a) Geographical situation and languages

Before considering these and other contributions made to the catechetical renewal by the Belgians it would be well to point out certain features of their country. Geographically it is situated between France, Germany, Holland and Luxembourg. Within what is a small but densely-populated country in comparison with its two largest neighbours, are to be found two cultures based on two languages and mainly confined within two areas. The five Flemish provinces to the north include the Belgian coastline and share the whole of the northern frontier with Holland. The language is closely related to Dutch. Only a small part of the southern frontier is with France and this adjoins the diocese of Lille. The four Walloon provinces are French-speaking and share the rest of the southern frontier of the country with France, adjoining the dioceses of Cambrai, Rheims, Verdun and Metz (in Lorraine). The eastern frontier is with Luxembourg and Germany. It is

1. Adler, Joseph Colomb, p.32.

2. See Chapter 5, p.122, note 129.

3. Adler, op.cit., p.30. See also Chapter 1, pp.29-30.

not surprising to find an interchange of books and ideas between southern Belgium (Wallonia) and France. However it is, perhaps, surprising to find that the main contributions to the catechetical movement came from the north. They reached France in two ways, generally speaking. In the first, they spread to the south and were translated into French and hence spread on into France. In the second the initiatives were by French-speaking people who lived and worked in northern Belgium.

(b) The teaching of religion

The place of religious education in Belgian schools is more comparable to England than to France. In council schools, to which about half the children go, half an hour's religious instruction daily is obligatory.⁴ Up until relatively recently this had to be given in the first or last half hour of school time.⁵ This restriction caused problems: sometimes religious instruction got left out through lack of teachers. To remedy this volunteer catechists were brought in, many of them laywomen, who were often inadequately trained. This led Fr Bernard Troquet to found a training-school for catechists in the diocese of Liège (Wallonia) in 1930. By 1957 most other dioceses had schools for catechists.⁶

2. The Belgian contribution to the French catechetical renewal

The main contribution of Belgium to the French catechetical renewal movement will be considered under the headings of Method, Milieu, Liturgy, and History and Rationale. These are not mutually exclusive but will serve as a guide.

(a) Method

(i) Poppe and the Sisters of Vorselaar

To Fr Edward Poppe (1891-1924) may belong the distinction of being

4. Bernard Troquet, Voluntary catechists in the council schools of greater Liège, Lumen Vitae (4) 1949, 179-192.
5. In 1958 the Pacte Scolaire allowed R.I. to be given at any time during the school day. (Pierre Ranwez SJ., 'En Belgique wallonne' in BICE, ed., Dix années de travail catéchétique dans le monde au service de la formation religieuse de l'enfance (1959), p.317 (BICE is the Bureau International Catholique de l'Enfance.)
6. ibid., pp.315-317. Also Troquet, loc.cit. The first school for catechists in France was founded at Lyons in 1947 by Colomb, though Boyer at Dijon (Chap.4, p.94) had a training programme and there had been one for a short time in Paris, (Fargues, How to teach religion, p.38).

the first to develop the concept of religious education as opposed to religious instruction or religious knowledge.⁷ He was Flemish and in his short life exercised a remarkable influence throughout Belgium and France. His influence began to be felt about 1916 and continued to spread during the remaining eight years of his life. His ideas were taken up and developed into a teaching method by the Sisters of Vorselaar.⁸ This in turn inspired the new Belgian unified catechism of 1946.

In Belgium as in France and elsewhere in the early part of the present century, religious knowledge was imparted in the catechism class and the home was left to do the rest. Poppe sought to counter-balance an increasing dechristianization by reaching out to all parts of a child's life with a Christian influence. He founded an association which would help to form the child to a supernatural life. Catechetical instruction was to be more narrative and meditative rather than based on a formulary. He sought to make the spirit and truths of Christianity very personal for each child.⁹ He set out his ideas in a booklet, The Eucharistic Method,¹⁰ and left notes for another which was published posthumously.¹¹

In their method for primary schools based on Poppe's ideas, the Sisters of Voreslaar juxtaposed and co-ordinated material for lessons including dogma, bible history, liturgy and Christian living. François¹² considers they were the first in the world to perfect this psychological and pedagogical work. This view is arguable and not all authors would agree as the Sisters' main book was not published until 1945. Boyer felt that their book lacked something of Poppe's simplicity and vitality.¹³ While the Flemish priest's own work was popular and influential all over Belgium and France, the catechism inspired by the Sisters' book was less so. Ranwez felt it was less

7. J. François, 'En Belgique flamande' in BICE, ed., Dix années de travail catéchétique, p.293.

8. Soeurs des Écoles Chrétiennes de St. Joseph Calasanz à Vorselaar, Semence d'amour, germes de vie, (1924).

9. François, op.cit., p.292.

10. Édouard J.M. Poppe, La Méthode Eucharistique, (1924).

11. Édouard J.M. Poppe, Manuel de la Catéchiste eucharistique, (1934).

12. François, 'En Belgique flamande', p.293-294.

13. Boyer, Pédagogie chrétienne, p.216.

well-adapted to the mentality of the French-speaking provinces¹⁴ and these in their turn looked back across their southern border to France.

(ii) Dupont and the Sisters of Notre Dame

Other precursors of the catechetical renewal cited by Ranwez¹⁵ are Canon H. Dupont and the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur. Adler¹⁶ does not appear to feel their influence sufficiently widespread as he does not mention them. Derkenne and Fargues, however, both acknowledged their importance and the latter was in correspondence with them. Boyer¹⁷ also discusses their methodology in his comprehensive review of catechetical methods of 1945 though he does not mention it in his historical account of the catechetical movement published in 1966 whereas he does mention Poppe.¹⁸

Both Dupont and the Sisters of Notre Dame were from the French-speaking southern part of Belgium. Dupont was diocesan inspector of religious instruction in Tournai and the Sisters worked in Namur. Their merit lies, perhaps, in their being early in the field of adaptation of active methods of teaching to religious education, and of taking up the ideas of Bishop Landrieux.¹⁹ From about 1920 the Sisters began to modify religion teaching for the very youngest children according to Montessori methods.²⁰ Soon a new syllabus²¹ was produced for use in schools adopting parts of other methods such as those of Mulot, Froebel and Decroly. This was preceded by a critical study of systems of education²² which attracted the notice of Mme Fargues. A correspondence ensued between them²³ which led to the review of the book by

14. Ranwez, 'En Belgique wallonne,' p.319.

15. Ranwez, Pastorale de l'enfance, pp.14-16.

16. Adler, Joseph Colomb. 17. Boyer, op.cit., pp.216-220.

18. idem, Mouvement catéchistique français, p.80.

19. H. Dupont, (Rapport sur l'enseignement religieux en Belgique, Cahiers catéchistiques no.42 Nov. 1936, p.154) says that in 1925 the Sisters of Notre Dame took up the ideas of Landrieux.

20. Sister Marie-Chantal, [Une Soeur de Notre Dame de Namur], Manuel de méthodologie (1921). Although a number of the sisters were engaged in trying out the methods only one, Sr Marie-Chantal, wrote the books under the pseudonym above (see Boyer, Pédagogie chrétienne, p.216).

21. idem, Un essai de programme pour les écoles enfantines réparties en trois années (1923).

22. Sister Marie-Chantal [Une Soeur de Notre Dame de Namur], Étude critique de systèmes d'éducation et leçons pratiques (1922).

23. April 1923, Archives of Marie Fargues.

Fargues.²⁴ Other books on child psychology and methodology as applied to religious education followed,²⁵ written alone or in collaboration.

At the same time as the Sisters of Notre Dame were publishing the results of their work with the younger infants, Dupont was working on a method for the next age group. He published it in 1929.²⁶ It was a clear exposition of the use of inductive methods in teaching religion and the first to appear in the French language since that of Quinet and Henin in 1912 (p.65). It was deservedly popular and Dupont followed it with a series of articles in Cahiers catéchistiques between 1934 and 1937 one of which in particular caught the eye of Mlle Derkenne (p.124).

(iii) Secondary schools

At the end of the previous chapter (p.125) the need to tackle the problem of teaching religion to the older children was mentioned. It was from Belgium that one of the first courses came, which was also one of the best. The series Witnesses to Christ²⁷ first appeared in 1941 and was widely used in France as well as in Belgium. Ranwez²⁸ commended it as showing a positive approach to teaching religion to this age group rather than the older, more negative one.

(b) Milieu

Poppe attempted to influence the milieu by seeking to reach other aspects of the child's life by a broader-based religious education. Even before him, however, an association had been founded in Brussels for family education.²⁹ Between the two Fr Joseph Cardijn had begun his radical attempt to rechristianize the lives of young working people.

24. Marie Fargues, À propos de divers systèmes d'éducation, Revue des Jeunes (37) 1923, 551-557.

25. Sister Marie-Chantal, [Une Soeur de Notre Dame de Namur], Notions de psychologie appliqué a l'éducation et méthodologie (1924).
J. Flamion and A. Adam with Sister Marie-Chantal, [Une Soeur de Notre Dame de Namur], L'enseignement religieux aux jeunes enfants (1925).

26. H. Dupont, Pour apprendre la religion aux petits (1929, with successive re-editions in 1930 and 1938).

27. Georges Delcuve SJ., ed., Témoins du Christ: manuels d'instruction religieux, 6 vols. 3rd ed. (1947).

28. Pierre Ranwez SJ., Religious teaching in Belgium, Lumen vitae (I) no.3 1946, 550.

29. Stanislas de Lestapis, Catechetical training of the parents, Lumen vitae (I) no.3 1946, 578. M. Devuyt founded the movement 'Éducation familiale' in 1899 in Brussels.

(i) Cardijn and the JOC

In 1912 Cardijn was working in a Flemish-speaking parish near Brussels.³⁰ He was concerned for the large number of young people living away from home so as to be near the factories and other places where they worked. Not only was he concerned over the often poor conditions in which they lived but still more at their ignorance of their religion. As he was to write much later,³¹ "The greatest danger for the Church is not communism,... it is that the workers are totally ignorant of the Church and the Christian faith." He started a study circle for young workers³² which developed into a club offering social amenities as well as help with finding jobs. For several years he searched, experimented and struggled to find the right formula for a movement of young people, for young people and run by young people. Eventually, in 1924, the JOCist movement³³ emerged in its present form. That the formula was a good one is abundantly shown by the rapidity with which it spread across Europe and beyond; it reached France in 1927³⁴ and England in 1937. By 1935 there were eighty-five thousand jocists in Belgium³⁵ and a hundred thousand in France³⁶ representing about 14 per cent of all young workers between the ages of fourteen and twenty-five.³⁷

The founder's vision was of an organization of young working men and women that would take them out of their isolation, grouping and training them so as to "enable them to re-christianize their whole lives, their entire environment, the whole mass of the young workers, in conformity with their divine vocation and the divine plan."³⁸ The

30. Although actually within the area of the northern Flemish provinces, Brussels, as the capital city, is officially bilingual.

31. Quoted in Colomb, Plaie ouverte au flanc de l'église, p.15.

32. Petit syndicat des apprentis, cf. Le Sillon in France (Chap.1, p.19).

33. JOC stands for Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne. In England the movement is known as the YCW, Young Christian Workers.

34. JOC, Journée du triomphe: Album souvenir du Congrès jubilaire de la JOC (1935), p.13.

35. JOC, Journée du triomphe, p.10.

36. JOC, Compte rendu de la Semaine d'Étude Internationale de la Jeunesse Oeuvrière Chrétienne (1935), Introduction. At the congress were also present jocists from Holland, Switzerland, Portugal, Spain, Canada, Colombia, Austria, Poland and England.

37. Fourteen was the school-leaving age at the time.

38. Joseph Cardijn, quoted in Damian Lundy, Cardijn speaks, The Sower (8) no.1 Spring 1984, 18.

training is based on the see-judge-act method in the social and gospel enquiries which are an essential part of all meetings. However, as Pihan remarked, "JOC does not consist of meetings, but of what you do in the world of work."³⁹ The same author notes that this movement made its mark on all Catholic activity such as the much older work of the 'Patronages'.⁴⁰ It also influenced catechism classes by supporting the drawing up of specialized textbooks of religious education for urban and rural populations.⁴¹

A noteworthy experiment was carried on for a number of years by the French jocists called 'Movement for Proletarian Children.'⁴² After Solemn Communion, generally at the age of twelve,⁴³ most of the children gave up all practice of religion and formed gangs, as they were not yet of an age to work and join adult organizations. Jocist members would seek to penetrate these gangs in an attempt to bring in a Christian presence. Of its nature it was not highly organized and for the same reason it was difficult to gauge of its achievement.

(ii) JAC and JEC

The jocist ideal while having been initiated with young workers, was susceptible of adaptation to other groups of young people. So it was that in March 1929 was founded the movement Jeunesse Agricole Chrétienne (JAC) and in October of the same year the Jeunesse Étudiante Chrétienne (JEC). These were followed by other movements of specialized Catholic Action,⁴⁴ but for the purpose of the present work only

39. Pihan, Religious formation in youth movements and those for children, p.451.

40. *ibid.*, p.450. See Chapter 1, p.37 for the Patronages.

41. Ivan Daniel, Vivre en Chrétien dans mon quartier (1943), which was for city children.
Albert Lanquetin, Vivre en Chrétien au village (1947), which was the same book adapted for country children.

42. Pihan, *op.cit.*, p.451.

43. See Chapter 5, p.116, note 96.

44. In 1922 Pope Pius XI initiated 'Catholic Action', defined as the participation of the laity in the apostolate of the hierarchy. In a generalized way it had existed for some time in the Roman Catholic Church but the Pope's call brought forth a number of new movements. In particular, movements seeking to penetrate a particular environment, known as 'Specialized Catholic Action', appeared. JOC and JEC and the related movements were among the first and most important of these. Pius XI himself commended the movement. (Damian Lundy, Joseph Cardijn: a new vision for the young, The Sower (8) no.1 Spring 1984, 17).

the JEC will be considered further.

Jecism did not spread quite so rapidly as jocism but it spread as far afield. It was a movement for secondary schools as the age limits of jocism were maintained.⁴⁵ Its aim was to permeate the student environment. As Pihan put it, "jecist activity is the whole of student life lived Christianly."⁴⁶

While not directly concerned with religious instruction, these movements were certainly concerned in the wider sphere of religious education as Poppe (pp.127-128) envisaged it. Ranwez⁴⁷ saw them as complementary to religious instruction. They help to permeate with a Christian atmosphere the ordinary daily preoccupations of the adolescent and young adult.

(c) Liturgy

(i) Beginnings

The singular importance of the liturgical movement in the French catechetical renewal and its origin in Belgium have already been mentioned (p.126). It must be pointed out, however, that the precursor of the movement was Dom Prosper Guéranger, Abbot of Solesmes, who was French. It was his book, The Liturgical Year which helped to renew interest in the liturgy more than anything else.

The French Revolution and successive waves of anti-clericalism caused many members of religious orders to be driven out of France. A number of new houses were founded to accommodate them, particularly in Belgium and England. However Guéranger re-established the Benedictines in France in 1837, at Solesmes. Other monasteries followed only slowly, and there were further expulsions⁴⁸ so that many Frenchmen entered Belgian monasteries. A number of Benedictine abbeys had been established in Belgium in the nineteenth century and one of these in particular, the Abbey of St André, near Bruges, became an important

45. The upper part of the age range, i.e. from eighteen to twenty-five, was catered for by the Jeunesse Universitaire Chrétienne. Not all the student body was adequately covered; for instance, technical colleges did not enter into JUC.

46. Pihan, Religious formation in youth movements, p.451. In England the jecists are called Young Christian Students (YCS).

47. Pierre Ranwez SJ., Pédagogie religieuse, Nouvelle revue théologique (63) no.7 July-Aug. 1936, 715.

48. See Chapter 1, p.16, note 6.

centre for the liturgical renewal. It was here that Dom Gaspar Lefèbvre, inspired by Guéranger, sought to unite the teaching of the catechism with the liturgy.⁴⁹

Lefèbvre was born in northern France, became a Benedictine at the Abbey of Maredsous in Belgium and then went to Brazil. Returning to Europe for a visit he was caught by the war of 1914 and it was then he began his liturgical apostolate by writing short commentaries on the Sunday Masses. After the war he did not return to Brazil but joined the Abbey of St André, which was in Flemish-speaking Belgium, though his own affinities were with French-speaking Wallonia. He spent the rest of his life in the same monastery, developing and extending his liturgical apostolate.⁵⁰

(ii) The place of liturgy in catechetics

In his summary of the catechetical situation as it was in about 1920, Ranwez⁵¹ distinguished three parts: Catechism, Bible History, Liturgy. The first, considered the most essential and to which most attention was given, involved the acceptance of a collection of truths or 'articles'. Bible History was considered a necessary complement to the catechism and was used to provide a series of moral tales, all taken as true, even though there were difficulties of interpretation. In very poor third place was liturgy, at best an optional complement, at worst ignored and ill-understood by many catechists. It was largely due to Lefèbvre that the situation was changed and that liturgy came to form an integral part of the catechesis.⁵² His strong sense of pedagogy led him to recognize that the liturgy, properly understood, was an immensely valuable 'visual aid'. It also contained the essentials of catechetical teaching, and is the "first and indispensable source of the true Christian spirit."⁵³

49. Ranwez, *Religious teaching in Belgium*, p.544.

50. Encyclopédie Catholique, s.v. 'Lefèbvre Dom Gaspar, OSB' (1880-1966).

51. Ranwez, Pastorale de l'enfance, p.93.

52. Derkenne, (p.126) Fargues, Lubienska de Lenval and Colomb all made progressive use of Liturgy. The Dominicans founded the Centre de Pastorale liturgique in Paris in 1943 to provide courses and publications on the subject, (Ranwez, Pastorale de l'enfance, p.106 et seq.).

