

Special Education as a Moral Mandate in Catholic Schools

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Recommended Citation

Carlson, Mary E., "Special Education as a Moral Mandate in Catholic Schools" (2016). *Dissertations (2009 -)*. 635.
https://epublications.marquette.edu/dissertations_mu/635

SPECIAL EDUCATION AS A MORAL MANDATE IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

by

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A Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School,
Marquette University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

May 2016

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

PREFACE.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	vi
CHAPTERS	
Chapter 1: Lord, Let Our Eyes Be Opened! Introduction; Statement/Status of Problem; Methodologies; Literature Review....	1
Chapter 2: Love Your Neighbor as Yourself: What does Church teaching tell us about inclusion?	18
Chapter 3: Look at Those with Whom He Eats: Who is responsible for exclusion, and are their actions just?	31
Chapter 4: Lord, When Did I See You? How can the Church's schools use liberation theology to respond?	61
Chapter 5: The Kingdom of Heaven is Upon Us: Summary; Interpretation; Limitations; Recommendations and Interpretations; Conclusions.....	90
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	109

Preface

In our sleep, pain, which cannot forget, falls drop by drop upon the heart until in our own despair, against our will, comes wisdom through the awful grace of God.

(Robert Kennedy's paraphrase of a quote from Agamemnon by Aeschylus, April 4, 1968, upon the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.).

The above quote seems an appropriate epigraph, because it summarizes how long it has taken Catholic schools, and those of us who have taught in them, almost against our will, to recognize that Jesus called us to welcome all children, not just those who present themselves as neuro-typical, temporarily able-bodied, or "normal." Many people who have worked with children, especially those diagnosed with special needs, have seen, as Mother Teresa would say, the face of Christ. It is there, in the eyes, but even more-so in the changes of expression. Depending upon the individual's exceptionalities, the changes from anger to calm, indignation to forgiveness, confusion to understanding, or sorrow to joy can be glacially slow or mercurially fast. But, because many of our children do not have the language skills to express themselves, it is in their faces that we perceive their gifts and their needs, and that we see the very face of God. I am neither romanticizing nor beatifying these children nor the vicissitudes of teaching them on a day- to-day basis, only sharing my experience of God through them.

I began my career looking into those faces as a special education teacher and diagnostician in the public schools. As part of my job, I did the diagnostic case work for children at the Catholic school a few blocks from my public school. If a child was diagnosed as having special needs, invariably, the parents would struggle with the decision of whether to have their child come to the public school for the special services available, or to keep them in the Catholic school. If the exceptionality caused any greater than a mild impairment, I had no doubt that the special services in the public school would be a better

choice for the child. We would always say that it was unfortunate that the Catholic school couldn't afford to hire special education teachers.

Later in my career, I taught in Catholic schools, with children from high risk populations, but who were placed in regular education classes. If I had a student whom I could not help to be successful, despite my best efforts at intervention, and despite the strategies learned as a special educator, I would refer them for special education services. I believed that the only other choice available was to watch them drown in frustration. Invariably, this would mean that we would lose these students to the public schools. There was nothing horrible about having to go to public schools, of which I am a great supporter. The loss was for the child and the family, who had chosen the Catholic schools to help them to raise their children in the faith, just as I had done for my own children. And, we would always say at the diagnostic meetings what a shame it was that Catholic schools couldn't afford to hire special education teachers.

It has taken me a long time to realize that children diagnosed with special needs should not have to be dependent upon our charity for their justice. If we are to have Catholic schools, what children are most in need of our special love and care? Shouldn't it be those who, according to Catholic social teaching, might be considered "the least among us" and "those to which the Kingdom of heaven belongs" (Matt 19:14)? Over the years, as in the epigraph, through the pain of turning these children away, pain which has fallen drop by drop upon my heart, has come the knowledge that if we are to serve any, we must try to serve all.

In my previous life, I used to do a kind of writing that I think most academics are more comfortable with. As a practicing teacher and diagnostician, and while pursuing

my master's degree, I was able to synthesize statistics regarding how reliable and valid assessments were, how the results compared with legal requirements, and what research-based interventions would be most appropriate. I used numbers, observations, statistical manuals...all things that were familiar to most of those I knew in academia. I began to pursue my Ph. D., and, if I had continued at that time, it would have been in school psychology or special education diagnostics.

Then, life, and children, got in the way and I couldn't continue. Eventually, I unexpectedly ended up teaching at Marquette University, where my job is to train teachers. Being at a Catholic and Jesuit institution gave me a completely new perspective on children with disabilities. And, that is why I come before you with a methodology, that of liberation theology, which takes me—and probably many of you—out of our comfort zone. The Jesuits are, first and foremost, a Catholic teaching order whose motto is “For the greater glory of God.” I hope that as a result of my studies in theology and philosophy, which led to this work, that some people may see the problem through a more theological lens. I hope to make a definitive case that, if indeed, God dwells within these children, and they should be accorded the same dignity as all other children, that it is imperative for the greater glory of God that Catholic schools serve their needs. As church sponsored schools, we have, for the most part, come late to this recognition.