53. Pope Pius X quoted on the title page of Dom Gaspar Lefèbvre, Daily Missal (1924).

(iii) Missals for the laity

Lefèbvre was essentially a practical man and above all he was an apostle. He therefore looked for a straightforward way of bringing about a greater knowledge and understanding of the liturgy. The way he chose was to present the Roman Missal complete, with vernacular translations in parallel columns to the latin text. Interspersed were explanations of the texts and their significance, many taken from Dom Guéranger. Each season of the Church's year was prefaced by a comprehensive explanation of its significance from the historical, doctrinal and liturgical points of view. He sought to associate the catechism with the missal so that the prayers enriched the explanations and the teaching culminated in prayer.⁵⁴ This missal had a considerable success and was almost immediately translated into other languages. It was too difficult for children so it was rapidly followed by a children's version with simplified texts and explanations.⁵⁵

(iv) Aids to liturgical method

Besides these and other missals⁵⁶ Lefèbvre produced a large number of books and articles on different aspects of liturgy and methods of introducing it into the religion lesson for all age-groups. To these were added a variety of teaching aids including pictures, cutouts, games, workbooks and models.⁵⁷ His Catéchisme Illustré par la Bible, l'Évangile et la Liturgie (known as the 'Méthode CIBEL') was not just a book, but comprised teaching aids including a series of scenes with movable cut-out figures.⁵⁸ He founded a review, the Bulletin paroissial et liturgique, to which Fargues contributed. The Abbey of St. André became a publishing house⁵⁹ to handle this vast output, which included the foreign-language editions until the Second World War. In

54. Ranwez, 'En Belgique wallonne', p.311.

55. The missal continued to be popular until the revision of the Roman Catholic liturgy at the time of the Second Vatican Council 1962-68. It is characteristic of Lefèbvre that he rejoiced in the reforms even though it made his missal out of date. He did not live to bring out a new one.

56. It is interesting to note a link between two of the movements mentioned above: Lefèbvre edited a missal for jocists which they published in 1937: Avec le Christ, Missel dominicale populaire.

57. Boyer, Pédagogie chrétienne, pp.220-223, passim.

58. Recommended by Fargues, Les méthodes actives dans l'enseignement religieux, p.132.

59. Apostolat liturgique, Abbaye St. André, Lophem, Nr. Bruges.

Boyer's view⁶⁰ Lefèbvre had the intelligence to realize that his ideas were more likely to be put into practice if he provided the means. In particular he lightened the task of teachers and catechists and enabled education in liturgy to go forward in a way it would otherwise have been unlikely to do so well.

(d) History and Rationale

The references in the present work provide abundant evidence that the Belgians have chronicled the French catechetical movement. However they have gone much further than that by producing critical studies of the catechetical movement worldwide. The Jesuit review, Nouvelle Revue Théologique, published by the 'Centre de documentation et de recherche' at Louvain had been in existence for some sixty years when the 'Centre de documentation catéchétique' was set up by the Jesuits at Louvain in 1935.⁶¹

(i) Où en est l'enseignement religieux?

The first task of the newly-set-up catechetical information centre was to try to classify and evaluate the large number of books being used in religious instruction in different countries. This attempt at a rationalized bibliography appeared in successive issues of the review in 1936.⁶² It was apparently carried out in response to the decree Provido Sane of Pius XI which had been promulgated the previous year, (p.83) and as a preliminary to research into catechism texts. Each section of the bibliography was prefaced by a brief analysis of the situation within the age group or topic under consideration. Over a thousand works were listed in the French language section alone, so that inevitably the comments on individual volumes were almost non-existent and there was little attempt at discrimination. The articles were revised and published in book form, together with the bibliography, in 1937.⁶³ It was reviewed by Fargues⁶⁴ and Boyer⁶⁵ who were

60. Boyer, *ibid.*

61. Louis Meilhac, 'Au Centre International d'études de la formation religieuse "Lumen Vitae"' in BICE, ed., Dix années de travail catéchétique, pp.329-338.

62. Où en est l'enseignement religieux? Nouvelle revue théologique (63) 1936 no.4, 355-404; no.5, 480-520; no.6, 599-650; no.7, 714-751; no.8, 874-899; no.9 1000-1032; no.10, 1114-1156.

63. Delcuve, ed., Où en est l'enseignement religieux? This was an enlarged version of the original articles with more than five thousand works listed for all languages.

64. Éducation no.39 Nov. 1938, p.214.

65. Persévérance no.66 July-Aug. 1937, p.476.

both highly critical of the lack of discrimination in the bibliography. However, if nothing else it may have served a useful purpose in showing how many of the books being used in catechetics were extremely old and how very few specialized works were available at the time.

(ii) Lumen vitae

The 'Centre de documentation catéchétique' later moved to Brussels and became known as the 'Centre International d'Études de la formation religieuse "Lumen Vitae"'. The new centre was much larger and incorporated a specialized catechetical library in six languages. The review Lumen vitae began in 1946 and has since published a large number of comprehensive and critical studies of many aspects of catechetics from all parts of the world. Members of the staff of Lumen vitae have published monographs on catechetical subjects, alone or in collaboration. In particular the historical surveys of Fr Pierre Ranwez SJ. deserve mention and some have already been cited. His major work, Aspects contemporains de la pastorale de l'enfance,⁶⁶ presents a detailed critical survey of catechetical methods and their development in the French-speaking world from 1920 to 1950; it includes a selective and carefully classified bibliography.

Conclusion

The influence of one person or country on another is never an easy thing to assess. So much is hidden in the mind and often the person influenced is only half-aware of it if at all. This is the case with the French and Belgian catechetical movements, particularly in what concerns method. It is simple enough to date published works but much more difficult to discover when they germinated in the mind, whether the ideas they contained were original and if not, where they came from.

(a) Method

In her published works on catechetical methodology Marie Fargues appears to make no direct references to Poppe and the Sisters of Vorselaar. However from her correspondence with Frère Marie, a Belgian Brother of the Christian Schools, it can be seen that she was well-acquainted with their work and made frequent references to it.⁶⁷

66. The book is cited by Fargues, Germain and Colomb among others.

67. Correspondence with Frère Marie from 1935-1953 passim, Archives of Marie Fargues. He was an inspector of schools, lecturer in method to student-teachers and writer of a number of articles in various periodicals.

Doubtless this owed more than a little to the fact that he made translations from the Flemish for her. Nevertheless her book, La Croisade Eucharistique is a factual and pedagogic account of the movement Poppe founded (p.127). She echoes his thought in statements such as "The crusade is a method of education."⁶⁸ The following year she brought out a book of eucharistic meditations for children, Le Pain vivant.⁶⁹ This, too, is imbued with his spirit.

On the other hand, Fargues recommended the books of Dupont and Sister Marie Chantal (p.129) in Les méthodes actives de l'enseignement religieux. That she did not do the same for the Flemish catechists may have been simply a question of language. She may also have felt, with Ranwez, that their work was less well-adapted to the French situation. Again, the Notre Dame method was strongly Montessorian, as was Fargues' own.

The correspondence with Sr Chantal and Frère Marie is interesting in showing how Fargues could resist attempts to influence her. Both she and Derkenne acknowledged the influence of the Belgian educator Decroly.⁷⁰ The Belgians were evidently unhappy at the way the French had taken up his methods for religious education, even in the Christianized form under which Eugène Dévaud presented them.⁷¹ In Chantal's letter⁷² she said she felt that even when religion is taken into account, Decroly's system has "a certain danger in the over-large part it gives to the senses in a child's education." Frère Marie, in another letter,⁷³ takes issue with Father Chatelain's praise of him, quoting the Louvain school as saying "his method is unscientific... And (here our Belgian Catholic educators disagree with Father Dévaud) the method aims at forming a little animal. Thirdly, his centres of interest are those of adults and not of children..." He ends the letter expressing the fear that in France "a system is extolled that we Belgian Catholics repudiate with all our strength..." Fargues, however,

68. Marie Fargues, La Croisade eucharistique (1932), p.4. This movement spread to France but was never so successful as in Belgium.

69. idem, Le Pain vivant, (1933).

70. See Chapter 5, p.109, note 63 and p.120. Also Chapter 1, p.31.

71. Eugène Dévaud, Le Système Decroly et la pédagogie chrétienne (1938).

72. 8 Apr. 1923, Archives of Marie Fargues.

73. July 1937, *ibid.*

continues her citations of Decroly,⁷⁴ while obviously being well-aware of his materialistic tendencies. It is also possible that his ideas would have been more acceptable in France than in Belgium.

The influence went in both directions as shown in the correspondence with Chantal (p.138) where she refers to Fargues' Choses Divines (p.108). Frère Marie, too, refers to the use he makes of her books and articles in his own articles and lectures.⁷⁵ He also reviewed her books for Belgian journals.

(b) Milieu

In the field of milieu the work of Joseph Cardijn stands alone for originality and vision, and it is not only France that is in his debt.⁷⁶

(c) Liturgy

The liturgical movement, too, owes an immeasurable debt to the energy and farsightedness of Gaspar Lefèbvre. His ability to translate the work of Guéranger into practical pedagogy justifies the importance given to him by recent authors such as Adler:⁷⁷ "... above all Dom Lefèbvre. These efforts have inspired directly or indirectly those who in France were at the origin of the catechetical renewal drawn from liturgical sources..." Boyer acknowledged his expertise by inviting him (at the instigation of Bishop Petit de Julleville) to speak at the annual general meeting of the Dijon catechists.⁷⁸ His subject was 'Liturgical introduction to the catechism.'

(d) History and Rationale

The valuable contribution to the chronicling of the catechetical renewal movement made by the 'Lumen vitae' centre is acknowledged by Fargues in her own history of the movement as she experienced it:⁷⁹ "Those who would wish a more complete and better proportioned picture

74. Marie Fargues, Introduction des enfants au mystère chrétien, Vol. 2: Dieu aime les hommes (1957), p.70.

75. Letter to M. Fargues 10 Feb. 1944, Archives of Marie Fargues.

76. Schoof, (Breakthrough, p.98) says of Jocism "It proved to be one of the most powerful forces leading to the revival [of French Catholicism] after 1930."

77. Adler, Joseph Colomb, p.32.

78. Letter from A. Boyer to G. Lefèbvre, 27 Feb. 1935, Archives of André Boyer.

79. Fargues, How to teach religion, p.10.

will have recourse ... to the works of the Jesuit fathers of the review Lumen vitae, who have published two thick volumes on the contemporary catechism and its bibliography..." (pp.136-137). Boyer⁸⁰ does not mention it, even though he, Fargues and many other French catechists contributed to the review.

It was pointed out above (p.127) that most of the initiatives came from the northern, Flemish provinces. It can perhaps now be realized how far the two parts of Belgium are linked together when one notes that the people concerned in both liturgical and historical contributions were French-speaking by birth or background while working in the north. The JOC movement was entirely northern in origin though this is a little surprising given that in the main it is in the south that most of the industry is concentrated. Contributions to method came from both regions.

80. Boyer, Mouvement catéchistique français.

VII

MARIE FARGUES, EDUCATOR AND INNOVATOR

The central importance of Marie Fargues in the early French catechetical renewal and her influence on it cannot be denied. Her early involvement in the movement has already been described (p.107). It hardly abated until she was eighty,¹ and even then she retained her interest and her contacts. As soon as it was possible to publish again after the war,² a further stream of books and articles came from her pen. She continued her crusade for reform and the criticism she evoked showed she had hit the target.³ Boyer remarked that whereas Quinet's method (p.65) "remained more or less 'static', Mme Fargues was continually searching."⁴ Bishop Elchinger expressed it more strongly, "she has a passion for research."⁵ "I move with the times and the current carries me along"⁶ was the way Fargues herself put it.

In this attempt to evaluate the work and influence of Marie Fargues her later writings will not be discussed in detail. Though most of them contain original ideas, there is also much repetition of what has gone before. Instead, the evolution of one key work

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1. Several hundred catechists including two bishops and a large number of priests met at the Institut Catholique in Paris to celebrate her eightieth birthday on 15 May 1964. It was there that she was brought the first copy of her last catechetical book, Le Dieu des chrétiens (Paris: Centurion, 1964). (Le mouvement catéchétique a fêté les 80 ans de Marie Fargues, La Croix (Paris), 21 mai 1964, p.4).
 2. Because of the German occupation almost all publication ceased in France between 1940 and 1945.
 3. Fargues, (How to teach religion, p.47) says in a footnote 'In an article entitled "Réformes de Structure" (Reforms in Structure) in Documents pédagogiques, May 3, 1945, I asked the question: "Will it be too late when we take efficacious measures?" The Documentation Catéchistique devoted to me a criticism as long as the article itself. Not precisely to deny its statements but to quote them in an unfriendly way, and to deny me the right to ask my questions, and also "to be taken seriously."
 4. Boyer, Mouvement catéchistique français, p.231.
 5. Léon-Arthur Elchinger, Preface to L'enfant devant le mystère de la mort, by Marie Fargues (1963), p.8.
 6. La Croix (Paris), loc.cit.

Introduction des enfants de neuf ans au catéchisme will be taken as illustrative of her continuing research. In second place will be considered her personal influence on individuals, especially as experienced in small groups, which is mentioned by several authors.⁷

1. Introduction of nine-year-olds to the catechism

The practical experience and theoretical background upon which the book was based have been described in Chapter 5 (p.110). It was welcomed by many catechists and used in parishes with or without authorization.⁸ Boyer's unjustifiably over-critical review⁹ was apparently never published. In it he said he considered the course was based on too short an experience with children of an age group different from that in the title. He felt it was altogether too generalized and theoretical with inadequate use of the gospel. Fargues recognized some of the weaknesses and made amendments, as will be seen. Later editions would bring improvements resulting from wider experience. The timely publication of Fargues' and Derkenne's books began a revolution in the teaching of religion by the imaginative introduction of new teaching methods though still within the limits of an outmoded text, the catechism.¹⁰

(a) The place of personal prayer in the religion lesson

Like Derkenne, Fargues did not just insert "active methods" into a catechism lesson. She sought to make a fresh approach, adapted to the children's age, following a more suitable order than that of the catechism and having regard to the liturgical year. Some catechism answers drawn from here and there were used to summarize lessons, but generally knowledge was tested by her own short, simple questions. However there was a further dimension which she perhaps expressed most

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7. For example, Boyer, op.cit., p.234; La Croix (Paris), loc.cit.; Vimort, Interview de Françoise Derkenne, p.99.
 8. Derkenne, La vie et la joie au catéchisme, (1940) Deuxième année, p.18 and passim. Jouin, whose correspondence with Fargues has been mentioned (Chapter 5, p.112, note 83), used the book until expressly forbidden to do so. In a letter of 25 Sept 1938 to Fargues he says "I know parishes where Petites leçons is used." (Archives of Marie Fargues).
 9. See Chapter 4, p.89, note 76.
 10. Duperray, Enjeux et avenir, Catéchèse no.63 Apr. 1976, p.224. It was only later that the work of Colomb would liberate them from that. (See also Chapter 10, passim).

succinctly in an interview she gave at a later date.¹¹ "I think the aim of religious instruction is to help children to pray ... I mean personal prayer... One must give the children an understanding of prayer, of conversation with God. For that the child needs to think about his catechism not just know it, then he must live it... One might say that children are capable of being interested in the religion lesson insofar as they are truly in direct contact with God, with Jesus Christ." She stresses, therefore, the importance of a child being able to work alone as well as in a group, the need for moments of silence and the use of short, spontaneous, appropriate prayers rather than the set prayers; these can follow later when some understanding has been gained. Sound psychologist, Fargues recognizes that it is useless to introduce these moments of quiet and prayer at the beginning of the lesson when the children are excited and talkative. An introduction is needed to make the transition from life outside to the catechism class.¹²

(b) First edition

The first edition of the work is presented in three volumes for the teacher incorporating the text of the child's book, Petites Leçons de catéchisme. The first part is taken up with a detailed introduction to the psychology of the nine-year-old and to the technique of the method. It was designed to help catechists with little or no training as teachers, and it was completed with a bibliography. The rest of the first volume contains the detailed explanation of the first term's lessons. The other two volumes present the lessons for the rest of the year. At the end are some supplementary practical notes aimed in particular at parish catechism lessons. The child's book was issued in loose-leaf form with space for the child's prayers and reflections. To these could be added answers to questions and short gospel texts so that by the end of the year it will have built up its own "catechism".¹³ Sixty-three lessons were provided for the year.

(c) Weaknesses

Marie Fargues herself recognized two main weaknesses. The first

11. Charles Bailby, L'Essential, Équipes catéchistes no.3 Nov. 1949.

12. Fargues, Introduction des enfants de neuf ans au catéchisme (1936) Teacher's book Vol. 1, p.28.

13. cf. Chapter 5, p.114.

was that the programme was too abstract and too full. The second was that the children did not learn their lessons any better than before.¹⁴ Both would be tackled in the extensive revision begun in 1947. In a partial revision she managed to publish in 1941, there was an attempt to remedy the second weakness. The title of the revised children's book gives the clue, Petites leçons rythmées, and it is worth giving some account of what lay behind her use of rhythmic texts as an illustration both of her "passion for research" (p.141) and of her open-mindedness to new ideas.

(d) Rhythmic method

Fargues' pre-occupation with the question of learning by heart has already been mentioned (p.115) as well as her early approach to it. One of her assistants in Paris, specialist teacher of the mentally-handicapped, told her how she tried to put the text of the lessons into rhythmic form, an idea she had got from lectures by Father Jousse.¹⁵ Fargues abhorred rote-learning but considered that at a certain stage, when lessons had been well-understood, it was necessary to learn them. Children, though, found the mechanical effort difficult, but Jousse showed how to make texts "learnable" by re-writing them to an

14. Fargues, How to teach religion, p.29.

15. Fargues, How to teach religion, p.30.

Marcel Jousse SJ. (1886-1961) had been in England in the 1914-18 war. After his return to France, he presented a thesis on 'Le style oral rythmique et mnemotéchnique chez les verbo-moteurs'. His studies in linguistic psychology opened up new ways and raised a number of questions of exegesis, particularly in regard to his ideas on the rhythmic and melodic teaching of Jesus. In his day he exercised considerable influence through his writings and lectures at the Sorbonne, but he died forgotten. (Encyclopédie Catholique, s.v. 'Jousse, Marcel').

appropriate rhythm.¹⁶

(e) Continuing experience

Boyer had criticized her for insufficient trial of her book but its worth and popularity caused a full new edition to be called for after the war.¹⁷ Fargues made a major revision in the light of the experience gained in continuing her catechetical work in Paris during the war in a large, working-class parish. A remarkable team of catechists at St Germain-de-Charonne, led by the parish priest, Fr Pierre-Marie Lacointe, Marie Fargues and Mme Germaine Gathelier,¹⁸

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16. One example of a rhythmic text taken from John's Gospel, Chapter 6, the discourse on the Bread of Life, illustrates that it is not just a question of the arrangement of the text on the page, though this is sometimes sufficient:

<u>Gospel Text</u>	<u>Rhythmic Text</u>
C'est moi qui suis le Pain vivant descendu du ciel. Si quelqu'un mange de ce pain, il aura la vie éternelle. Et le pain que je donnerai c'est ma chair	C'est Moi le Pain vivant qui est descendu du Ciel. Si quelqu'un mange de ce Pain, il aura la vie éternelle. Et le Pain que je donnerai, c'est ma chair.
Celui qui mange ma chair et boit mon sang demeure en moi et moi en lui. Et moi, je le ressusciterai au dernier jour.	Mais celui qui mange ma chair et qui boit mon sang, celui-là vivra par moi.

Dieu aime les hommes (1950) p.135. *ibid.*, Leçon 33 'Le Pain de Vie'.

17. There are many letters in Fargues' correspondence at this time asking if she has any copies as the book is no longer obtainable in bookshops. Most added a plea for re-edition and asked permission to duplicate pages in the meantime. Many added a word of castigation of the catechism and approval of her work. A good number were priests who bemoaned the fact that it was too little known and insufficiently used by priests. For example, Fr M.J. Graindor in a letter of 17 June 1951 speaks of "... a perfectly unadapted catechism ... without any pedagogical disposition." Fr J. Caupenne in a letter of 3 Jan 1947 says "... for eight years I have used ... Petites leçons de catéchisme and owe much to it not only for first year classes but for the older ones and even for my sermons... They are not used as much as they should be ... I should like a new edition ... I do not think there has been enough publicity ... your works are mentioned with others of much less value... Unfortunately, many priests do not think the first year important... Is there any hope your ideas might get into the official catechism? ... a book whose plan, formulation and presentation in no way corresponds to the mentality of the present day..."
18. Ranwez, Pastorale de l'enfance, p.21. This collaboration continued until 1947.

provided a practice parish for the woman catechists for whom Fargues had begun to organize courses in 1940.¹⁹

- (f) Introduction to the catechism for children, a major revision in 1947

The new edition of the work was enlarged to include an introductory course of thirty-two lessons for eight-year-olds. The original course was reduced to fifty-three lessons in which there was considerable re-ordering. The title was modified to Introduction des enfants au catéchisme.²⁰ This allowed for the fact that the way in which the course could be used depended to some extent on the children. As Fargues pointed out in her introduction, the first volume, Le bon Dieu et ses enfants, was an initiation to religious education and could be used with eight or nine-year-olds. Similarly, the second volume, Dieu aime les hommes, could be used with ten-year-olds. The overall plan was cyclic, but repetition was avoided by a wide choice of texts, gospel extracts and activities. There was a particularly close adherence to the liturgical year in the first cycle and a greater depth of treatment in the second.

- (g) Musical settings

Rhythmic texts were used in the lessons and an interesting development made its first appearance. This consisted in the use of simple musical settings for some of these texts.²¹

- (h) Method of testing

Two years before the new edition, there had appeared the first volume of the Collective catechism tests, an important work on which research with a group had been proceeding since 1935.²² This formed an essential part of her method.

19. Fargues, How to teach religion, p.41.

20. Marie Fargues, Introduction des enfants au catéchisme (1947).

Teacher's books

Children's books:

Vol.1: Le Bon Dieu et ses enfants

Le bon Dieu et son enfant, Petites leçons rythmées

Vol.2: Dieu aime les hommes

Dieu aime les hommes.

21. In her correspondence there are letters from Dom Lucien David OSB., and Fr Joseph Gelineau SJ., experts whom she consulted in the matter.

22. See Chapter 5, p.112, note 81.

(i) Theological critics

Although the revised work was very well received there were criticisms, particularly from Boyer, who accused her of bending theology to psychology.²³ In the climate of the present day she would more likely be considered prophetic. Indeed Adler, commenting on these criticisms in 1980, wrote²⁴ "...coming from the clergy, [they] are addressed to a laywoman, a non-theologian."²⁵ However formulated their focal point is the same: the integrity of the truths of faith is menaced, in particular the place given to original sin." He ends by asking "Priority given to content or to the child? A debate opened in the 1930s which is far from being closed in 1980..."²⁶

(j) Pedagogical critics

Canon Eugène Charles disapproved of the use of active methods in the religion lesson.²⁷ According to Fargues, "...active methods were feeling their way more or less awkwardly, but without any major opposition and even on the bases approved by a bishop."²⁸ This was during the 1920s, up to about 1935, the time of the publication of Derkenne's La vie et la joie au catéchisme and the first edition of Fargues' Introduction des enfants de neuf ans au catéchisme. Then, continued Fargues, "they became more intelligent and could be taken seriously, opposition appeared around the years 1940-50." Theologians regarded with distrust the importance given to the subject, the child. "We had to win the right to study psychology as being one of the

23. Boyer, Mouvement catéchistique français, p.231.

24. Adler, Joseph Colomb, pp.31-32.

25. Jouin (previously mentioned in Chapter 5, p.112, note 83) was a member of the diocesan commission for the catechism and wrote to Fargues after one meeting (14 June 1946, Archives of Marie Fargues). "They studied your first year plan ... in giving the author's name, which it might have been better not to have done, as certain members did not seem very well-disposed to the work of laypeople."

26. The debate may be said to extend even further back, with the Modernists (See Chapter 1, p.27).

27. Fargues, How to teach religion, p.47. Charles is referred to in Chapter 4, pp.75-76.

28. She refers to Petit de Julleville, Bishop of Dijon, who wrote the introduction to Les Méthodes actives dans l'enseignement religieux (1934). See also Chapter 4, p.77 et seq.

essential bases in the formation of the teachers [of religion]."²⁹

- (k) Introduction to the Christian mystery for children,
second revision

The original publisher of the second edition had handed it over to another publisher who had reprinted it. Five years later, in 1955, the first part of a completely new edition appeared, entitled Introduction des enfants au mystère chrétien.³⁰ The change in title can be taken, perhaps, as a renewed emphasis on the part of Mme Fargues that she was not concerned with religious instruction so much as "to educate in the faith so that knowledge could turn to love."³¹ As far as she was concerned the catechism was dead, though she still had to put up with it. She has left the word out of the title because she sees her book as a transition, a preparation for the catechism. She has the audacity to suggest that the use of the latter should be put off not just to the end of a lesson nor even to the end of a year, but to the end of two years. She continues, prophetically, "Our successors will do better. Nowadays one may question the necessity of ending with the catechism in the case of children. We suggest that a living faith does not die for lack of being put into precise formulae, providing one has safeguards."³²

There are not very many changes in the text except for additions here and there and a few changes of order of the lessons. The use of musical settings (p.146) is more fully developed.³³

29. Fargues, op.cit., pp.46-47. She describes herself feeling as if she were a heretic condemned to the stake when she stood in the audience for one of Charles' lectures while he read the antimodernist Credo, "the more so when for a quarter of an hour after psychological methods were condemned not in explicit terms but in a most transparent way."

30. Marie Fargues, Introduction des enfants au mystère chrétien (1955, 1957, Nouvelle édition entièrement revue)

Teachers' books:

Vol.1: Le bon Dieu et ses
enfants

Vol.2: Dieu aime les hommes

Children's books:

Le bon Dieu et son enfant (Cours
préparatoire ou première année)

Dieu aime les hommes (pour la
deuxième année de catéchisme)

31. *ibid.*, Vol.2, Avant-propos, p.5.

32. *ibid.*, p.6.

33. Fargues (*ibid.*, p.7) says "The texts of the method owe much to Fr Gelineau ... who has made many corrections ... I want to thank him for having, by his approval, strengthened my confidence in the value of this procedure." (See also p.146, note 21 above).

(1) Some other books and articles

All during this period when she was preparing successive revisions of her major work, Fargues published articles on aspects of them.³⁴ She also published several more books including her only venture into adolescent catechetics, with a book on Bible history.³⁵ In fact she continued lecturing and writing on catechetical subjects until her eightieth year (p.141). One of her last books was How to teach religion³⁶ in the first part of which she set down her recollections of half a century as a catechist.

2. Her personal influence

Fargues' influence on the French catechetical movement was not confined to her writings, but extended to her personal contacts, especially through study circles. Two of these have already been mentioned.³⁷ A third was started on her own initiative in 1946 when she first invited a group of about fifteen catechists to her country house for a week of study and research into catechetical problems.

(a) Fargues' study weeks

Thus begun, the study weeks became an annual event continuing for some ten years. The idea was taken up elsewhere and under different leaders. Officially they were called 'A week among catechists' and were presided over by Fr Joseph Colomb,³⁸ but to those who attended them they were the 'Semaines Fargues'. Her obituarist wrote "No-one who has not taken part in the famous 'Semaines Marie Fargues' that she organized in the 50s will ever know the fervour of a research at once spiritual and pastoral which opened new perspectives in the ministry of

34. Marie Fargues, Catechism recitatives, (les récitatifs rythmés) Lumen vitae (5) no.4 1950, 605-609. Three other articles on catechetical subjects appeared in the same review between 1947 and 1950.

35. Marie Fargues, Histoire sainte d'après les textes bibliques (1953), Teacher's book and 2 pupils' books. This enjoyed a considerable success. It was favourably reviewed in the English Roman Catholic catechetical review The Sower (no.2, 1954) "We have nothing like it in English." It was later translated into English and is among the very few published in England: The Old Testament: selections, narrative and commentary (1960, reprinted 1962).

36. Marie Fargues, D'hier à demain le catéchisme, (1964). English translation by Sister Gertrude SP., How to teach religion, (1968).

37. See Chapter 5, p.112, study group for research into tests and Groupe Lajeunie.

38. Fargues, How to teach religion, p.45.

the word."³⁹ People who did take part recalled them twenty or even thirty years later. Some were already well-known in the movement, others became so. Among those mentioned or cited in the present work are Elchinger (p.141), Chanon (p.56), Coudreau (p.55), Derkenne (p.120) and Vimort.⁴⁰

Probably the most significant introduction effected by her was when, in 1949, Colomb and Derkenne met for the first time and began a fruitful collaboration in the catechetical movement. There was a notable absentee from these annual events, André Boyer. He had been invited, as he recounts himself,⁴¹ but, as Director of the National Catechetical Centre, (p.175) he evidently hesitated. He consulted Cardinal Suhard, Archbishop of Paris and received the reply "It is not your place." Boyer continued "He had no difficulty in persuading me, I did not agree with Mme Fargues' fundamental ideas."⁴²

(b) Experience, intuition, stimulation, tenacity

There do not appear to be any official records of the sessions, so it is impossible to say exactly what particular ideas came out of them. It is evident that Marie Fargues had the gift of making people feel at ease and of facilitating discussion; they seemed to be drawn by the warmth of her personality and her great experience even though she held no official position in the catechetical organization. "From decade to decade her experience matured and assured her mastery. She attracted an ever-increasing following of disciples drawn by the discreet charm of her personality and her remarkable intuitions."⁴³ She seemed to have the gift of stimulating reaction by provocative statements. She

39. Jean Honoré [J.H.], *Catéchiste toute sa vie*. Le souvenir de Marie Fargues, La Croix (Paris), 8 Dec. 1973, p.12. J.H. was almost certainly Fr Jean Honoré, close collaborator of Marie Fargues when he was director of the National Catechetical Centre in Paris from 1958.

40. Jean Vimort, *passim*, starting in Chapter 1, p.30. Fr Vimort was director for religious education for the archdiocese of Lyons where he succeeded Colomb in 1954.

41. Boyer, Mouvement catéchistique français, p.234. There is a curious sequel to this in Boyer's correspondence, (Correspondence of Sembel and Boyer, July 1955, Archives of André Boyer.) Fargues had wished to hold one of her sessions at the Dijon diocesan centre, La Bussière. For some reason this enraged Boyer who went to the Bishop about it. Bishop Sembel then forbade it.

42. Boyer, *loc.cit.*

43. Jean Honoré [J.H.], *Catéchiste toute sa vie*, La Croix (Paris), 8 Dec. 1973, p.12.

was tenacious, too, for the account of her eightieth birthday celebrations speaks of those who benefited from her "gentle obstinacy".⁴⁴

(c) The training of catechists

It is very probable that one of the questions discussed would have been that of the training of catechists and the institution of professional catechists. This, as has been said (p.115), was of grave concern to her and she returned to it over and over again in her writings. In a review article of 1946⁴⁵ Fargues compares teachers of religion unfavourably with ordinary teachers from this viewpoint, "... no training college, no recruitment of specialists ... people are scandalized ... to hear the function of catechist talked about as a profession to be remunerated..." She had taken practical steps in 1940 to begin to remedy the situation by organizing courses for catechists. However it was not until 1946 that the first school for catechists was founded in Lyons to be followed by that in Paris in 1948 and later in other large centres. In 1951 the Higher Institute of Pastoral Catechetics in Paris was founded with Father Coudreau as its first director and Mlle Derkenne in charge of teaching practice. That Fargues was partly behind these foundations is implicit in the introduction by Coudreau to her book How to teach religion.⁴⁶ Chanon is more explicit in a letter to Fargues where she says, "The schools for catechists are something of your work, you have worked so much at the renewal of religious teaching methods..."⁴⁷

Conclusion

In April 1964 there was held in Paris the fourth national catechetical congress at which some 8,500 catechists were present including bishops, priests, nuns and laypeople. During it someone remarked "without Marie Fargues this congress would not have taken

44. Le mouvement catéchétique a fêté les 80 ans de Marie Fargues. *ibid.*, 21 May 1964, p.4.

45. Marie Fargues, Situation de catéchisme, review of La grande pitié de l'enseignement chrétien, by Joseph Colomb in Vie spirituelle (75) Nov. 1946, 578-583. This review is quoted in part in Fargues, How to teach religion, p.35.

46. M. Coudreau, Preface to How to teach religion, by Marie Fargues, p.2.

47. 19 Dec. 1962, Archives of Marie Fargues.

place."⁴⁸ This was, perhaps, an exaggeration; it is easy to be carried away on a wave of emotion such as, on this occasion, was generated by the imminent celebration of her eightieth birthday. It was followed by a more sober, but hardly less telling, announcement in the newspaper of the celebration and an invitation to all her friends to attend. "The catechetical movement ... knows what it owes to its pioneers among whom Marie Fargues holds an eminent place..."⁴⁹ The numbers who answered the invitation included some who had been pioneers with her but also many others who had benefited from her life and experience.

The present generation of catechists with all the methods and apparatus available to them can hardly be expected to see the significance of Fargues' work as educator and innovator. However, no serious student of the history of the movement can escape the fact that she was among the first to attempt to improve the methodology of the religion lesson. Not content with a limited effort, she devoted a lifetime not only to spreading her own ideas, but also to supporting and encouraging the initiatives of others.

48. Le mouvement catéchétique a fêté les 80 ans de Marie Fargues, La Croix (Paris), 21 May 1964, p.4.

49. Le mouvement catéchétique fête Madame Fargues (à l'occasion de son 80e anniversaire), La Croix (Paris), 14 May 1964, p.4.

VIII

ANDRÉ BOYER, POLEMICIST AND ORGANIZER

The contribution made to the early French catechetical movement by the diocese of Dijon was discussed in Chapter four. The part played by André Boyer first as director of the work of the voluntary catechists and later as diocesan director of religious instruction was seen to be important; not only did he carry out with efficiency the plans of two of the bishops he served concerning the teaching of religion in the diocese, but he also provided a thread of continuity.¹ The part he played in the project for a unified catechism and his role as first director of the National Catechetical Centre will come into the succeeding chapters. In this chapter an attempt will be made to evaluate his contribution to the catechetical movement by his books.

1. Classifier of ideas

The judgement quoted at the end of Chapter four that his organizational ability was more important than his catechetical writings (p.94) may be justified today. Viewed in the context of the time when Boyer began his main catechetical work in Dijon (p.77), however, this opinion should, perhaps, be modified. At that time, his ability to classify and present in orderly fashion the new ideas in education and catechetics that were proliferating in the first quarter of the century was of immense help to hard-pressed catechists possessed of few educational skills. It was another aspect of his organizing power, but one not to be disparaged.

2. Prolific writer

Boyer's literary output can hardly be ignored, consisting as it does of some sixty books as well as innumerable articles and reviews. It must be said, however, that a good many of these were pamphlets of

1. Boyer in fact lived during the episcopates of eight bishops of Dijon. He was influenced to some extent by Dadolle and Landrieux as seminarian and young priest. As director of religious instruction he served Petit de Julleville, Sembel and Charles de la Brousse until his retirement in 1970, a period of nearly forty years. Even while he was director of the National Catechetical Centre in Paris, he never ceased to be director in Dijon.

twenty to sixty pages, including a number of lectures expanded for publication. Apart from these there were teachers' and childrens' books to cover virtually the whole age range from five to fourteen, and he also edited a series for the older secondary children. On average he wrote one or two books a year during the whole of his career, even when he was both National Director and Director at Dijon. A number of them ran to two or even three editions with thousands of copies sold. Translations of many were made in to English, Spanish, Portuguese, German and even Arabic, Madagascan and Vietnamese, so they were obviously disseminated worldwide and used, too, in France's former colonies and protectorates.