This work is a call to action rather than a how-to manual. Once we make the decision for more just practices, we will develop, out of necessity, the tools we need. If we wait to work out the funding formulae first, it may never happen. In this work, using theological, philosophical, ethical, and pedagogical theories, without the tools I used to use--

standard errors of measurement or meta-analysis or charts or graphs—I am trying to further the conversation most prominently put forth by Dr. Martin Scanlan, of my doctoral committee, in his book *All Are Welcome*. Martin very eloquently expresses the need to welcome *all* children into Catholic Schools. Given the dearth of theological arguments on this topic, and being powerfully influenced by a gifted, prominent moral and liberation theologian, Fr. Bryan Massingale, Ph.D. (also of my doctoral committee), it seemed logical to use that methodology to investigate the question—and, it spoke directly to my heart. Since theology and philosophy go hand in hand, it was while studying philosophy that I came across the work of Miranda Fricker and her theory of testimonial and hermeneutical injustices. I hope that in combining Fricker’s theory with liberation theology, applied to the question of including students diagnosed with special needs in Catholic Schools, I have been able to look at the problem in a new way, which might further the dialog.

Acknowledgments

Aside from thanking Martin Scanlan and Fr. Bryan Massingale from my committee, I'd like to thank others who helped along the way—Greg O'Meara, S.J., J.D.; Dr. John Fitzgibbons, S.J.; Dr. Daniel Hendrickson, S. J.; Dr. Lee za Ong; Dr. Nancy Rice; Dr. Kathleen Cepelka; Paul Secunda, J.D.; Ann DelPonte; Bernie Janz; Bishop Richard Sklba; Dr. David Byers; Dr. Melissa Shew; Sr. Margaret Farley, Ph.D.; Dr. Deirdre Dempsey; Dr. Heather Hathaway; Dr. Timothy Melchert; Dr. Kevin Gibson; Dr. Ellen Eckman; the librarians at Raynor Library; and the faculty and staff of the Marquette Graduate School. I highly recommend their dissertation boot camp! I'd like to also thank everyone I work with, who are too many to name, for supporting me. I thank every student, from kindergarten through college, whom I have ever taught and learned from, and ask your forgiveness for the times that I did not do the best for you. You have been a continuing source of grace for me. I am also grateful to my professors, both at UW-Milwaukee, where I acquired a zeal for working with kids with exceptionalities, and at Marquette, where my heart was set afire. I am especially grateful to my co-chairs, Dr. Jeffrey LaBelle, S. J., and Dr. Doris Walker-Dalhouse. They kept me on track, taught me a lot about writing and gave me shoulders to cry on. They affirmed my vision of the needs of marginalized children, based on their own teaching experiences, and it was their unconditional positive regard which carried me through. My friends and family, especially my husband, Stuart, and our children and grandchildren, have been unfailingly patient and supportive--eternal love and thanks to you.

Chapter 1. Lord, Let Our Eyes Be Opened!
Introduction; Statement/Status of Problem; Methodologies and Literature Review

In the theological tradition of prophetic witness—in lay terms, what one might call speaking truth to power—some thinkers are pointing to what seems to be a conflict between Christian theological ethics (which includes Catholic Social Teaching) and certain ethical practices in U.S. Catholic schools. Does the teaching of the Catholic Church give clear theological, moral and ethical guidance on whether special education must be offered in Catholic schools? If so, is that guidance being followed? Because most Catholic schools do not currently provide special education (DiFiore, 2006), I propose to more deeply explore the theological and philosophical bases for including or excluding children diagnosed with special education/al needs, exceptionalities, or disabilities in Catholic schools. Catholic Social Teaching (CST), which is largely embraced by the U.S. Church hierarchy, has been used by other writers (Frabutt, 2013; Long & Schuttloffel, 2006; Scanlan, 2009) to encourage the schools to be more inclusive, with some limited success. Since “the aim of ...research...is to engage in a conversation with those who may not be eager to change their minds, but who, for good reasons, will,” (Booth, Colomb, & Williams, 1995, p. x), it is hoped that a more in-depth theological and philosophical investigation might bring about a more frank discussion, and possibly consensus, regarding what level of inclusive services should be offered in Catholic schools. Posing the question of what is or is not mandated by Sacred Scripture and Church teaching raises the question of possible injustice. If there is no injustice, then the schools can continue current practice in good conscience. If Church teachings and virtue ethics deem current practices unjust, then this work serves to continue a conversation in the academy on how to proceed.

Introduction to the Problem

There has not been a full length treatment regarding a possible conflict between the body of teaching we call Christian Theological ethics, especially in the conjunction of Catholic Social Teaching, Church doctrine and liberation theologies, and what is practiced in U.S. Catholic Schools regarding special educational services. The tenets of Catholic Social Teaching (CST) are radically inclusive, based largely upon Jesus' teachings regarding the Kingdom of Heaven, also called the Kingdom of God, the Reign of God, or the *Basileia*, and human dignity. According to this Church teaching, what is the Church called to do for children with disabilities through its schools? This is the main problem to be addressed in this study. Related questions include: Are obstacles, especially financial ones, justification for exclusion? And, if they are not justified, does this exclusion rise to the level of injustice? If so, who is responsible, and how does the Church call those parties to respond?

Status of Problem: Lack of Services, Lack of Literature

Although the U.S. Department of Education's 2013 *Condition of Education Report* published by the National Council for Education Statistics (NCES, Children and Youth with Disabilities web page) estimated that over 13% of U.S. students require special education services, a review of the literature indicates that most Catholic Schools do not offer a range of services (hereafter referred to, interchangeably, as inclusive services and special education/al services) for students diagnosed with special, or exceptional needs. Also, there is not a great deal of literature about what has been historically, or is currently, being offered.

While there is a growing body of literature calling for more inclusive services (see Frabutt 2013; Scanlan, 2009) I have found fewer than 20 references written in the past 20 years which specifically address the issues of how many children are being served in U.S. Catholic schools. The 2013 *Condition of Education Report Fast Facts page: Students with Disabilities*, states that 95% of students diagnosed with disabilities are in public schools, and roughly 1% are in private schools with the remainder mostly attending specialized schools. The 1% figure is certainly lower than the number actually served, in that it only indicates the number of students who are funded through federal set-aside money through special education law. However, DeFiore (2006) reported that the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) identified only 7% of the Catholic school population as having “learning disabilities”¹ (p. 454). Thus, even the most optimistic statistics indicate that Catholic schools are providing services for, at most, roughly half of the percentage of students who are diagnosed with special needs.

Methodologies Employed to Explore the Problem

Building on the work of Scanlan (2009), Frabutt (2013), Long & Schuttloffel (2006), and others, I used an interdisciplinary method of investigation to craft a more complex theological and philosophical argument in examining possible injustice in the Church’s practice in Catholic schools. One advantage in using interdisciplinary research methods here is that, aside from using theological arguments, it allows the researcher to

¹ There are numerous possible reasons why these figures differ so widely (for instance, generalizability from sample to population, phrasing of questions, definitions used, etc.) and the purpose of this summary is not to examine or explain the differences, but to point out both the dearth of services and the dearth of research on what inclusive services are offered in Catholic Schools

use a secular model of philosophy (particularly virtue ethics) to open the conversation to a wider audience.

While I begin chapter 2 with an argument based solidly on official Church doctrine and CST, the method at the heart of this investigation, the hermeneutics of liberation, is a recognized method in the field of theology (Phan, 2000; Boff, in Ellacuria & Sobrino, 1993). This liberationist lens will be used to view these questions through what Gustavo Gutierrez calls the “backside” or “underside” of Church history. This methodology is similar to that used in critical race theory, which looks at “facts” from different vantage points to try to find the truth behind the “facts” and to look at what we think we know with a fresh, yet wary, set of eyes. It is often thought of as a hermeneutic of suspicion. Liberation theologians are aided in investigation by support from the social sciences, such as anthropology and psychology. Liberationist theologians prize the lives of the marginalized and compare those lives with the life and death of Jesus. I found this branch of Christian Theological Ethics, which looks at the real, lived experience of marginalized people, compatible with a virtue ethics philosophical analysis using Miranda Fricker’s epistemic injustice model, regarding the ways that knowledge is understood and conveyed. This virtue ethics lens, with a strong Aristotelian/Thomistic underpinning, was helpful in exploring whether the disabled community has had an adequate voice in Church policy, what the policy should be regarding inclusive services, and the conjunction of the disability rights movement and disability liberation theology.

This study required the employment of research-driven pedagogy, educational philosophy grounded in ethics, and Christian Theological Ethics. An in-depth investigation could not have been carried out using any of the disciplines alone. As Karl Rahner

(1978) asserts, there is a necessary unity between philosophy and theology in order to reflect jointly the self-interpretation of human existence, along with God's self-communication to us through grace and through Jesus. Since the theological methodologies use Sacred Scripture as their source, a lens through which to view Scripture was also chosen. In this study, when interpreting Sacred Scripture, two of the hermeneutical rules from *Appealing to Scripture in Moral Debate* (Cosgrove, 2002) were used. They are the rule of "Countercultural Witness," which is used in liberation theologies, and the rule of "Moral-Theological Adjudication," in which one interprets Scripture in the most charitable way possible; it is sometimes referred to as the "Rule of Love." Here again, the interdisciplinary link to philosophy proved useful. William Spohn (cited in Keenan, 2010) affirms the use of charitable interpretations, suggesting virtue ethics as the most appropriate way to approach Scripture. According to Brady (2008), aside from Sacred Scripture, CST takes its moral reasoning from Church tradition, philosophy, and lived experience, related through narrative and prophetic witness. CST encourages philosophical discourse and political activism, when appropriate, to uphold the common good and the dignity of all persons (Brady, 2008, pp. 18-20). Finally, this work is the culmination of my training and career as a special educator, which influences the way I address these three aspects of the problem:

1. Lack of scholarly application of Christian Theological Ethics and Philosophy to the education of students diagnosed with special needs in Catholic schools (Ch. 2, 4 and 5);
2. A possible lack of the voice of the disabled in Church deliberations regarding inclusion from the viewpoints of liberation theology for those with disabilities; and lack of agential responsibility according to a virtue ethics theory of epistemic injustice (Ch. 3);

3. Lack of exploration of what Catholic, liberatory pedagogy may offer special education (Ch.4 and 5).

Additionally, there are two problems which will be addressed briefly in this chapter and chapter 5, but require more attention from the academy

1. *A minimal awareness of*; the already-proposed models to serve students with disabilities in Catholic schools; of the legal requirements of the special education laws, known as IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, aka IDEIA), the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act; of possible means of funding (Scanlan, 2009); and lack of special education certification programs in U.S. Catholic universities (Browne & Celeste, 2006).

2. *A lack of*; statistical information on the number of children with special educational needs who are being served in Catholic schools; how they are served; and by whom.

Literature Review

Parameters:

In order to address the problem that is the focus of this dissertation (the moral/theological problem regarding the lack of inclusion of children with special educational needs in Catholic schools), it must be established that: the problem itself exists; that there is not a great deal of literature which directly addresses the scope of the problem and/or some aspects of the problem; and that there is a lack of scholarly application of Christian Theological Ethics and philosophy to the education of students diagnosed with special needs. There are a number of challenges here, including proving what people take to be “givens”: that Catholic schools don’t usually offer special education--yet the

numbers to quantify that problem are very difficult to come by (Bello, 2006); that Catholic schools would provide special education if they could afford to, which may be true in many or even most cases, but the literature is inconclusive (Dudek, 1998); and that they cannot afford it. Although this final unaffordability argument is widely accepted, there is not much literature to support it (Scanlan, 2009). The following literature review will help to establish that there is, indeed, a problem worth addressing and that the aforementioned givens are worth challenging (i.e. Catholic schools believe in and want to offer inclusive services, and would offer them if they could afford to, but they can't). In addition, many administrators would say that the key is not in convincing schools to offer the services, but in laying out a framework for how to offer the services (Scanlan, 2009). However, there is more literature available on possible ways to offer special education in Catholic schools than exists regarding why they should offer it or how many offer it now. The literature review will also point to the existing literature regarding how to serve children with special needs. *Before* researching the theological and philosophical case for inclusion or exclusion, the status of the problem and several specific aspects of it must be established.

Unlike liturgical practices, Catholic schooling practice tends to be more parochial than universal in nature. In addition, each country has its own laws (or lack thereof) regarding special education. So, although there has been a good deal of literature written regarding Catholic schools that incorporate special education, particularly in the United

Kingdom, Ireland, Canada, and Australia, only literature regarding U.S. Catholic schools will be employed.²

In answering these preliminary questions, the focus will be on literature of the last 20 years. There will be a brief summary of the literature written in the late 1970s and 80s after the publication of Public Law 94-142 (The Education for All Handicapped Children Act, later renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, commonly referred to as IDEA). However, going beyond the 20-year mark, the speculative and/or dated aspects of these materials made them less helpful for this review.

The Questions:

What are the legal requirements regarding special education in Catholic schools?

Regarding IDEA's assurance of a "Free and Appropriate Public Education" (or FAPE), "There is no requirement that Catholic schools provide the free and appropriate education" (Shaughnessy, 2007, p.39). IDEA does not extend all of its rights and benefits to all students in private schools. If a parent chooses to enroll the student in a private school, the SEA (State Education Agency) or LEA (Local Education Agency) are required to provide only a proportionate amount of its IDEA funds, and particular services such as diagnostic assessment, individual educational plans (IEPs), and consultation with classroom teachers (Turnbull, Huerta, & Stowe 2006, p.19). Whatever services may be

² For example, special education in Catholic schools is widespread and offered on a continuum of inclusion model in Australia. However, the Australian government funds those services at a level that is 80% of what is funded in the public schools. Since financing is reported as the most common stumbling block to inclusive services, this is non-applicable to the situation in the U.S. retrieved from <http://www.ceomelb.catholic.edu.au/ourschools> on 10/24/13.

offered through the SEA or LEA or individual Catholic schools, it remains that “...Catholic Schools are not legally required to accept students with disabilities” (Russo et al, 2002, p.3). Under IDEA, there is no legal compulsion for the Catholic schools to offer services, nor is there any compulsion for the SEA or LEA to offer services beyond assessment, planning, and consultation to private school students.