Even though they were not, apparently, translated into Italian, a long analytical article and bibliography of Boyer's books was published in Italian in 1959, by L. Csonka,² showing the status he had abroad. This was probably due in part at least to his position, and far exceeded his importance in the movement as a whole. This same article dismisses the work of more original minds such as Fargues and Derkenne in a few lines.

3. The essence of Boyer's method

In his bibliography of Boyer's books Csonka recognizes three periods in his output. The first period is said to be one of enquiry, and includes the early works already considered in Chapter four, of which Catéchisme vivant (p.85) was the most important.

The second period is one of reflection; the principal work is Christian pedagogy, of which the first volume, Problems and methods, appeared in 1945, and the second, Catechetics, Two years later.³

The third period is called that of construction and consists of the complete series The Progressive Education of the Christian⁴ which was written between 1949 and 1964. There are twenty-five books, eight of them teachers' guides, and they cater for the four main stages of a

2. L. Csonka, L'oeuvre catéchistique du Chanoine André Boyer, Orientamenti pedagogici An. 6 no.5 Sept.-Oct. 1959, pp.778-801. Boyer had the whole of this article translated into French and it is this translation which is being used here. (Archives of André Boyer, File 56). He also reproduced the bibliography from this article in his book Mouvement catéchistique français, pp.345-348.

3. André Boyer, Pédagogie chrétienne
Vol.1: Problèmes et méthodes (1945)
Vol.2: Catéchétique (1947).

4. Collection 'Éducation progressive du chrétien' (1949-1964).

child's development distinguished by Boyer. These are:

before the age of reason:	awakening to religious experience
the age of reason:	Christian initiation
later childhood:	Christian formation
adolescence:	religious orientation

The dates are significant in providing some evidence that he had really elaborated his method with the completion of the second volume of Christian pedagogy, that is, in 1947. After this book, apart from the Unified catechism in which he collaborated with Quinet, two or three descriptive brochures and several re-editions, he did not publish anything else until the Progressive Education series to appear. Further, he prepared a bibliography dated June 1948 and headed 'Canon Boyer's Method'⁵ which ends with the two volumes of Christian pedagogy. Then in 1967 in an autobiographical note⁶ he stated that "having no longer to bear the heavy burden of the Centre in Paris, he could give more time to 'structuring' his method," implying that his method as such was complete. In the same correspondence he refers to "Canon Boyer's method elaborated since 1950: Progressive education of the Christian."⁷ He left Paris in 1954 and it is from then that most of the books in the series are dated. The fact that Csonka based much of his article (note 2) on an analysis of the two volumes Christian pedagogy provides corroborative evidence.

Internal evidence is provided by examination of the books themselves when it can be seen that there are no new ideas, but that what was outlined in 1947 was developed more fully between 1949 and 1964.⁸ It is proposed, therefore, to consider Christian pedagogy only,

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5. 'Méthode de M.le Chanoine Boyer', Archives of André Boyer, File 55.
 6. Correspondence with Sr Marie-Pia, 2 May 1967, *ibid.*, File 116. In his archives, Boyer kept a file for each book he wrote in which are to be found source material, drafts, proof copies, correspondence with editors, reviews from French and foreign journals. There are also copies of his replies to what he considered to be unjust criticisms, letters from his readers and his replies. The letter cited above is from correspondence concerning Un demi-siècle au sein du mouvement catéchistique français.
 7. Further support for this view comes from Boyer's history of the catechetical movement, Mouvement catéchistique français, p.267, where there is a curious piece of self-advertisement. He reproduces long passages from a review of Pédagogie chrétienne as if to underline the book's importance, as he found the review "very favourable."
 8. Interview with Georges Duperray, Lyons, 1 June 1979.

in any detail, as in it lies the core of Boyer's contribution to catechetical methodology.

4. Christian pedagogy

(a) Problems and methods

The comment which probably best sums up Pédagogie chrétienne: Problèmes et méthodes is that of M.de Paillerets in a letter to Marie Fargues "What an odd idea! a living card-index. He has put all the teaching methods on cards and then set them out. Obviously it is very informative but not very attractive."⁹ It suffices to look at the table of contents to appreciate the veracity of this comment.¹⁰

There is a short introduction in which are discussed briefly the science and art of education, in which education is said to be subservient to philosophy and theology. In the first part, 'Problèmes',

9. 19 July 1945, Archives of Marie Fargues.

10. As an example, the contents of Chapter nine are given:

CHAPITRE IX - MÉTHODES ÉTRANGÈRES D'ENSEIGNEMENT RELIGIEUX.

Allemagne:

La méthode de Munich188
Influence de l'Arbeitschule191
Plan de Fulda192

Amérique:

Méthode de Yorke196
Méthode de Shields198

Angleterre:

Plan du Sower202
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Australie:

Application du principe des projets à l'enseignement religieux205
Cours par Correspondance210

Belgique:

Méthode Eucharistique210
Méthode de Vorselaar215
Méthode des Soeurs de N.-D. de Namur216
Méthode Dupont219
Méthode Liturgique220

Canada:

Méthode inductive intégrale223
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Espagne:

Méthode Manjon227
Méthode Bilbao228
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Méthode Tusquets230
Méthode de l'ASCEA232

Italie:

Méthode intuitive cyclique233
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the problems of the aim, the object, the subject, adaptation, the environment and authority are set out briefly in successive chapters. Possible solutions are presented, with the marxist alongside the Christian one. The second part, 'Méthodes', reviews almost every teaching method, secular and religious, from France and abroad. Besides the obvious ones like Froebel and Montessori there are less likely ones such as nazism and Scouting, more than fifty all told. The book ends with a brief review of the present state of religious instruction in France. Thus far it is a useful reference book even if dull and possibly confusing for anyone who was not a trained teacher.

(i) Defence of the catechism: the views of the critics

The book was reviewed by Jean Pihan who set it in a wider field. It is fair, and Boyer himself found it favourable, except for one or two reservations.¹¹ Pihan had put these reservations more forcibly in a previous letter to Fargues as "...his [Boyer's] anxiety to defend the catechism ... and a kind of 'corporate pride as a theologian' which sometimes prevents him from speaking the same language as we do."¹² In the review he wrote, "...among those in our country interested in catechetics there are two opposing factions, the theologians-above-all and the educators-above-all... Canon Boyer has a foot in both camps. His pedagogy is based on theology and he has reminded us of the essentials neglected for some years, now..." He adds later, "The eminent specialist from Dijon is one of the few people to link the catechism with life..."¹³

Others were more critical and considered Boyer had been less than fair to some of the contemporary French catechists. For example, in the letter to Fargues already quoted (p.156) de Paillerets says "The few pages devoted to your method are somewhat acid... And he reproaches you for giving a text which is not that of the official catechism, even though he recognizes the general lack of success for the national catechism." This insistence on the catechism text even if in a somewhat improved version can be found throughout his life. He applied new teaching methods to the improvement of the catechism lesson but in spite of the influence of Dadolle and Landrieux in his own

11. Boyer, Mouvement catéchistique français, p.267. He quotes from the review on subsequent pages, (see also p.155 above, note 7).

12. 20 Dec. 1943, Archives of Marie Fargues.

13. Boyer, loc.cit., pp.267-268. The review was originally published in L'Union no.622 Feb. 1946, pp.19-26.

diocese he never sought to replace the theological text with an evangelical catechism. Bolder and more original minds than his would bring about that change and with it the real catechetical movement,¹⁴ but this falls outside the scope of the present study. Boyer was a theologian more than an educator and was unable to go the whole way with new educational methods because he was unable to see, as Landrieux had seen many years before, that as long as the catechism remained no real progress would be made.¹⁵

Marie Fargues was asked to review Boyer's book for the influential Catholic journal Vie spirituelle.¹⁶ In her review she took up the cudgels against the catechism¹⁷ but first she noted that in the survey of methodology worldwide "France's rank is humiliatingly low." She pointed to certain other countries where there is a progressive plan for teaching religion rather than a concentric one as in France. She chided the author for making matters worse by giving a lengthy review of the method of St Sulpice, (p.36) thus opening the way to criticism of French methods as anachronistic. She noted that Boyer considered the catechism indigestible in spite of the efforts of the publishers to brighten up the new edition,¹⁸ yet he still wanted to carry on with it. Still worse, he would discourage those who proposed a better-adapted version, thus turning back on him his criticism of her method (p.157). She also considers he is too severe on another contemporary catechist, Françoise Derkenne.¹⁹ Her final suggestion would gain him royalties but was not really what he had in mind when he wrote the book: "You must buy Canon Boyer's book, take the ideas and use them to try and get

14. Duperray, *Le contenu de la catéchèse*, p.489.

15. Interview with Georges Duperray, Lyons, 1 June 1979.

16. Letter from the editor A.M. Henry OP., 19 June 1945, Archives of Marie Fargues.

17. Marie Fargues, Review of *Pédagogie chrétienne*, by André Boyer, in Vie spirituelle (74) Jan. 1946, 136.

18. This refers to the Catéchisme à l'usage des diocèses de France (1937) and its successive editions. See Chapter 9, p.165, note 10.

19. Derkenne's liturgical method is acclaimed to this day as one of the most original to come out of the catechetical renewal, as was seen in Chapter 5, pp.120-124. Fargues does not actually name her in the review but gives a page reference in Pédagogie chrétienne. Boyer's criticism is on the same point of the centre of interest already discussed in correspondence between them at a much earlier date (1935). (See Chapter 4, p.86, note 66.) It provides another example of his reluctance to change his ideas and methods.

rid of the paralysing obsession with the catechism manual."²⁰

(ii) Answer to criticisms

Typical of Boyer is his violent reaction to Fargues' trenchant, though polite, criticism: "Mme Fargues does not dream that one might dispute her right to be the 'teaching church' nor to make her own catechism."²¹ Then he catches her out in one or two slight misquotations which do not affect the tenor of her argument or of his, and immediately accuses her of a falsehood to make it seem as if he was in agreement with her. It is not unreasonable to believe that Boyer considered she had usurped his position, but there were others in the movement who did not consider he had the right to be the 'teaching church' either.

(iii) A useful book

While not wishing to belittle the value of Pédagogie chrétienne as a sourcebook, enough has already been said to show that at least some of the assessments of other people's methods were not always strictly accurate. At times Boyer could adopt a sneering tone or leave things out altogether even though there were worthwhile ideas. He received many letters concerning the book, some unfavourable, others less so. To give an example, there is a forthright letter from a parish priest making very plain what he thought of such comments on a method he used and valued and pointing out certain misrepresentations. Boyer defends himself and still more the catechism but unfortunately there was an acrimonious note in the correspondence.²²

(b) Catechetics

The second volume of Pédagogie chrétienne entitled simply Catéchétique contains Boyer's method properly so-called. As one would expect it is comprehensive, clear and traditional in the sense of being catechism-orientated. It is also pedagogically and theologically sound and included in the presentation are elements not so often found in catechetical manuals of the time. These include doctrinal preparation

20. Fargues, Review of Pédagogie chrétienne, p.138.

21. Single sheet of type headed 'Vie spirituelle (janvier 1946)' and found in a folder of miscellaneous papers, (Archives of André Boyer). It has not been possible to trace its publication so it must be assumed either that the editor refused it or the author never submitted it for publication.

22. From Canon E. Bogard to A. Boyer, 22 Oct. 1945, and reply of 10 Nov., *ibid.*, File 97.

of adults for the reception of the sacraments and the instruction of adolescent groups. This latter point was an important feature of Boyer's catechetical work in his early days at Dijon (p.78).

(i) Catechetical directives

The book opens with an introductory chapter on the catechetical directives from Rome. He had included a short summary of these in the conclusion to the previous volume and this may provide a clue to Boyer's method and his insistence on the catechism; he was following these directions loyally. His was not the type of mind to see that those directives themselves needed changing as would indeed happen after the Second Vatican Council. That was, however, still twenty years in the future and not many had the vision to see so far ahead.

(ii) Religious instruction and religious education

The rest of the book is divided into two parts; the first, 'Truth' deals with religious instruction from the earliest years up to adulthood. The second, 'Truth for living', concerns Christian education for life. While recognizing that these two elements should always be present in religion lessons, Boyer, in separating them, seems to be reacting against two things; on the one hand against over-intellectualism, and on the other to what may seem to be an exaggerated emphasis on the application of religion to life. Many people nowadays might question this approach as did some of his contemporaries, but others agreed. An American reviewer, for example, felt that "In the midst of the confusion, the separate treatment of these two interlocking aspects of catechetical work achieves a genuine clarity that may well be regarded as Canon Boyer's distinctive contribution to modern catechetical literature."²³

(iii) Religious awakening and Christian initiation

In presenting his method, Boyer shows himself to be aware of the psychological development of the child and of its capabilities for learning. He recognized the need to cater for the youngest children, often neglected in the past, to provide a Christian nurture many no longer receive in their own homes; for them it is religious education not religious instruction. Influenced here by Landrieux, he places gospel and bible stories in a central position but he would also lead

23. John F. Dwyer SJ., Review of Catéchétique, by André Boyer, in Theological Studies (9) no.4 Dec. 1948, 628-629.

the children along the way of nature in the contemplation of the wonders of the world, God's creation. He suggests such suitable activities as cutting out and colouring pictures, singing and drama.

(iv) Catechism for the nine-to-twelve-year-olds

It is in considering Boyer's method for the older children that his traditional ideas are most evident. In France where religion lessons were only obligatory from nine to twelve years of age, he put much careful thought into the working out of his plan. Basically it is the catechism which, by the third year, is studied in its entirety and must be known. He concedes that other books besides the catechism can be used for the religion lesson but, as Csonka puts it, "without renouncing in any way the theological formulation of doctrine."²⁴ Active methods are employed, the lessons are linked with the liturgical year but the synthesis is presented in the traditional way through the Apostle's Creed.²⁵

(v) Religious orientation of the adolescent

In the catechesis of adolescents Boyer recognizes that they are often bored by religious instruction that has no bearing on their moral and intellectual pre-occupations. He offers some concrete suggestions in which an historical approach is paramount: salvation history and history of the Church centred on Christ. However the Christian ideal is also presented through lives of the saints. He proposed a scheme based on three centres of interest: Revelation, the Church, the Christian. Since religious instruction was not obligatory for those over twelve, this catechesis took place in the parish setting, except for those in private schools. He therefore sees the special importance of the part played by all Christians in religious education, not just the catechists. He also emphasises the importance of Catholic youth movements.

24. L. Csonka, *L'Oeuvre catéchistique de Chanoine André Boyer*, p.793.

25. In a series of memoirs published between 1943 and 1950 under the general title Questions actuelles de pédagogie catéchistique, Boyer set out in some detail his views. The first of these, Catéchisme et éducation, p.8, says: "Les 'idées centrales' que nous rappellerons à tout propos sont évidemment en fonction de la mentalité de nos enfants et des déficiences de notre temps... beaucoup de gens ne savent ni d'où ils viennent, ni qui ils sont, ni pourquoi ils sont sur la terre, ni où ils vont." He appends a table entitled 'Plan éducatif' in which the four questions above are set out in relation to what is to be taught to answer them. It follows almost exactly the order and method of the catechism.

Conclusion

(a) The importance of method

Boyer showed openness to new methods while recognizing the validity of some traditional ones and kept a balance in his own. He saw the importance of a Christian atmosphere in contributing to a full religious education, but his contribution to the catechetical movement was mainly in method and organization. The judgement of Adler²⁶ that his work was unoriginal by comparison with, for example, that of Derkenne and others whose work has already been discussed can perhaps now be seen to be justified.

(b) Delaying action

Boyer once spoke of himself as an obstacle in connection with the Archconfraternity.²⁷ It is not wholly inappropriate to consider him an obstacle to the progress of the catechetical movement. The prejudice of the time against women in which he shared probably caused more weight to be given to his method than it deserved. His adherence to the letter of the catechism may have helped to prolong the life of what many considered to be an outmoded text.

26. Adler, Joseph Colomb, p.33.

27. See Chapter 4, p.89, note 75. The remark was made in the course of this correspondence, in his letter to Mlle Heitz, 13 Apr. 1935, (Archives of André Boyer, File 57).

PROJECT FOR A UNIFIED CATECHISM

The catechism, as was seen in Chapter one (p.34), continued to be the basic textbook for the teaching of religion in France as elsewhere in the Roman Catholic Church, all through the period between the two world wars. In spite of the growing momentum of the movement to update catechetical methods pioneered by Quinet, Fargues and many others, some of whom form the subject of the previous chapters, its use could not be avoided except, possibly, with the youngest children. Even the direct attack on it by Bishop Landrieux (p.70) failed to change the opinion of the majority of priests throughout the country. There was, however, a call for a single text¹ among those who accepted this state of affairs in whom must be included the women auxiliary catechists.² The difficulties encountered when families moved into a different diocese where a different catechism was in use can easily be imagined, especially in the case of itinerants such as bargees and fairground people (p.45).

1. A new catechism on conventional lines

The catechism for the diocese of Paris, published in 1914, (p.36) still did not fulfil the need as it was only adopted by about 25 per cent of the dioceses of France. The Catéchisme par l'évangile of 1930, written under the inspiration of Bishop Landrieux by Eugène Charles, (p.75) was not accepted as an official text. Instead, the Assembly of Cardinals and Archbishops of France (ACA) set up an episcopal commission to study the question.³ Presided over by the then

1. See Chapter 3, pp.61-62. This request for a unified catechism for all France was repeated at a number of meetings of the Oeuvre des Catéchismes. For example at the Second Annual Congress 29 Jan. to 2 Feb. 1912, the Secretary-General expressed it before Cardinal Amette, Archbishop of Paris and the assembled bishops, priests and women catechists: "... first ... the desire, by no means new, to see a single catechism for the whole of France..." (Archiconfrérie de l'oeuvre des Catéchismes, Compte rendu du deuxième Congrès national, p.75).
2. See Chapter 2 passim.
3. Charles Quinet, The unified catechism in France, Lumen vitae (5) no.4 1950, 517.