IDEA is the major law that grants educational due process rights (to FAPE), and funding for those rights, to students diagnosed with special needs. However, there are two other laws that are jurisdictional and may offer limited funding for accommodations for students with disabilities in Catholic schools. Those laws are the (formerly Vocational) Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (MacDonald, 2005; Scanlan, 2009). In particular, section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act requires “reasonable” modifications to make education accessible to students who are “otherwise qualified” to attend the school. Because most Catholic schools receive some federal funding through programs such as the federal lunch program and Title I, they must comply with accommodations that are not “burdensome” but that provide equal access to educational services. For instance, it might not be “reasonable” to retrofit an entire building to be disabled-accessible, but it would be reasonable to switch a classroom to a lower floor, to have music class in the classroom rather than in the music room, etc. (Russo, 2002). Scanlan asserts that “Catholic Schools are obligated to make accommodations that are minor adjustments” (Scanlan, 2009, p. 540). Unfortunately, the vagaries of what is considered “minor,” “reasonable,” or “burdensome” make the law somewhat ambiguous (Scanlan, 2009).

What has been historically or is now the status of special education in Catholic schools?

Catholic religious congregations, and even some dioceses in the U.S. have a long history of offering education to traditionally marginalized groups (Scanlan, 2008; Walch, 2003) Some examples include: St. (Mother) Katherine Drexel and the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament who opened schools for Native American and African American students (nbccongress.org/features/history); Mother Theodore Williams and the Franciscan Handmaids of the Most Pure Heart of Mary, who relocated their order to Harlem and opened schools for African American students (nbccongress.org/features/history); and Mother Caroline Friess and the School sisters of Notre Dame who opened schools for girls and for immigrants (Ruether & McLaughlin, 1979). Numerous other congregations served these and other marginalized groups, and the poor. This is not to say that poor children and children of color have always been served, and poverty is a particularly challenging problem today.³ A number of schools have also been strictly devoted to serving the needs of children with exceptional needs, among them: St. Lucy's in Darby, PA, serving blind students; St. Coletta's in Milwaukee, WI, serving students with intellectual disabilities; and St. John's School for the Deaf in Delavan, WI, but these are exceptions rather than the rule.

Given that history of serving other marginalized children, it is somewhat surprising that the same zeal has not appeared for including children who have been diagnosed with special needs. Legally, children have “special education/al needs,” or are qualified

³ To be sure, there was historical exclusion also. The Church, in places, has suffered from institutional racism or white privilege. Many schools which once might have served the poor, immigrants and children of color (as well as middle and upper class whites) struggled with both identity and funding following the exodus of whites and the middle class to the suburbs and the loss of the nuns who had taught without salary (Durow, 2007; Scanlan, 2008).

to receive special education/al services, if they meet diagnostic criteria for certain “handicapping” conditions, or exceptional educational needs, the most common of which are: Specific Learning Disabilities, Communication Disorders, Emotional or Behavioral Disabilities, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Giftedness, and Cognitive Delay (also sometimes known as Intellectual Disabilities and/or Mental Retardation). Children can only meet this diagnostic criterion after intensive interventions have been documented and they have undergone observation and individualized assessment with valid, reliable instruments (Vaughn, Bos & Schumm, 2013). Although there are many other factors which put students at risk, I will not use Martin Scanlan’s (2009) broader notion of students’ special needs, an umbrella term which includes other marginalized groups of children, such as English Language Learners, along with children diagnosed with disabilities. While, conceptually, it has many strengths, I find it too broad for my purposes here, and will limit “special needs” to agree with the legal definition of disabilities and giftedness.

I begin with a brief summary of early literature and continue with a review of the extant literature to establish the problem. The main foci of early literature were explanations of whether the law had any effect on Catholic schools (i.e. McKinney, 1991; Shaughnessy, 1989) or suggestions or exhortations for implementation of services for students with disabilities (i.e. Hall, 1979). As to the more current state, the U.S. Department of Education 2013 *Condition of Education Report* issued by the National Council for Education Statistics (nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubinfo, Participation in Education, Children and Youth with Disabilities web page) estimated that over 13% of U.S. students require special education services. However, a review of the literature indicates that most Catholic schools do not offer a range of services (hereafter referred to as special education/al

services, which may or may not offer full inclusion) for students diagnosed with special, or exceptional, needs. As mentioned earlier, DeFiore (2006, p. 454) reported that the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) grouped 7% of the Catholic School population as having “learning disabilities,” which may be an over-(or possibly under-) representation, since they seem to use learning disabilities as a more generic descriptor than a diagnostic category. Thus, optimistically, national statistics indicate that Catholic schools are providing services for possibly half of the percentage of students who are diagnosed with special needs.⁴