Archbishop of Paris, Cardinal Verdier, the commission charged its secretary, the same Eugène Charles (p.163), with the drawing up of a new catechism on conventional lines which would be put forward as an official text. Even though in disagreement with the idea, Charles eventually produced the Catéchisme à l'usage des diocèses de France.

(a) Criticisms

An initial printing was sent out to the dioceses for comment in 1936 and came in for a good deal of criticism. Boyer wrote from Dijon, "...this formulary will have the advantage of being unique but it will not advance by one step catechetical teaching method, which will be neither more concrete, nor more evangelical nor more practical..."⁴ As Germain put it, writing of this catechism and its predecessor of 1914, "Both, in their formulation, belong to the catechetical practice of the nineteenth century."⁵ Duperray spoke of it as a "congealed text"⁶ in the service of which a new and vital pedagogy was a paradox and an impossibility. The well-known author François Mauriac attacked the vocabulary used in the catechism as well as the parrot-like repetition.⁷

(b) Three editions of the approved text

Nevertheless the text was approved by Rome and accepted by the French bishops, though it would not become obligatory for two years. A notice to this effect was inserted in Cahiers catéchistiques⁸ with certain additional information. Its title would not be Catéchisme nationale, as that might have Gallican overtones.⁹ It had the traditional three parts: truths to be believed,
duties to be practised,
sacraments to be received.

There were 607 questions and answers divided into seventy lessons. The unembellished text was published first, superseded the following year

4. Boyer, Mouvement catéchistique français, p.94.

5. Germain, Langages de la foi, p.205.

6. Duperray, Enjeux et avenir, p.224.

7. Cited in a letter to Mauriac by Fargues, 3 Sept. 1938, following an article by him in Temps présent, (Archives of Marie Fargues).

8. Cahiers catéchistiques No. 1937, p.81.

9. For a discussion of Gallicanism see Chapter 1, pp.20-21.

by one of a more interesting format,¹⁰ illustrated, and in two colours, in which Quinet had been involved initially.¹¹ Finally, Quinet was asked to produce another edition in which, it was hoped, some of the defects of the basic text would be masked with improved presentation including the incorporation of scriptural texts and the children's activities as well as colour and illustrations. For this edition he obtained Boyer's collaboration.¹²

(c) Defects of the text

No amount of 'window-dressing' could disguise the basic defects of the text itself: it was too long, too difficult to memorize, too abstract. The chapters were of unequal length and worst of all, it was not Christocentric.

(d) Grudging acceptance

Nevertheless the bishops adopted it for their dioceses though not without reservations and in many cases re-editions. For example, Bishop Houbaut of Bayonne republished his own Catéchisme illustré des petits in accordance with the unified catechism.¹³ However, there was mounting criticism¹⁴ including several lengthy and carefully considered

10. The editions of the first unified catechism were:

1. Catéchisme à l'usage des diocèses de France, Black and white (1937).
2. Catéchisme à l'usage des diocèses de France, 2 colours, illustrated. (1938).
3. Catéchisme à l'usage des diocèses de France présenté aux enfants et aux maîtres par le Chanoine Quinet et le Chanoine Boyer, illustrations de P. Rousseau et R.B. Sibia. (1939).

In all three cases the actual text was that of Eugène Charles of 1936.

11. Boyer, Mouvement catéchistique français, p.95.
12. *ibid.*, p.96. It was this third edition that was translated and adopted by the Poles and the Austrians. See Chapters 4 and 8 for Boyer's part in the catechetical movement.
13. A. Boyer, À travers les diocèses, Cahiers catéchistiques no.64, Jan. 1939, p.307.
14. Examples of criticism from catechists are to be found in Fargues' correspondence and in that of Boyer. e.g. M.d'Aubigny in the document previously referred to in Chapter 5, p.118, note 111, speaks of the "unified catechism as a book for adults for which a careful initiation must be given to the children to make it intelligible."

Further comments have already been cited in Chapter 7, p.145, note 17, some of which refer to the revised as well as to the first version of the unified catechism. Yet more comments are cited by Boyer in Mouvement catéchistique français, p.120.

reviews by authorities such as Canon Masure¹⁵ and the Jesuits.¹⁶

2. A revision to be made

Afraid lest, in the end, the catechism might be rejected, the Assembly of Cardinals and Archbishops decided on a revision. They asked Cardinal Petit de Julleville, Archbishop of Rouen,¹⁷ to form a national commission for the catechism to carry out this task.

(a) National difficulties

The difficulties were enormous. By the time the commission was set up, the war in France had come and gone, leaving three-fifths of the country under German occupation. Communication and travel were difficult, particularly between the occupied and unoccupied zones.¹⁸ Shortages of paper meant that most journals ceased publication and indeed publication of any sort was difficult. In effect, therefore, the Commission was for the occupied zone, and had been set up by the Cardinals and Archbishops of occupied France, with the addition of Cardinal Gerlier of Lyons, at their meeting on 24 April 1941.¹⁹

(b) Members of the National Commission for the catechism

The national commission did not hold its first meeting until 15 October 1941, the intervening months having been spent in collecting together its members. They were all priests: Quinet, Eugène Charles,

15. Eugène Masure had himself written a Christocentric catechism in 1935: Manuel d'initiation chrétienne. His critical review is extensively quoted in Boyer, *op.cit.*, pp.97-101.

16. Boyer, *op.cit.*, p.102.

17. See Chapter 4, p.77 et seq. for an account of the remarkable work of organization of the religious teaching in the diocese he had carried out when he was Bishop of Dijon. He had already been asked by the ACA in 1933 to carry out an enquiry on the same subject throughout France, (Boyer, *op.cit.*, p.102).

18. The larger, occupied, zone included all of northern and western France bounded by the Channel, the Atlantic and the borders with Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany, and part of Switzerland. The unoccupied zone was bounded by Italy, the Mediterranean, and part of the Spanish and Swiss frontiers. It included part or all of the ecclesiastical provinces of Avignon, Aix, Albi, Bourges, Chambéry, Lyons, Marseilles and Toulouse, leaving the remainder in occupied France, including Paris, Rheims and Rouen.

The situation changed at the end of 1942 when the whole country was overrun by the Germans. It changed yet again after the allied invasion in 1944.

19. Boyer, Mouvement catéchistique français, p.105 et seq., where the work of the commission is detailed in full and whence most of the following account is taken.

Boyer, Lieutier (Director-General of the Archconfraternity), Xavier Charles and Simon (diocesan directors for religious instruction of Rheims and Rouen respectively).

(c) Exclusion of the laity

It seems astonishing, in the light of previous chapters,²⁰ that none of the women who had already begun to make their mark on French catechetical methods was included. Mme Fargues was in Paris²¹ at the time though Mlle Derkenne was in Spain (p.121). Both Tribou and d'Aubigny (pp.118-119) were in occupied France and therefore available for meetings or consultation. There is no mention of any of these or other lay catechists being directly involved. However, there is circumstantial evidence that their influence was felt.

(d) Their influence

(i) Rhythmic text

In 1943, the second of the two enquiries was made by the Commission concerning the catechism and how it should be revised. Among the many points made was the following, "watch the rhythm of the phrases."²² Fargues was a pioneer in the use of rhythmic phrasing to assist the learning process in religious instruction (p.144). She had brought out a new edition of her book Petites leçons de catéchisme two years earlier, revised in accordance with this method and entitled Petites leçons rythmées. There is abundant evidence in her correspondence that the book was widely used by priests.²³

(ii) Timid incorporation of the work of pioneers

A further piece of circumstantial evidence occurs in an article by Chanon.²⁴ After mentioning names of pioneers in catechetical method such as Fargues and Derkenne she adds "At last, in 1946, a team of priests headed by Cardinal Petit de Julleville put the finishing touches to the catechism ... which ... incorporated very timidly the efforts of the pioneers."²⁵

20. See especially Chapters 5 and 7, passim.

21. See Chapter 5, p.117. The courses she organized for catechists began in Paris at this time.

22. Boyer, op.cit., p.122. 23. See Chapter 7, p.145, note 17.

24. See Chapter 2, pp.56 and 58 for details of Chanon's work in catechetics.

25. Marcelle Chanon, 25 ans d'histoire, Catéchèse no.94 Jan. 1984, p.85.

(iii) Jealousy

Father Jouin, whose criticisms of the catechism and of the commission have already been quoted,²⁶ felt there was a certain jealousy which caused, as he put it in a letter to Fargues, "side-stepping of the laity."²⁷ There was a fear of some of the laity being "better-qualified than the clergy."²⁸

(e) First enquiry

After the first full meeting of the National Commission for the catechism an enquiry was set up and a detailed questionnaire²⁹ sent to all the bishops. The object of this was to obtain a clear picture of the state of religious teaching throughout France. It also asked for detailed criticisms of the so-called National Catechism. The accompanying letter indicated that the National Commission intended to prepare a syllabus for religious instruction for all categories from infants through primary and secondary levels to adults.³⁰

(i) Desire for unity and simplicity

The replies to the questionnaire showed that there was general agreement on the need for a unified catechism and for the present one to be shortened and simplified. There were also certain constructive comments as to how this could be done, as well as a few more radical suggestions. These included the wish for a more Christocentric plan, a change of the traditional divisions and more use of the gospel.³¹

(ii) Diocesan directors for religious instruction

In putting the results of the enquiry before the Assembly of Cardinals and Archbishops in April 1942, Petit de Julleville asked that there should be a director for religious instruction in each diocese who would be quite separate from the private schools and Catholic Action organizations.³² The directors would be the link between the

26. See Chapter 7, p.147, note 25.

27. 18 Jan. 1947, Archives of Marie Fargues.

28. *ibid.*

29. Boyer, Mouvement catéchistique français, pp.108-109, where the first part of the questionnaire is reproduced in full.

30. Boyer, Mouvement catéchistique français, p.107.

31. *ibid.*, p.109.

32. See Chapter 5, p.97. Hitherto in most dioceses the director for religious instruction held other and more exacting positions.

National Commission and the dioceses.³³

3. The revised catechism

Although apparently set up in 1941 for this purpose, the National Commission was not actually given the go-ahead to revise the catechism until 1943.³⁴ Quinet favoured a partial revision involving suppression of some questions and simplification of others.

(a) Second enquiry

Work was begun on this project while at the same time a second enquiry was sent to the dioceses. The newly-appointed diocesan directors for religious instruction had in many cases set up diocesan commissions which studied the questionnaire carefully. The answers that came back were therefore more representative and more detailed than previously.³⁵ The Jesuits and the Christian Brothers also replied. This time the call for a complete recasting of the catechism seemed to be more insistent, coming from more than ten per cent of the respondents. All the other dioceses wanted a revision and there were many and varied suggestions.

(b) An alternative catechism

Using these suggestions the work of revision continued for more than a year. Then Petit de Julleville intervened by producing a catechism of his own.³⁶ He obviously felt the need to respond to the call for a recasting of the catechism rather than a simple revision. His followed a Christocentric plan³⁷ and he first asked Boyer's advice before putting it to the members of the national commission early in 1945.

(c) A fresh vision from Lyons

Meanwhile, conditions in France had eased somewhat with its liberation from the German occupying forces. The National Commission had been augmented by Canons Droulers and Léon Bazin,³⁸ diocesan directors for religious education for Lille and Lyons respectively.

33. Boyer, Guide du visiteur (1950), p.4.

34. idem, Mouvement catéchistique français, p.119.

35. Boyer, Mouvement catéchistique français, p.121.

36. See Chapter 3, p.63. Petit de Julleville had first sketched the outline of his catechism more than thirty years earlier.

37. Boyer, op.cit., p.123.

38. ibid., p.110, and also p.124 and p.136.

This was a significant introduction of new blood which was to provide fresh ideas on the vexed question of whether to remodel or simply revise the catechism.

(d) Documentation catéchistique

It had also been possible since 1943 to bring out a catechetical bulletin to replace Cahiers catéchistiques (p.104). Because of wartime difficulties the Documentation catéchistique only came out at irregular intervals until 1945.³⁹ Boyer was the editor and the aim was to provide as much helpful information and advice for catechists as possible in straitened circumstances.⁴⁰ To some extent it was used as a mouthpiece for the National Commission.⁴¹ Later, when it became a quarterly appearing regularly, its character changed somewhat.⁴²

(e) Two catechisms

The catechism presented by Petit de Julleville after some hesitation caused a certain amount of embarrassment and ill-feeling in the Commission. Eugène Charles saw it as a rival to his Catéchisme par l'évangile for which he still entertained some hopes. Bazin felt the Cardinal had acted precipitately.⁴³ Since the revision of the 1937 catechism was well on the way to completion, it was decided, at Bazin's suggestion, to submit this revision and Petit de Julleville's catechism to the hierarchy. This was not done, however, until October 1946, a delay of well over a year.

Detailed comments on both catechisms came in from the dioceses. Opinions were divided, half the respondents opting for each text to be adopted as the official one. Many reservations were expressed, but the affair had been going on long enough and already many catechists were taking the law into their own hands.⁴⁴

39. Since the occupying power would not sanction the publication of new reviews, it had to be made to appear as if they were different books. Accordingly, the first four numbers all had different titles:

1. Documentation catéchistique May 1943
2. L'enseignement du catéchisme Sept. 1943
3. Programmes et examens Feb. 1944
4. Catéchismes et catéchistes Aug. 1944

A further six numbers, called Fascicules V to X, appeared more regularly during the next three years. In Sept. 1948 a new series began, starting with no.1 and appearing quarterly until 1960 when the review was superseded by Catéchèse.

40. Boyer, Mouvement catéchistique français, p.115.

41. *ibid.*, p.135.

42. *ibid.*, p.116.

43. *ibid.*, p.124.

44. *ibid.*, p.132.

(f) A single modified catechism

The Assembly of Cardinals and Archbishops then asked for a harmonization of the two. Petit de Julleville felt this was impossible as the two concepts were too different, so he withdrew his own. Finally, Quinet modified his revised version of the 1937 catechism in the light of the Cardinal's text and it was this version that was finally published in June 1947.⁴⁵

(g) Three in one

The new catechism was certainly simpler and shorter than the previous one, (p.164) with sixty-five lessons and 429 questions. It was arranged so that three catechisms could be extracted from it. The one for the younger children had a hundred questions; there was an intermediate one with two hundred questions, while the older children had to know the complete text.⁴⁶ The order reverted to that of the Council of Trent, with the sacraments in second place before morals (p.164).

(h) Deception: the gospel is not in the catechism

As Germain put it, "It was only the previous one touched up ... there is the same perspective, the same abstract formulation. Once again, as in 1937, this text awaited for so long and with such high hopes, lacked the boldness of renovation."⁴⁷ Fargues summed up the situation mildly but truly "The catechism manual prevails in the classroom and it is not evangelical."⁴⁸ Boyer expressed it more forcefully nearly twenty years later "It was the third and most resounding failure to produce a gospel-based catechism."⁴⁹ Later on in his book he records Petit de Julleville's own disappointment at not being able to get people to understand the importance of a gospel-based catechism.⁵⁰ The Cardinal did not live to see the shift from the theologically-based catechism to the biblically and liturgically-based catechesis that would be the work of Colomb.⁵¹

45. Charles Quinet, *The Unified Catechism in France*, p.518.

46. *ibid.*, p.519.

47. Germain, *Langages de la foi*, p.206.

48. Fargues, *The gospel in the catechism*, *Lumen vitae* (3) no.2 1948, 399.

49. Boyer, *Mouvement catéchistique français*, p.134.

50. *ibid.*, p.165. Petit de Julleville died on 10 Dec. 1947.

51. Duperray, *Enjeux et avenir*, p.224. See also Chapter 7, p.142, note 10.

(i) Lyons makes it presence felt

The infusion of fresh life into the deliberations of the National Commission with the advent of Bazin from Lyons was mentioned above (p.169). It was in this connection that the name of Colomb first appeared for he had been appointed Bazin's assistant in 1945. Together they had produced some of the strongest arguments for the need for a total rethink of the catechism. A heated correspondence ensued between Lyons and Dijon.⁵² Bazin expressed his views forcefully to the Commission and to its president but the publication of the revised catechism went ahead. However, the last had not been heard of Lyons on this subject.

Conclusion

(a) The problem remained

Ranwez wrote in 1936 "A problem remains to which many allude but few face up to in all its aspects, that is the official text of the catechism."⁵³ The situation did not seem to have changed much in 1947, and the problem still remained.

(b) Hope for the future

Although he had authorized the publication of the revised catechism, Cardinal Suhard⁵⁴ could nevertheless write of a fresh surge forward of religious teaching in France. He added, "we must keep an open mind so as to not to be satisfied today with yesterday's methods and to avoid being constantly lagging behind by a generation."⁵⁵

52. Boyer, Mouvement catéchistique français, pp.125-129.

53. P. Ranwez SJ., Le pré-catéchisme et le catéchisme, Nouvelle revue théologique (63) no.4 July-Aug. 1936, p.362.

54. Emmanuel Suhard succeeded Jean Verdier as Archbishop of Paris in 1940.

55. E. Cardinal Suhard. Nécessité d'un immense effort de recherche et de synthèse, Documentation catéchistique no.1 Sept. 1948, p.5.

THE RELEVANCE OF THE EARLY CATECHETICAL RENEWAL

The foregoing chapters describe activity in the catechetical field that was not, perhaps, well co-ordinated. Nevertheless the work of such pioneers as Marie Fargues, Françoise Derkenne, Eugène Charles, Charles Quinet, André Boyer¹ and many others was beginning to throw the new light of modern pedagogy on the old institution of the catechism. The use of the gospel in the catechism pioneered by Charles under the inspiration of Bishop Landrieux had not, it is true, made much headway as shown by the rejection of Petit de Julleville's ideas in the catechism revision of 1947.² The contribution made by Derkenne to the use of liturgy in catechism teaching was taken up by subsequent authors and became of great importance in the later movement (p.120). These were all signs of an original approach and the works published by these authors were taken up by many catechists, priest and lay, as evidenced by, for example, Fargues' correspondence.³ They were also signs of the existence of a movement following Duperray's criterion of 'perceptibility' (p.12). That it was not the main French catechetical renewal is perhaps best shown by the fact that it was mingled with and dependent on the still largely nineteenth century pedagogy of the catechism (p.164).

A. Development of the catechetical movement of postwar France

As has been said external circumstances are bound to impinge on people's lives and work in one way or another (p.15). Inevitably the two world wars of 1914 and 1939 had an effect, but one must avoid the pitfall of trying to fit the early catechetical movement neatly between them.

1. Major creative activity 1919-39

Nevertheless, preceding chapters have shown that the major creative activity of those involved in the early catechetical renewal

1. See Chapters 3, 4, 5.

2. See Chapter 9, especially pp.169-171.

3. See Chapters 5 and 7 passim, especially Chap.7, p.145, note 17.

fell in the period 1919-39. They have also shown that the activity of many of these pioneers continued long after 1945. The difficulties of the war and of the German occupation meant poor communication and a certain consequent localization of effort but it did not seem to diminish catechetical activity as a whole. Indeed, certain new things were begun, such as Fargues' courses for catechists in Paris (p.151). However, according to Father Vimort, it was only "after 1945 that the movement took shape, became organized and reached the Church as a whole."⁴ The same author names Father Colomb⁵ as one of the principal artisans of the movement and mentions the two books he published in 1946 which had such a resounding effect.⁶

2. Links between the early and later catechetical movements

The development of the catechetical renewal movement and Colomb's part in it falls outside the scope of the present work.⁷ A few brief indications will, however, be given of later developments in France. These will show some of the links between the early and main catechetical movements and thus demonstrate that the later movement arose from already extensive foundations.

(a) National Catechetical Centre

In the previous chapter the work of the National Commission for the catechism was discussed. Mention was also made of the request by Cardinal Petit de Julleville, President of the Commission, for the appointment of a director for religious instruction in each diocese (p.168). It soon became evident that a central direction was needed. Accordingly, in 1945, Boyer was asked by the Cardinal to draw up a preliminary plan for such an organization.⁸ The following year the

4. Jean Vimort, *Le mouvement catéchétique et l'essor du catholicisme français après 1945*, p.12.

5. See Chapter 9, p.171. On Bazin's death in 1947, Colomb succeeded him as director for religious instruction at Lyons.

6. Vimort, loc.cit. The books were Aux sources du catéchisme (1946). La grande pitié de l'enseignement chrétien (1946). The latter was reviewed by Fargues (see Chapter 7, p.151).

7. The later catechetical movement has been extensively covered elsewhere, e.g. the whole of Catéchèse no.80 July 1980 is devoted to 'Joseph Colomb et le mouvement catéchétique.' This number contains copious references to further documentation.

The movement is also evaluated in a wider context in Rummery, Catechetics and religious education in a pluralist society.

8. Boyer, Mouvement catéchistique français, p.161.

Assembly of Cardinals and Archbishops approved the setting up of a National Catechetical Centre in Paris and Boyer was appointed its first director.⁹ The Centre was officially opened by Cardinal Suhard, Archbishop of Paris in October 1947.¹⁰ The excellent organization set up by Boyer was a unifying factor in the French catechetical movement. The Centre was able to co-ordinate the work of the National Commission and of the dioceses in the setting up of the new programmes for religious instruction at all levels already projected (p.168). It was concerned with the training of catechists, which included study days and catechetical reviews as well as a resource centre and library.

(b) The disappearance of the Archconfraternity in its original form

Two important consequences flowed from this central organization. First, the disappearance of the Archiconfrérie de l'Oeuvre des Catéchismes which has already been discussed (p.58). Two of the other movements founded independently but later brought under its umbrella continued their work. The first was the organization for the little ones, FCTP (p.50). The other was the organization for men catechists re-named Équipes Catéchistes (p.49). A third, the Oeuvre Ste-Catherine de Sienne for the instruction of adults developed into the catechumenate of later years (p.53).

(c) Training courses for catechists

The second consequence of the central organization of catechetics brought about the fulfilment of Fargues' dream (p.151) of systematic training courses for catechists, priest and lay, men and women religious, and seminarians (p.55).

(d) Later activities of the pioneers

Finally, in this brief survey of the co-ordinating and unifying work that prepared the way for the biblical and liturgical catechesis of Colomb¹¹ it must be noted that some of the early pioneers were still active. Fargues in particular, by her extensive contacts, brought people together and continued to inspire and innovate (p.149). It was

9. In 1954 he was replaced by Colomb.

10. Boyer, Guide de visiteur, p.5.

11. Germain, Langages de la foi, p.208.

through one of her Study Weeks that Derkenne¹² was brought back into the French catechetical scene and others have acknowledged their debt to her. Chanon's involvement with the Paris School for catechists has also been mentioned (p.58).

B. General implications for the teaching of religion

In the wider sphere the early French catechetical movement, while making important contributions, was not the only one to do so. The movement in Germany, also begun early in the present century,¹³ is esteemed by some to be of greater importance. This may well be due to the fact that it is better-known and well-documented principally through the writings of Josef Jungmann¹⁴ and his disciple Johannes Hofinger and their association with the kerygmatic movement. Rummery¹⁵ seems to incline to the view that the modern catechetical movement began with the Munich Congress of 1928 and Jungmann's subsequent book. However, he is convinced of the importance of the movement in France.¹⁶

Schoof¹⁷ is prepared to give equal importance to the two countries and though his viewpoint is mainly theological, it has already been shown that there are links between catechetics and theology.¹⁸ An explanation for the seeming lesser importance of the French contribution may well be that it is parish-based and therefore of less interest in England (p.39). It has already been remarked that many of

12. See Chapter 5, p.122, Chapter 7, p.150. Derkenne became deeply involved in the later catechetical movement both as author and as chef de travaux pratiques à l'Institut Supérieur de Pastorale Catéchétique. She worked in close collaboration with Colomb and like him suffered greatly in the catechetical crisis in France in 1957.

13. See Chapter 1, pp.38-39 for some discussion of the Munich movement.

14. J.A. Jungmann's key work Die Frohbotschaft und unsere Glaubensverkündigung was first published in 1936. It was revised at the time of the Second Vatican Council. This version was translated into French as L'Annonce de la foi, expression de la bonne nouvelle (Paris: Casterman 1965), and into English as Announcing the word of God (1967). There was an earlier translation, apparently, of the first edition, but it cannot be traced, apart from a reference in Joseph Colomb, La Grande Pitié de l'enseignement chrétien. The title given was La bonne nouvelle et notre prédication.

15. Rummery, Catechesis and religious education, p.1.

16. idem., personal letter 29 Mar. 1983.

17. Schoof, Breakthrough, Chapter 2 passim, especially pp.93-94.

18. See Chapter 1, p.21 in connection with Jansenism and p.23 in connection with Modernism.

the translations into English of Fargues' books¹⁹ were made in the United States where catechetics is parish-based. However, Derkenne's books were used in the school-based Belgian catechism classes²⁰ though, of course, language was less of a problem. Finally it is worth remarking that Jungmann's seminal work was published just before the war, Colomb's just after (p.174). That seems a strong indication that the underlying ideas were being developed in parallel.²¹

In attempting to evaluate the contribution made by the early French catechetical movement to the general one, a broad perspective is needed. It is proposed, therefore, to consider the place of France in the teaching of the religion of a changing church in a changing world.

1. The teaching of religion

Most people would probably agree that the teaching of religion has undergone considerable change in the past forty years. There are some who would say that the change was for the worse but that view is not under discussion here. It is simply proposed to consider the French contribution to two inter-related aspects of the teaching of religion, namely change of conceptual approach and change of method..

(a) Change of conceptual approach

(i) RI becomes RE

a England

The common practice in English schools until about 1960 was to speak of 'religious instruction' or 'religious knowledge'. These are the terms used in the 1944 Education Act, though in Roman Catholic schools there was a tendency to speak of 'catechism' instead. By the

19. See Chapter 7, p.149, note 36, and also Appendix IV.

20. BICE, Dix années de travail catéchétique, p.323.

21. Jungmann's 1936 book does not seem to have reached France before the end of the Second World War (see p.176 note 14). Articles by him had appeared in Lumen vitae in French and English from 1950. Corroborative, if negative, evidence of parallel thinking may be adduced from Boyer's Pédagogie chrétienne (1945) where no mention is made of Jungmann in an exhaustive survey of religious teaching methods from all over the world (see also Chapter 8 p.154 et seq. especially p.156, note 10).

Rummery (op.cit. p.10) says that Jungmann's work "was popularized after the war through the work of such catechetical leaders as Joseph Colomb and Johannes Hofinger."

appearance of the Durham report²² the term in use was 'religious education'. These two expressions do not simply represent a change of wording over twenty years, but they also indicate a changing approach. There is more concern now with the religious environment of the child and with the child himself. It is less a question of learning a set of formulae than of developing a relationship with a personal God. There is also a broadening of the approach to include a consideration of other religious faiths.

b France

In France, too, similar expressions were used: 'enseignement religieux' (religious instruction), with the frequent alternative of 'catéchèse' or 'catéchisme'. It was Marie Fargues who, much earlier than in England, began to change the current approach. She was among the first to recognize the dechristianization of the milieu and the fact that families no longer provided a Christian atmosphere for the child to absorb.²³ Louise Damez recognized it also and founded the movement FCTP (p.50) with a view to remedying the deficiency. The same idea is to be found in Françoise Derkenne's catechetical work (p.120). The term that came into use went further, at least in the confessional sense, than the English 'religious education'. It was 'éducation de la foi' (education in [the] faith). Rummery acknowledges the origin of this concept with the French catechetical movement.²⁴ Duperray goes further and says that Fargues was its originator.²⁵ It is certainly evident in her writings, and an article of 1947 bears the

22. The Fourth R: Report of the commission on religious education in schools by the Bishop of Durham, Chairman (1970), passim.

23. See Chapter 5, p.117, note 103, and also p.181 below.

24. Rummery, Catechetics and religious education, p.108. On p.121 he equates the terms 'religious education' and 'catechesis' in French-speaking countries. That this can be done nowadays is largely the result of the work of the pioneers.

25. Interview with Georges Duperray, Lyons, 1 June 1979.

title 'L'information de la foi'.²⁶

(ii) A more positive attitude

Another example of this change of conceptual approach is the change from the somewhat negative attitude of the moral code to the more positive one of the gospel: "Thou shalt not" of the Commandments tending to give place to "Blessed art thou" of the Beatitudes. This changed viewpoint is to be found in Bishop Landrieux's pastoral letter (p.69), in Fargues' writings,²⁷ and in the attempts of Pierre Petit de Julleville²⁸ and Eugène Charles²⁹ to change the emphasis and arrangement of the catechism.

(b) Change of method

It has been suggested above (p.177) that method and conceptual approach are related. Indeed, change of method might have been considered before change of approach as it is virtually impossible to decide which came first. It is suggested that the likely course of events was that a small change in one initiated change in the other which in turn stimulated further change. For example, in the case of Fargues, her training as a teacher took place just before the First World War. She was of the school of Montessori with its emphasis on child-centred, activity-based education. She was also a catechist and the method she found in use in the religion class made her want to improve it by applying her Montessori training. The article she published just after the war on The problem of early religious formation (p.107) showed how she was now moving away from the

26. M. Fargues, Teaching the faith, Lumen vitae (2) no.1 1947, 97. In the opinion of the present writer this translation of the French title slightly alters its meaning. (The periodical published the article in French, with an English title and summary at the end.)

Some indication of the way the notion was taken up abroad can be gained from the fact that in Italy, in 1970, a reappraisal of the teaching of religion by the hierarchy was published entitled Il rinnovamento della catechesi. It was translated and adopted by the Australian hierarchy later in the same year under the title Teaching the faith the new way. In 1973 the English Roman Catholic bishops republished the same document under the title The renewal of the education of faith with a new introduction setting out the situation in this country.

27. See Chapter 7, p.147. Boyer took issue with her over the question of original sin and hell, which is really another instance of the same outlook, see also Chapter 1, p.27, note 65.

28. See Chapter 3, p.63 and Chapter 9, pp.169-171.

29. See Chapter 4, pp.75-76 and Chapter 9, pp.163 and 170.

traditional idea of the catechism lesson. Her success encouraged further experimentation, and others joined in.

It was not, however, simply a question of introducing active methods into the religious lesson. To bring about the radical change in conceptual approach suggested above (p.177) a much more complex process involving a number of changes was required.

(i) The problem of the catechism

The first problem encountered was that of the textbook. The catechism was quite unadapted to the child's needs; its logical layout and theological substance were far beyond a child's mind. This was nothing new; there had been calls for improvement since early in the century and attempts to bring it about. The approach had not changed, however, as the hostile reception accorded Dadolle's gospel-based catechism showed. There were signs of a change of attitude when Bishop Landrieux's letter appeared ten years later, attacking the catechism and calling for much greater use of the gospel. This was enthusiastically received and encouraged many pioneers such as Fargues and d'Aubigny at least to sidestep the catechism in their teaching. The Catéchisme par l'évangile of Eugène Charles, written under Landrieux's inspiration marked a real breakthrough in methodology but it was still denied official acceptance. The liturgical movement in Belgium brought about a long overdue recognition of the possibilities of liturgy in catechesis. Derkenne used it to introduce a new dimension, that of the liturgical year, while later Lubienska de Lenval (p.120) integrated liturgy itself with catechesis.

(ii) Return to sources

With the elaboration of a catechesis using active methods and based on the foundations of gospel and liturgy the first of the main overall changes of method was completed; dogma was traced back to its sources and imparted through them. The work of the early catechetical movement in France was to re-integrate gospel and liturgy into the teaching of religion; the work of the main movement was to incorporate what were still really methods into the mainstream of catechetics. This would also include recent advances in theology and exclude the catechism in its present form. "The link between the pedagogical and

theological movements was Colomb."³⁰ There was now a doctrinal renewal in progress, according to Germain, who recognized Colomb as one of its pioneers.³¹ She added that "it was organized round twin objectives: to turn catechesis back to its sources, Bible and liturgy, and to rediscover the worth of its message."

(iii) The question of the environment

The second problem encountered was that of the milieu. This was not as widely recognized as it might have been, there seeming to be a stronger tendency to attribute the general decline in religious practice to ignorance (p.99). However, a number of people not only recognized the increasingly dechristianized environment but did something about it. The foundation of Le Sillon in France by Marc Sangnier at the very beginning of the present century has already been mentioned (p.19). The much more important JOCist movement originating in Belgium a few years later has been described (p.131). The Archconfraternity recognized the importance of its role of Christian witness (p.43). Damez saw the need for Christian nurture of the little ones (p.50). The realization of the part played by a child's family and surroundings came to Fargues at an early date. She summarized her reflections and experience in a little book published in 1935.³² In it she faces the fact that increasingly children receive no religious formation at home or at school but only in the hour or two of the catechism lesson. She recognizes the inadequacy of this in a world of growing atheism and materialism. She is aware of the threat from Russia, but she is also conscious of the excellent work done by the JOCist movement to counterbalance these things. Finally she asks what will happen in the future when the present generation has become parents if they do not even recall a vivid catechism lesson, "who will continue to come to catechism?"³³ It was mainly in this way of

30. Interview with Georges Duperray, Lyons, 1 June 1979. He expresses a similar idea in *Où va la catéchèse?* *Catéchèse* no.68 July 1977 "... la catéchèse biblique s'introduisit progressivement, à partir des années 50... Colomb fut l'initiateur principal."

31. Germain, *Langages de la foi*, p.208. In this connection it is worth noting that the full title of Colomb's seminal work of 1946 was *Aux sources du catéchisme, Histoire Sainte et Liturgie*, Vol.1: *La Promesse*, Vol.2: *La vie de Jésus*, Vol.3: *Le Christ glorieux*.

32. Fargues, *La formation religieuse des enfants du peuple dans le milieu déchristianisé*, passim, especially pp.9, 13, 52. See also Chapter 5, p.117, note 103.

33. *ibid.*, p.77.

re-vitalizing the religion lesson that Fargues and Derkenne made their very important contribution to the confronting of this problem of the environment. For them the child came first, the catechism second.

(iv) Christian life in the catechism class

Within the mini-environment of the catechism class Derkenne and Fargues strove to give the children at least a taste of what they saw to be lacking at home: moments of silence and prayer, shared liturgy, encouragement to form a relationship with Jesus. They also sought to draw in parents, catechists and teachers. Derkenne valued the hour of Christian life she and her assistants spent with the children (p.123). The religion lesson was moving away from indoctrination to the experience of Christian living. The pioneers of the early French catechetical renewal had wrought a fundamental change in religious teaching methods which opened the way for later developments. These pedagogical changes combined with another pioneering activity, the work of St Catherine of Sienna for the instruction of adults (p.175), helped prepare the way for the catechumenate. Ranwez put this in first place among Colomb's achievements³⁴ when he wrote "His truly original action was first to insert religious teaching in a 'catechumenate' and give it place in a total formation, then to develop the structure of the message to be put forward." This, too, would have repercussions far beyond France, in Roman Catholic circles.