Perhaps the most accurate summary of the present level of services in Catholic schools is this: “No formalized system for students with special needs currently exists within Catholic Schools” (Bello, 2006, p. 461). Bello quoted one of the most complete surveys available, done in 2003 by the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA) of Catholic high schools in which roughly 10% of the schools responded (Bello, 2006). Of those that did affirm offering services, the schools reported that the vast majority of students whom they served were diagnosed with what are generally considered more mildly to moderately handicapping conditions. A much smaller percentage of schools (2-9%, according to Durow, 2007) offered services for students with what are generally considered to be moderately to severely handicapping conditions. A more recent survey was done by the NCEA (2014), in which 28% of the elementary schools contacted responded. They reported for the 2012-2013 school year that 69% accepted students with learning disabilities, 64% students with speech disorders, 61% with ADHD, 37% with autism,

⁴ There are also pockets of greater than the norm inclusive delivery, including St. Louis (Scanlan, 2010) and Kansas (Huppe, 2010), the Maryland/DC area (Catholic Coalition for Special Education Website), and others.

20% with Emotional/Behavioral disorders, 18% with blindness, 11% with deafness, and 1 out of 5 schools reported having programming for students who were gifted.⁵ Although 28% responded, the sample may not have been representative, so we cannot judge the generalizability of this group to all Catholic schools—they could be providing either more or fewer services. Additionally, we do not know how many students with those exceptionalities were admitted. Even in this NCEA survey (2014), which has more hard numbers than most of the literature, the intensity of services offered is unknown. For instance, in those schools reporting use of the resource room model, less than half (46%) reported staffing the room with a teacher certified in special education. The extant literature is enough to confirm that the problem (underserving children with special needs in Catholic schools) exists, but not enough to confirm the extent of the problem.

A related, and perhaps underlying problem, is that of those U.S. Catholic universities that offer degrees in education, only roughly half offer degrees in special education (Browne & Celeste, 2006). Hence, it is not surprising that Catholic school teachers feel underprepared.

What are the arguments for or against offering special education in Catholic schools?

The most common barrier to special educational services cited by administrators is funding for additional teachers, aides, therapists, renovation for accessibility, and equipment, including technology, (Bello, 2006; Durow, 2007; Scanlan, 2008; Young, 2013) while one of the major barriers reported by teachers is lack of training and prepara-

⁵ Giftedness is not considered an exceptionality under the current IDEIA. However, under some state laws, it is. Gifted children, if not given appropriate challenge, are at risk for both under-developing their potential gifts to society and, somewhat surprisingly, for dropping out of school. (Vaughn, Bos, & Schum 2013)

tion (Durow, 2007; McDonald, 2008). Psychologist William Van Ornum (2013), the father of a son with Down Syndrome, outlines both the costs associated with educating children with exceptionalities (some more than \$100,000 a year) and at the same time what he believes is a move towards more inclusion in Catholic schools in response to Church teaching. Durow (2007) summed up the main barriers to offering special educational services in Catholic schools as inadequate funding, inaccessible buildings, insufficient teacher preparation and confidence, and as a part of the problem that will be addressed in this research, "inconsistent commitment from parishes and boards" (p. 487).

The funding question, while not solved, has seen a number of partial solutions proposed. Catholic schools have funded special educational services through tuition, donations, grants, and federal funds (Bello, 2006). Parents have borne the brunt of fundraising in some cases, either by paying extra tuition to cover the cost of services (Chandler, 2010) which seems antithetical to CST, or through formation of parents' groups around the country (i.e., FIRE in Kansas, SPICE schools in Ohio and several other states, Exceptional Catholic in Minnesota, and the Catholic Coalition for Special Education in Maryland), which have raised both funds and awareness.

Several authors have done in-depth research on the legal requirements and the use of federal, state, and local funding afforded to Catholic and private schools under IDEA/IDEIA 2004, and the (Vocational) Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (sec. 504). None of the proposed solutions would fully fund special educational services for any students except those with mildly to moderately handicapping conditions⁶—but, even that would be

⁶ Scholarly and legal definitions refer to students as having disabilities, handicapping conditions, and special or exceptional needs interchangeably, as is the case here. These terms refer to students who have been diagnosed with a need that requires more services than are normally afforded to children in order to be successful in school (Turnbull et al., 2006).

a start. The NCEA (Q & A webpage, 2011), Scanlan (2009), and other advocates have identified which services are eligible for public funding through the aforementioned laws, and to what extent. However, most Catholic schools do not report using funding through IDEA or 504 plans. We can only guess that schools are either unaware of the funding, or the complexity involved in seeking the funding is too daunting.