2. A changing church

Looking at the Christian Church of today and comparing it with that of fifty years ago one sees remarkable changes. One finds greater openness and less dogmatism. There is less of a tendency to see everything in black and white terms, more readiness to listen to different points of view and to co-operate with those of divergent opinions. At its best this leads to a genuine spirit of mutual acceptance. It also leads to mutual trust and an honest, co-ordinated search for truth. The result of all this should be a total commitment to ecumenism. In practice the ideal is probably not so often attained as people would wish to believe. Still, there is undoubtedly less bigotry and greater acceptance of other branches of Christianity. There is also a greater acceptance of, and willingness to understand, other faiths.

34. Ranwez, Pastorale de l'enfance, p.20.

(a) Hidden growth

Forty or even thirty years ago the situation within the Church had not progressed far from that pertaining at the beginning of the Second World War. Underneath, however, changes must have been taking place or the Second Vatican Council would not have had the impact it did on the whole Christian world, not just the Roman Catholic one. This is not the place to discuss the theological currents and counter-currents flowing in the twenty years between the end of the war and the opening of the Council. Suffice it to say that the theologians concerned were of many nationalities, of which the French and German were the most prominent, and represented the principal Christian denominations.

(b) Recognition of the place of the laity

Along with a greater openness in doctrinal terms there is now a greater acceptance of the laity, particularly women, in the ministry of the Church. This has been the case in some denominations for many years but in the Roman Catholic Church of pre-Vatican II days it would have been unthinkable to have a lay diocesan director of religious education, much less a woman. Again there is a certain lagging of practice behind the ideal and a lack of conviction is perceptible in some quarters. Nevertheless many such appointments have been made. This newly-found place for the layperson did not emerge only as a result of the Council. It was the fruit of a movement that had been growing underground for a long time. The fact that there were a number of lay theologians and other experts, men and women, at the Council shows that the preparation had begun years before.

(c) 'Dangerous prophets' of the early renewal

It is obviously difficult to estimate how far these winds of change in the Church of the later twentieth century were influenced by pioneers of the early part of the century. One can only point out that the experts of the 1960s and 1970s were the schoolchildren of the 1920s and 1930s and many of them were French. Germain feels that some of them, priests and laity, must have come under the influence of the catechists of the early renewal movement and later "been led to call in question an abstract ... and too passive a catechesis"³⁵ still obtaining in many parishes. She adds, "The laity, becoming more conscious of its positive role, begins to collaborate in a catechesis

35. Germain, Langages de la foi, p.207.

that should be the responsibility of the whole ecclesiastical community." No doubt this consciousness was also awakening in other countries. It is perhaps not an exaggeration to add that the large number of articulate and persistent Frenchwomen in the early catechetical movement made their voice heard so well that it finally resounded in Rome with consequence for the whole Roman Catholic Church. That theirs were prophetic voices may not have been appreciated at the time. Rummery points out the reason when he says "Perhaps it has been possible only in our different kind of Church since the 1960s to see some of the prophets who were regarded as 'dangerous' in those days."³⁶ Only a woman with a mission could have persisted in the face of such obstacles as did Fargues in the Church of the 1920s and 1930s.

3. A changing world

There have been tremendous changes in the post-war world both material and spiritual. The concern of the present work is to indicate those areas of change in the western world that most impinge on the teaching of religion and the part played by the early catechetical movement.

(a) Religious indifference

There would seem to be little doubt that the world of today, as compared with that of the first half of this century, is largely indifferent towards religion with an indifference born of secularism. In France "the Message no longer comes up against anti-clericalism but against a massive indifference."³⁷ In England, the Roman Catholic Church no longer suffers from persecution mania. Legally it had not needed to do so since the repeal of the penal law but psychologically it continued to do so for a long time, with a consequent introversion.³⁸ The wide discrepancy between figures for baptisms and those for regular churchgoers point in the same direction.³⁹ Germain points out that "one is no longer born a Christian."⁴⁰ "The Church in France is conscious of being only a little bit of a largely dechristianized

36. R.M. Rummery, personal letter 29 Mar. 1983.

37. Germain, Langages de la foi, p.198.

38. A.C.F. Beales, Catholic education in England, Lumen vitae (1) no.3 1946, 459.

39. In France, official statistics for 1978 were 96 per cent baptized Catholics, 22 per cent go to church on Sundays.

40. Germain, op.cit., p.223.

nation."⁴¹

(b) Atheism

There is also an increase of atheism and with it a vocal minority always ready to attack the Church. The poor political showing of the Communist party in both France and England does not, however, mean that it is not also a force to be reckoned with.

(c) Other faiths

A third factor in bringing about change in the western world is that of immigration. In England, and increasingly in France, large numbers of settlers have come from Africa and Asia. Many of these have joined the mass of the indifferent or the vaguely Christian. However there are sufficient numbers of Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims for it to be necessary for special provision in school and place of worship. The Jews have always been present as a religious minority with their own synagogues and schools.

(d) The importance accorded to the individual

The pioneers of the early French catechetical movement were well aware of growing indifference towards religion and of dechristianization. They recognized the threat of atheism from Eastern Europe, indeed, they saw its presence in their midst. Apart from Judaism they had little direct contact with members of other faiths. This does not mean that their influence did not make itself felt in the greater tolerance and acceptance now to be found. This in turn has meant some change in missionary methods with, perhaps, less proselytizing than hitherto, as well as a change of definition of the meaning of 'mission'. This change may have been helped by the stress laid on the place of the individual which became of increasing importance in the early catechetical movement.⁴² This is not to say that they did not make mistakes, errors of judgement, or even take wrong turnings. It cannot be denied, however, that they pointed the way to their successors and prepared the ground for much that followed.

41. *ibid.*, p.198.

42. Ranwez, Pastorale de l'enfance, p.21. Also G. Gathelier, Individualized teaching of the catechism, Lumen vitae (5) no.2-3 1950, 393.

Conclusion

The names of those involved in the early catechetical renewal are now largely unknown to the present generation of catechists. Even that of Colomb evokes little recognition.⁴³ The path of catechetics has moved far since their time without, perhaps, advancing as much as some would believe or hope. New ideas have been tried, new words coined and sometimes rejected. "Evangelization, pre-evangelization, conversion, pre-catechesis, catechesis ... these are words which have appeared along the way in the efforts of the Church to reach the world."⁴⁴ It is perhaps a sign of their prophetic vision that the pioneers recognized the need for the Church to reach out to the world. The modern child was not going to accept an unadorned, unexplained lump of dogma expressed in a few answers to catechism questions. The Church had got to adapt her methods, extend them far beyond the child of First Communion age to children of all ages and to adults throughout their lives. Through liturgy, the family and parish would be brought in. If Christianity was to survive it would be by this total involvement of the whole person and the whole body of the Church not just in religious instruction but in an education of faith. In the words of a modern French prayer-book, it is "the catechists and the whole Christian community who help parents to take their place as educators of the faith."⁴⁵

43. Vimort, Interview de Françoise Derkenne, p.103, where Derkenne says "If you ask a parish catechist [about Colomb] she will reply 'Colomb? Never heard of him.'"

44. Germain, Langages de la foi, p.228.

45. Nouveau missel des dimanches (1979), p.20.

APPENDIX I
SOME DEFINITIONS

In his book Catechetics and religious education in a pluralist society, Richard M. Rummery analyses the meaning and origins of words forming the vocabulary of his subject. Many of the same terms are used in the present work, generally with the same meaning, but for convenience they will be gathered together here. Unfortunately they are not always defined in the same way by those who use them, and are often not clearly defined at all. It must also be remembered that the accepted meanings of some of these terms have changed over the years. Here the French terms will be given, and the English equivalents used will be explained, with due regard for changes in accepted usage.

1. Catéchèse

(a) In the English rendering Catechesis this may be defined as "religious instruction given in a school setting or a church grouping apart from worship, to young people of school age, generally by means of a basic text or catechism."¹ It presupposes a common faith in which the one who is catechizing shares his convictions with others.²

(b) Even though Dufaux insists that it should not be confused with "l'institution catéchétique",³ in practice this is often the case. It is then best rendered in English by Catechetics. Because of the confusion it is difficult to be absolutely consistent, especially as the adjective catechetical embraces both meanings.

2. Catéchisme

Rendered in English as Catechism, two meanings must be distinguished:

(a) Catechism class where, particularly in traditional Roman Catholic usage, it was equivalent to religious instruction.⁴ Catéchisme would probably be the preferred term in French for Institution catéchétique.

(b) Catechism book, which refers to the manual or basic textbook for religious instruction.

The adjective Catéchistique was used for both.

3. Catéchuménat is rendered in English as catechumenate. This institution of the first centuries of the Christian church and recently revived, embraces "the successive stages of prayer and instruction and probation which followed the first act of faith."⁵

1. Rummery, op.cit., p.viii.

2. *ibid.*, p.27.

3. Dufaux in 'Le 25e anniversaire de l'ISPC', Catéchèse no.64 July 1976, p.345.

4. Rummery, Catechetics and religious education in a pluralist society, p.viii and p.27.

5. *ibid.*, p.26 and p.204

4. Catéchiste is translated as catechist. In French LE Catéchiste generally referred to the priests who gave religious instruction, in the context of the early catechetical movement. LA Catéchiste or, preferably, la dame catéchiste (to whom corresponded l'homme catéchiste) meant the woman (or man) who made the children repeat the catechism they had learnt by heart. Although Rummery's definition is in a modern context, it can be applied to the men and women catechists of the early movement: "at least ideally, [he is] an example in his own living, of the truths he teaches."⁶ The situation had radically changed by the time of the main movement which could call on large numbers of trained lay catechists.

5. Pré-catéchèse is rendered in English as pre-catechesis. The term was hardly used in the early French catechetical movement though pré-catéchisme was, even if relatively infrequently. Thus in 1937 Canon Charles Quinet wrote of a "pré-catéchisme évangélique:"⁷ by which he meant that before starting their catechism lessons children "will have had presented to them the essentials of religion by means of gospel passages." This does not altogether correspond to the pre-catechesis of the later movement which was aimed rather at adults and adolescents in de-christianized areas. It sought "to remove the obstacles which prevent man from making a real encounter with the Word of God. Pre-catechesis assures first of all the physical presence of the Church."⁸

The pre-catechism of the early movement is more of an attempt to restore the Christian atmosphere of previous centuries where family and parish provided solid training. "The first ten or fifteen years of youth constituted a pre-catechism, a moral and intellectual preparation. Catechism classes completed and put in brief formulae notions acquired in home and Church."⁹ Damez attempted to provide this form of pre-catechism in her organization FCTP. M.d'Aubigny pressed for at least a preliminary year to familiarize the children with the broad outline and the terminology. Fargues and Derkenne sought to reach all the children of the catechism classes by providing an experience of Christian life within the limited contact they had with them.

6. Éducation religieuse, enseignement religieux

In the context of the early catechetical movement, the former expression is used infrequently but both terms are probably best translated by religious instruction or the teaching of religion and are equivalent to catechetics or catechism as defined above (p.187). The inconsistency of this terminology may be illustrated by the fact that the list of members of the National Commission for the catechism in 1941 were all 'Directeurs de l'enseignement religieux'. The newly constituted National Centre of 1947 was called 'Centre national catéchistique', but it is now called 'Centre national de l'enseignement religieux'. The Higher Institute for catechetics was called 'Institut supérieur catéchétique' when founded in 1951. It later became 'Institut supérieur de Pastorale Catéchétique.'

6. *ibid.*, p.204.

7. C. Quinet, Comment nous préparons une leçon de catéchisme pour les moyens, Cahiers catéchistiques no.48 May 1937, p.584.

8. Rummery, Catechetics and religious education, p.201.

9. Guy de Bretagne, The History of the catechesis, Lumen vitae (5) nos.2-3, 1950, 367-368.

7. As the early movement developed, with awareness of the need to provide a Christian atmosphere as well as the teaching of religion, there evolved the idea of Éducation de la foi. This concept of the handing on of faith by education in the faith may be said to have grown out of the work of the French and Belgian pioneers who were seeking to widen the concept of religious education in the confessional sense of providing an atmosphere as well as instruction. In that sense Rummery's statement that "'l'éducation religieuse' in French-speaking countries is simply another term for 'la catéchèse' because of the historical position of Catholicism in such countries"¹⁰ implies that both terms have enlarged their meaning. He adds that "the term [religious education] as used in English-speaking countries reflects a wider religious pluralism."

10. Rummery, Catechetics and religious education, p.121.

APPENDIX II
BISHOP LANDRIEUX'S PASTORAL LETTER (TRANSLATION)¹

It is a fact that the essential work of the religious education of our children is becoming more arduous.

I have often confided to you my preoccupations on the subject, which you share.

Our results are rather disappointing. This comes from the misfortune of the times, from a state of affairs that is beyond our control, the school and the family. I do not want to dwell on the source of the misfortune; I want to draw your attention to a particular point in the matter. We cannot change either the school or the family overnight. However, things being what they are, since family and school, which ought to help us, for the most part hinder us, should we not see if there is not another way of gaining some advantage from our difficult situation?

Whatever may be the external obstacles, and leaving aside the complications and exterior difficulties which weigh so heavily on our mission as catechists, let me put the question this way: 'Is it acceptable that children of average intelligence who have spent two or three hours a week with a priest for at least three years should be unable, at twelve years of age to have a general idea, an adequate knowledge of their religion, in a word, the religious education, befitting their age?'

Surely not.

Where does this failure stem from and how can it be overcome?

There are some who know 'their catechism' as we say, who are successful in the examination. But I am speaking of the majority, of the children who are less protected, less followed up of the state schools and even from our own schools. It must be admitted that most of them escape us.

Whose fault is it? The children's? Yes, sometimes: laziness, levity, ill will; but in general, no. The teachers? Certainly it is possible that there may be some negligence here and there through weariness, discouragement, overwork; but one cannot but pay tribute to the admirable zeal for the catechism of the present generation of priests. Some even overtax their strength and kill themselves in the effort.

1. 'Sinite parvulos - le premier enseignement par l'Évangile'. The text used in this translation is that published in Documentation Catholique (8) no.168 14 Oct. 1922, columns 580-588. The headings were not in the original addition (Dijon: Jobard 1922) but in other respects the texts are identical. The translator has numbered the headings for greater clarity.

The 1923 edition (Marseilles: Publiroc) had some additional notes and an extended bibliography but these have not been included here, neither has the original bibliography given by the Bishop.

A. The catechism manual is too heavy for the child, it must be lightened

So where does the failure come from? Could it not be the method and the book, the Catechism, that is given to the children too soon?

I am aware that I am embarking on a very delicate subject and I would only wish to speak of it with the utmost reserve.

'Our catechism' has stood the test of time. With this tool, such as it is, our forebears did good work. In secondary and boarding schools, in most of the big city parishes, where the children are more open, better-prepared and have greater aptitude, it may still serve.

But it is quite otherwise in the country districts and the poorer suburbs. There we get the children at the last possible moment, at nine years of age, most of them having never even heard of religion, either at home or at school. They come to us with minds as uncultivated as fallow land, bogged down in unconscious paganism, without even knowing any prayers and hardly able to read.

Nevertheless straightaway we put into their hands, as into those of the others, the Catechism, an excellent little book, a methodical presentation of doctrine and summary of theology couched in precise, abstract, dry terms, quite beyond their uneducated minds.

The most intelligent, the most gifted apart, the others, though not all, finally manage to learn it. They recite it laboriously, word by word, more or less as an altar server recites the Latin responses of the Mass, without understanding them.

No, the Catechism is not a suitable book for beginners nowadays; it is beyond them, it is a burden to them and it puts them off.

It is the children who have changed. Conditions are worse for them than formerly when the school was working on our side.

Formerly the children grew up in a Christian atmosphere. At home the seed was sown in the soul, mind and heart of the little one by the parents' example, the wordless lesson of events, the mother's daily work. The grace of baptism could act; there was a foundation, prepared ground, natural dispositions.

The children of today have nothing, their state of mind is quite different. We must treat them differently for the Catechism, which could have been used to continue religious instruction already started, is not the right tool for a first initiation.

1. "Begin with the Gospel, the best book for beginners"

To them above all, we must speak first, and at length, of our Lord. We must put before their eyes scenes from the gospel so as to make them know and love the Divine Master before presenting his teaching in a formal manner.

(a) The Catechism is a lesson, the Gospel is a story

The Catechism is always a lesson. The Gospel is a story. Why should we want to teach as a lesson what we can get across as a story? A child will put up with a lesson, it will never tire of stories.

A child does not listen to a story as we grown-ups do with an aloof curiosity that leaves us strangers to the action; he enters into it, puts himself right inside with imagination and feelings. It takes shape, comes alive, so if one is talking to him of our Lord, telling the story of his life where, set against the background of Palestine, the simple and vivid narratives of the parables are mixed with the wonderful accounts of the miracles, through which shines his divinity, the child sees, hears, listens, follows and soon begins to love him. If one is careful to direct his faith, his heart, his piety towards the tabernacle to remind him continuously that the same Jesus of the Gospel is there hidden, living in the sacrament with and for us, the work of formation, of religious education, is done without effort.

(b) For a long time the Gospel held pride of place in religious instruction

The gesture of John the Baptist: 'Behold the Lamb of God' should be familiar to the true catechist, pointing to the tabernacle while explaining the Gospel.

Was it not the thought of that master-catechist Chancellor Gerson when he wrote his treatise De parvulis ad Christum trahendis to respond to the appeal of Jesus 'Let the little children come to me'. Lead them straight to him first before tying them down to the thankless study of doctrine.

Was it not also the pre-occupation of Pius X in his decree Quam singulari of 15 [sic] August 1910: early contact with our Lord, without demanding explicit and reasoned knowledge of dogma of which they are not yet capable and which will be asked for later?