Catholic administrators report that, aside from money, they need a blueprint for how to include children with special needs (Scanlan, 2009). While a perception may exist that there is a dearth of material available on programming, a fair number of books and articles actually propose models that Catholic schools might (and do) use to offer services to students diagnosed with disabilities which might be gathered into five broad categories:

1. *Consultant* models (Durow, 2007; Scanlan, 2008) in which Catholic schools would take advantage of consultant services offered to teachers in private schools serving children with IEPs (funded by IDEA), or children with 504 plans⁷ (funded by the Rehabilitation Act) and/or schools might hire consultants with their own funds;
2. *Collaboration* models (DeFiore, 2006; Russo et al., 2002), in which Catholic schools would band together to offer services of one type at each school (i.e., for students with learning disabilities at one school, services for children with cognitive delays at another);
3. *Teacher's Aide/Tutor* models (Crowly & Wall, 2007; Durow, 2007) that use teachers' aides or tutors trained to work individually with children diagnosed with special needs, and often make heavy use of existing technology and software;

⁷ 504 plans are part of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act, and are meant to make education accessible to all students. At the request of the parents or the school, the local school district can help to develop a plan for "reasonable" modifications to curriculum, instruction and facilities, which are less extensive than those required by IDEA.

4. *Resource Room* models (DeFiore, 2006; Durow, 2007) that follow the public school resource room model of hiring licensed special educators, often involving finding some funding through proportionate set-asides from IDEA; or,

5. *Retraining* models (Gould & Vaughn 2006; MacDonald, 2008; Scanlan, 2009; Storz & Nestor, 2007) that are based upon retraining staff to be radically inclusive through methods such as *Universal Design for Learning* (Meyer, Rose et al., 2014)⁸ and/or patterned after the program known through IDEA as Response to Intervention, or RtI.^{9 10} This type of model usually requires grant money to provide the extensive training needed.

Each model has strengths and weaknesses, and while most do not offer solutions to the funding problem, they do provide a body of theoretical blueprints, and in some cases, actual working reports from the field (Crowley, 2007; Durow, 2007) which would provide a choice of ways to successfully include children with special needs. A wealth of practitioner literature from special education practice in public schools (for instance, Frattura & Capper, 2007; Gould & Vaughn 2006; Tomlinson & McTighe, 2006; Vaughn Bos & Schumm, 2013), some of whose strategies will be discussed in Chapter 5, could be applied either directly or indirectly. In contrast with the other questions in this literature review, which tend to lack literature, the answer to this particular question points to an unexpectedly diverse body of literature.

⁸ *Universal Design for Learning* (Meyer, Rose, et al., 2014) is a method of instructional planning, modeled after universal Design in Architecture, which focuses on removing barriers to learning for all students.

⁹ RtI is a pre-referral process designed so that fewer children will be diagnosed with exceptionalities and to help more children have their needs met in the regular classroom. There are usually three progressively more intensive “tiers” which use research proven strategies tailored to specific children or children who fit a particular learning profile. (Vaughn, Bos, & Schumm, 2013)

¹⁰ This type of model is the one most strongly defended by proponents of CST (Scanlan, 2009), who believe that most pull out models are antithetical to the tenets of CST. This argument will be further explored in chapter 5.

Thus far, the literature review has concentrated, for the most part, on the arguments against special educational services. However, there have been a growing number of authors calling for special education services, with many putting forth arguments for full inclusion, based upon theological arguments (i.e. Frabutt, 2013; Long & Schuttloffel, 2006; Scanlan, 2008, 2009; Storz & Nestor, 2007). The main argument used by these authors has been based upon Catholic Social Teaching, or CST, which, in turn, is based upon Sacred Scripture, Church Teachings, and, in this case, especially upon pastoral statements and letters by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB, 1978/88). While there are other theological references, in these works, the only other theological argument of any length is Long and Schuttloffel's (2006) paper, which uses both CST and theological contemplative practice (a method of prayerful discernment) and Frabutt's 2013 book, which uses mostly CST and Sacred Scripture to make the case for inclusion. Most notably, none of the reviewed literature used liberation theologies which will provide the theological underpinning for most of this work.

Chapter 2: Love Your Neighbor as Yourself:¹¹ What Does Church Teaching Tell Us About Inclusion?

In the previous chapter, it was established that many Catholic schools are not serving children diagnosed with special educational needs. If Church teaching does not compel a more egalitarian admission system, there is no moral or theological problem--it is simply a matter of personal or corporate conscience. Therefore, in this chapter, in order to make a compelling case for inclusion of children with special education needs, I will examine official Church teaching, mainly using the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas, a Doctor of the Church. His writings are often quoted in the official letters and encyclicals of the Church hierarchy and inform Catholic Social Teaching (CST). I will briefly summarize the tenets of CST, its legitimacy of application to inclusive education in Catholic schools, and explore in greater depth the Thomistic teachings on which I base my argument, which is that there is no question about what the Church calls us to do.

Brief Summary of Catholic Social Teaching and Application to Offering Inclusive Services

The tenets of CST are radically inclusive, based largely upon Jesus' teachings about the Kingdom of Heaven (also called the Reign of God, The Reign of Heaven, the Kingdom of God, or in Greek, *Basileia*), such as the Sermon on the Mount (e.g., Matt 5:1-12) and the Last Judgment (e.g., Matt 25: 31-46). According to the U.S. Council of Catholic Bishops (Seven Themes of Catholic Social Teaching, *What We Believe* page, www.usccb.org), there are seven basic themes of CST. I would summarize them thus:

¹¹ Much of this chapter appeared as "Aquinas on Inclusion: Using the Good Doctor and Catholic Social Teaching to Build a Moral Case for Inclusion in Catholic Schools for Children with Special Needs" in the *Journal of Catholic Education*, Sept., 2014, pp. 62-78.