Does St Paul not convey to us that it was thus they proceeded in the instruction of catechumens from the first centuries and does he not suggest that the true means of nurturing souls in the Christian life, all souls, but especially those of children, in revealing to us the way he did it himself 'Being their father in Christ through the Gospel'.²

One must carry on for a long time like that, with oral teaching grafted on to the Gospel story; if religion is doctrine it is first an event.

(c) It was only after the middle ages that the little catechetical summary took up all the space

Until printing was invented children probably never had a book in their hands.

Then again it was only after the great theological work of the middle ages that the little catechetical Summa was drawn up, first by Canisius and Bellarmine. It eventually took up too much space, in fact all of it.

There are so many graver causes which paralyse our ministry among children nowadays that that one had not struck us.

We go too fast, we press on, we proceed with an inconceivable ignorance of child psychology. It is all feelings and impressions with him yet so soon we impose sustained efforts of intellect with

2. I Cor. iv, 15.

reflection on texts and formulae whose meaning and even words are beyond his very restricted understanding and vocabulary.³

Instead of quite simply going in by the open doors of the child's imagination and sensibility, we persist in knocking at the still closed doors of his understanding and judgement. They have not yet got teeth to bite bread, they need the milk and broth given to infants: 'You need milk not solid food'.⁴

They are not capable of understanding chapters of dogma or morals which are beyond their intelligence at that stage but they are capable of being interested in the life and person of our Lord and going through him to the Father in heaven. They can have a practical idea of God, of his presence and his power; of the fear and love of God. They are able to distinguish good from evil, to regret and confess their sins, to do penance and make a sacrifice, to pray and to open their awakening faculties to the action of grace.

2. We are not abandoning the Catechism, just beginning with something simpler

So, at the right age, eleven or twelve, their intellect will be disposed to assimilate more easily the lesson properly so-called, the co-ordinated ideas and formulae of the Catechism.

It is not, therefore, a question of giving up the Catechism. Rather we are seeking how, in face of the particular, abnormal problem arising from half-a-century of secularization, we can best surmount the obstacle and attain our end.

What is our aim? It is to be able to show these poor children, victims of the evil in the world, their eternal destiny and enable them to respond; it is to take these little ones as they are, backward and misled, and turn them to God.

Since there is so much to be done and one cannot do everthing at once, we consider it wise to begin with the simplest thing, the most accessible and within their reach, with a form of teaching that is concrete, vivid and popular; so we begin with the Gospel before coming to the Catechism.⁵

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3. All the authors who speak of catechetical teaching method come up against this obstacle. They are preoccupied with it and do their best to get round it. However their recommendations, their advice, the procedures they suggest are only palliatives; they underline the difficulty. Their insistence proves that the tool, the book is not suitable.
 4. Hebrews, v, 12.
 5. It is well understood that Bible History must not be forgotten. Already it, too, is the story of our Lord. From the first chapters of the Bible there is allusion to him, 'the promised Redeemer, the Messiah who is to come.' The messianic idea fills and dominates the Old Testament: the book of promises prepares for the book of realization, the Gospel; they follow on like two chapters in the same book. Children are interested in Bible History as in the Gospel, but from the very beginning we must let them perceive our Lord through the Bible. Later, we can isolate and throw into relief the messianic idea to make them understand the true meaning of Bible History.

Was not the Gospel, which was preached before it was written, the theme of the preaching of the apostles; what Christ did, what he said, 'Quaecumque mandavi vobis'? Did not St Paul declare that he only preached 'Christ, and him crucified', in other words the life of our Lord and the redemption?

It seems, therefore, that the Gospel, primitive oral catechesis that was only written down later by the evangelists, was and still ought to be pre-eminently the manual for initiation.

Certainly, as soon as possible we must get to the task of memorization, to the study and recitation of formulae, to the precision of definitions, to the logical order of doctrinal statement, in a word, 'to the letter of the Catechism'. But, once again, we only postpone it in order to return at a more propitious moment with greater profit.

B. The organization of the catechism lessons is hard on the child; it must be changed

I would like to go further.

It is not only the book that is too heavy for a child's hand but by force of circumstances the organization also of our catechism lessons.

We have all read and been moved by the admirable programme elaborated by Mgr Dupanloup for the priest catechist: 'the work of pre-eminence'. We know how the catechism sessions of St Sulpice fulfilled it to give this fundamental apostolate all the attractiveness possible and the highest return, by a co-ordinated programme of activities and influences. Recitation, instruction, the homily, advice, singing, prayer, occupy all the child's faculties, interesting and stimulating it. It lets itself be carried along and gives itself to the training, which incites it to piety in the measure that its mind is enlightened.

And in our dreams we, as young priests, promised ourselves to keep as close as possible to this model, adapting the method to our limited means, even in country parishes.

1. The catechism has become arduous extra work

Alas, the reality did not correspond to our hopes for there is nothing more heart-rending than the humiliating place held by the catechism in the lives of our children; extra work outside class time on which the school sets no value and which is necessarily taken out of recreation time.

Thus it is after three hours of lessons that the children come to us, often late if the teacher has kept them in. In the evenings at home, while others play they have to learn a lesson that is too difficult, if there is enough time. Recitation is laborious, but one has to insist on it otherwise it would lapse altogether. It is painfully prolonged. The result is that the explanation is shortened, the homily, advice and singing characteristic of St Sulpice are omitted. They are too tired to listen and at midday they are sent away with another chapter to learn which seems an imposition. They go home for a hasty meal and back to school without time to breathe between the two sessions. They are pursued from one catechism lesson to the next by the obsession of the wretched chapter to be learnt. And this will continue for three years.

How should they not aspire to a freedom which, for most of them, will be definitive!

2. 'We must slacken the vice'

We must slacken the vice; we must lighten the burden and, as far as we can, make their task less onerous.

How? By arranging a period of initiation of a year or eighteen months for them, made more vivid and attractive with the Gospel. The commentary of a parable or the description of a miracle will interest them much more than the explanation of a page of doctrine; they will remember the text all the more easily because the lesson will have the double advantage of being shorter and less arduous.⁶

(a) Religious instruction should be interesting and not tiring

It is important that this first instruction should be interesting and not wearying for them, so that they may find it attractive, take to it and like it, for if the first contact with religion is laborious, the first impression disagreeable, if we start by imposing too heavy a burden they will reject it and always have an unpleasant recollection of it.

How often do we find that by going too far and too fast all has been compromised because we have not known where to stop. More often than we think it is the way we go about it that brings about our failure.

It is the same for the catechism as for the Mass. When we have managed in two or three years to get a fairly regular attendance of our children at Sunday Mass, but a passive attendance, dreary, without a book, often far from the altar, that is to say a long hour of constraint, in silence, have we trained them to come to Mass? No. Rather we have trained them never to come again.

It will be the same with religious instruction if they come to it reluctantly.

(b) For the little ones it must be an active lesson

As for the little ones that we get at seven or eight years of age, why do we not dispense with all catechism lessons for a time? Thus they will come to us joyfully, freely and calmly to hear the beautiful and noble story of our Lord without the added burden of homework to cast a shadow over these first impressions.

If one makes the effort to draw their attention to some outlines of Bible History or the Gospel, an abridged catechism will suffice.

Thus conceived in a less rigid fashion our catechism lessons would

6. It is essential for the children to be able to see a map of Palestine. Illustrated catechisms and slides, though useful, are not available to everyone, nor are the movable cut-out pictures of Mme Gahéry's The most beautiful story, very precious for the little ones above all. But it is easy, without much expense, to build up gradually a collection of pictures which will complete the visual aids already available in the Church and sacristy: Stations of the Cross, statues, stained glass windows, etc.

be something other than a 'religious instruction class'. We would have more freedom, a greater latitude to give time to the children's souls, to the development of their spirit of faith, to form them to piety in view of first Communion, not only because the Gospel lends itself better to exhortation, commentary and homily, but also because from time to time one can, without inconvenience, take a whole session to prepare, for example, for confession; to explain the ceremonies of the Mass; to make a liturgical visit to the Church or sacristy; to underline the Passion narrative with the Stations of the Cross; to put in relief certain great and fundamental truths such as the existence of God, the Divinity of Jesus Christ, the real presence; to recount the beautiful life of a saint or martyr of times past, saints of France and its regions, popular saints of whom they only know the name, etc.

At the end of a year or a year and a half of this lightened programme, the children would be familiar with the life and teaching of our Lord; they would have a general idea of religion, an overall view of the Redemption, of the Church; above all they would have a practical faith and Christian customs.

It would be a stage. They would have acquired some maturity with age. They would then come to that other book, the Catechism, with the impression of tackling the same subject of Christian Doctrine under a new but more rational form.

C. Our catechetical methods are out of date; they must be renewed

There is another aspect of the question which is important.

We have not changed our methods while everything around us has changed, the family background, the attitude of the school and the children's mentality.

1. A serious gap in our catechism classes

- (a) All the Catechism is in the Gospel but the Gospel is not in the Catechism

However our catechism lessons have little to say about Bible History and the Gospel, which the children used to learn at school, and this is a serious omission.

Three or four terse pages on the life of our Lord, two or three vague and inexact dates; a few episodes sketched briefly; a short and dry list of miracles, a word on the Passion, two lines on the Resurrection and that is all.

If, therefore, we put the Catechism into the children's hands right from the start and stick to the same text for three, four or five years, in the classes for the infants and middle and upper juniors, they will know neither the Gospel nor our Lord.

In town parishes, boarding schools, and Church clubs there is supplementary instruction for the older ones. But in most country parishes, through lack of time and because the catechism hardly mentions it, the Gospel passes unnoticed and so it remains for life.

Can one imagine a practising Catholic who has never read the Gospel? It is the case with the majority.

One could be perfectly instructed in the faith if one only knew the Gospel because the essence of the Catechism is in the Gospel. But the reverse is not true, the Gospel is not in the Catechism.

Is it necessary to bring out any other arguments? I do not think so. For in the course of the discussions I have had with the parish priests on my pastoral visits I have often brought up this subject and my conclusions, those I have given here, have been welcomed with heartfelt relief.

D. A Directory for the catechists

The rare objections made to me were on secondary matters: a special book for the children and also one for the teachers, a single syllabus, a single method.

True, it would be better, but is it essential? And must we wait until the ideal textbook is produced to try out our own experiments?

Cannot this work of adaptation be carried out by the teacher who knows his pupils? There are whole libraries on the subject.

Let each one make his own plan so as to grade his teaching from one year to the next, speaking of Jesus and the Gospel in a different way, so as not to repeat the same lesson.

I am not imposing anything; but I willingly authorize those who feel drawn to follow this pattern with the seven, eight and nine-year-olds in leading them gradually towards the diocesan catechism on which we must concentrate in the last two years without losing sight of the Gospel.

The parish priests who would like to try this out should send their observations in a report at the end of the year; and if the results correspond to our hopes, we will take appropriate decisions in the light of this experience.

Dijon, 22 September 1922.

+ Maurice Landrieux
Bishop of Dijon.

APPENDIX III

ANDRÉ BOYER'S IMPORTANT WORKS

La Bible des tout-petits	1st edition 1934	Secrétariat des catéchistes volontaires, Dijon
	2nd edition 1937	Bouasse Jeune, Paris
	3rd edition 1948	Lethielleux, Paris
Album de la Bible des tout-petits, (with Mme Le Tourneur)		1938 Bouasse Jeune, Paris
Le Catéchisme vivant	1st edition 1935	Desclée de Brouwer, Paris
	2nd edition 1938	
Manuel d'instruction religieuse des adolescents		
I La Révélation	1st edition 1938	Bouasse Jeune, Paris
	2nd edition 1942	Lethielleux, Paris
II L'Église	1st edition 1938	Bouasse Jeune, Paris
	2nd edition 1942	Lethielleux, Paris
III Le Chrétien		1942 Lethielleux, Paris
Comment présenter le Christ aux enfants d'aujourd'hui		1937 O.Gé.O., Paris
Catéchisme à l'usage des diocèses de France, (with Canon Quinet)		
	1st edition 1939	Mame, Tours
	2nd edition 1947	
Questions actuelles de pédagogie catéchistique		
I Catéchisme et éducation	1943	Lethielleux, Paris
II La première communion des petits enfants	1943	
III Du catéchisme vivant au catéchisme vécu	1943	
IV Méthodes actives? Non. Pédagogie active?		
Oui. Catéchisme vivant, mieux encore	1947	
V Du catéchisme vécu au catéchisme missionnaire		1949
VI Catéchisme et monde nouveau		1950
Pédagogie chrétienne		
I Problèmes et méthodes	1945	Lethielleux, Paris
II Catéchétique	1947	

APPENDIX IV

MARIES FARGUES' IMPORTANT WORKS

Choses divines et petits enfants	1st edition 1922 Éd. des Jeunes, Paris 2nd edition 1931 Publiroc, Marseille (Revised and enlarged)
Monsieur Cornouzières au coin de son feu	1928 Lumière, Dijon
Les tendances actuelles en éducation	1929 Lumière, Dijon
La rédaction chez les petits	1931 Cerf, Juvisy
La petite Anne de Guigné	1st edition 1932 Cerf, Juvisy 2nd edition 1965 Le Grain de Senevé, Paris
Les méthodes actives dans l'enseignement religieux	1934 Cerf, Juvisy
La formation religieuse des enfants du peuple dans le milieu déchristianisé	1st edition 1935 Spes, Paris 2nd edition 1937 Spes, Paris
Introduction des enfants de neuf ans au catéchisme (Revised and enlarged)	1st edition 1936 Desclée, Paris 2nd edition 1947 Cerf, Paris 3rd edition 1955 Mame, Tours
Tests collectifs de catéchisme	1st edition 1945 Cerf, Paris 2nd edition 1954 Cerf, Paris
La foi des petits enfants	1950 Bloud et Gay, Paris
Catéchisme pour notre temps	1951 Spes, Paris
Histoire Sainte	1953 Mame, Tours

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PERIODICALS

Many of the periodicals cited above were short-lived, some were local and in many cases more of the numbers were consulted than are cited. For convenience, therefore, they are listed below with such information about them as is available.

Bon Catéchiste, le.	Paris, 1904.	Monthly, from the third number it became La Voix du Bon Catéchiste, q.v.
Bonne semence, la.	Nancy, 1922-1932	Monthly, diocesan catechetical bulletin.
Bulletin paroissial et liturgique.	Lophem, Bruges, Abbey of St André.	
Catéchisme paroissial et liturgique.		Became Paroisse et Liturgie. Founded in 1919 by Dom Gaspar Lefèbvre.
Cahiers catéchistiques.	Paris, 1932-39	Monthly.
Cahiers du clergé rural.	Paris, 1945-65	Monthly.
Catéchèse.	Paris, 1960 to date.	Quarterly.
Catéchiste, Le.	Paris, 1919-32	Monthly. Organ of the Archconfraternity.
Correspondant, Le.	Paris, 1843-1933.	Quarterly.
Croix, La.	Paris, Current.	National catholic daily newspaper.
Documentation catéchistique.	Paris, 1943-1960	Quarterly from 1948.
Documentation catholique.	Paris, 1919 to date.	Fortnightly semi-official Catholic Review.
L'École.	Paris, 1909-1939?	Weekly review of primary teaching in Catholic private schools. Founded by Georges Audollent.
L'École et la vie.	Paris, 1917-39?	Weekly review of secular education.
Éducation.	Paris, 1935-1946?	Monthly, linked with Catholic private schools.
Équipes catéchistes.	Paris, 1949-1966?	Quarterly, followed l'Homme-catéchiste, q.v.
Études.	Paris, 1856 to date.	Monthly Jesuit review.
Grain de Senevé.	Nancy, 1937-39.	Monthly diocesan catechetical bulletin.

l'Homme-Catéchiste.	Paris, 1927-49.	Quarterly.
Journal of religious instruction (Catholic Educator).	New York, 1931 to date.	
La Lettre du Centre.	Paris, 1939-51.	Monthly magazine for women catechists.
Lumen.	Paris, 1920-33.	Monthly review for Catholic women teachers.
Lumen vitae.	Brussels, 1946 to date.	Review of International Centre for Studies in Religious Education.
Nouvelle Éducation, la.	Paris, 1921-39.	Monthly educational review, secular.
Nouvelle revue théologique.	Tournai, 1869 to date.	Monthly review of the Belgian jesuits.
Orientamenti pedagogici.	Rome.	International review of the pontifical Salesian institute.
Persévérance.	Dijon, 1931-46.	Monthly diocesan catechetical magazine.
Petite Correspondence de l'Oeuvre en temps de guerre.	Paris, 1915-19.	Organ of the Archconfraternity during the war. It was replaced by Le Catéchiste, q.v.
Pour l'ère nouvelle.	Geneva, 1922-39?	Founded by Adolphe Ferrière.
Revue des Jeunes.	Paris, 1915-39.	Quarterly Dominican review. Absorbed by la Vie intellectuelle.
Revue pédagogique.	Paris, 1882-1926.	Monthly review of primary education.
Sower, The.	1919 to date.	English Roman Catholic catechetical periodical founded by Canon F.H. Drinkwater.
Temps présent, L'Hebdomadaire du.	Paris, 1937-39?	Roman Catholic popular weekly. Absorbed by la Vie catholique.
Theological Studies.	New York, 1940 to date.	Roman Catholic review.
l'Union.	Paris, 1900-1939?	Monthly review concerned with Catholic Action.
Vie Catholique, la.	Paris, current.	National, Catholic, popular weekly magazine.
Vie spirituelle, la.	Paris, 1919-1939?	Monthly Dominican review.

Vie intellectuelle, la.	Paris, current.	Monthly Dominican review.
Voix du Bon Catéchiste, la.	Paris, 1904-14.	Organ of Archconfraternity, founded by Abbé L. Poulin.

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The Archives of André Boyer and of Marie Fargues are rich sources of correspondence, lecture notes and background material and have been drawn on freely by the present writer. Neither have been properly classified. They are also invaluable sources of many printed works cited which are otherwise difficult to obtain.

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