1. A consistent ethic of life, with a commitment to love each person (made in the image and likeness of God), at each stage of life, according to her/his human dignity;
2. The right of all to participate in family, community and social/political/religious life in order to reach the full flourishing of their humanity;
3. The duty of Catholics to seek the common good, to make sure that the “things required for decency” and basic human rights are assured to all;
4. A preferential option for the poor, based on the idea from Matthew’s gospel (Mt 25: 31-46) that we will be judged on how we treated the “least” in this world;
5. The right to work and the rights of workers to be treated with dignity, to form associations, and to enjoy wages and benefits which ensure a decent standard of living;
6. Solidarity, or the commitment to stand with all in the world for peace and justice; and
7. The stewardship of all of God’s creation.

CST is a body of teaching, which, while heavily dependent on sacred Scripture, is largely encapsulated in papal encyclicals and letters dating back to 1891 and in letters from various Catholic bishops’ conferences. Those, in turn, are based upon Scripture and magisterial teachings (those teachings by theologians of the past, including Aquinas’, which are accepted as part of Church doctrine). Although CST is a relatively large body of teaching, it is only a subset of Christian theological ethics, which also includes the work of Catholic theologians (and sometimes theologians from other faith traditions), not all of which is part of official Church teaching. In sum, CST is what we might call officially Church-sanctioned teaching on social issues.

One might ask how CST is relevant to the issue of offering inclusive services in Catholic Schools. As Brady (2008) observed in considering appropriate responses to societal problems, “Catholics have formed parallel institutions that provide services,” and “that advocate for the poor or marginalized in society” (pp. 45-46). So, if the Church creates parallel institutions (such as hospitals and schools) to meet social needs, those institutions must serve the people most in need. Simply pointing out to others the need for services, such as special education, is not enough. In the apostolic letter *Octogesima Adveniens* (1971), Pope Paul VI issued a call to action:

It is not enough to recall principles, state intentions, point to crying injustice and utter prophetic denunciations; these words will lack weight unless they are accompanied for each individual by a livelier awareness of personal responsibility and by effective action...The Church invites all Christians to take up a double task of inspiring and innovating in order to make structures evolve so as to adapt them to the real needs of today. (*Octogesima Adveniens* #48)

In that same letter, Paul VI exhorted us to honor the need in all persons for equality and participation as expressions of our God-given human dignity and freedom. “While progress has been made inscribing these two aspirations in deeds and structures, various forms of discrimination continually reappear” (Brady, 2008, p. 149). In an earlier document, *Gaudium et Spes*, (1965) which also arose from Vatican Council II, Paul VI affirmed the dignity of all persons, each of whom is created in the “image of God” (Gen. 1:27) and shares the same nature and origin.

(E)very type of discrimination, whether social or cultural...is to be overcome and eradicated as contrary to God’s will...(A)lthough rightful differences exist between men, the equal dignity of persons demands that a more humane and just condition of life be brought about. (*Gaudium et spes*, #29)

Thus, CST (particularly in its first three themes regarding the dignity of persons, the right to full participation, and the responsibility to seek the common good) is an appropriate body of teaching to reference, because special education in Catholic schools embodies a societal need for the common good (in an area where the Church has created parallel institutions), and recognition of human dignity through participation.

In order to convince those Catholics who would reject an argument from liberation theology, which I will use in later chapters, I will turn to the teaching of St. Thomas, “The Holy Doctor,” for the doctrine underlying much of CST. As I begin this process, it is important to note that while liberation theology is usually sensitive to inclusive language, biblical and doctrinal language often are not--the language of many Church documents is the language of another time and sensibility. Even in my own writing, I have used the scriptural term “the least among us” to justify inclusion. This phrase is an artifact, and by no means characterizes my view, nor should it be taken to characterize the Church’s view on those diagnosed with special needs.

To set the stage for this argument, the fact that we have exclusionary policies in many Catholic schools, whether just or not, has been established here and elsewhere. If the Catholic Church in the U.S. has created schools that are truly to call themselves Catholic, how can they discriminate against children diagnosed with special needs and remain true to Catholic Social Teaching, which supports the dignity of each person? Some of administrators’ most commonly stated reasons in the literature (see, for example, Durrow, 2007) for not offering inclusive services deal with a lack of funding for teacher training, hiring personnel, and modifying space. If the Church is called, by the principles of CST,

to follow the radically inclusive teachings of Jesus, and does not, largely on the claim that there is not enough money, can that failure to include all be justified?

Brief Exploration of Thomistic Doctrines Applied to Inclusion in Catholic Schools

In some ways, it may be a fool's errand to try to answer the question WWTDD (What would Thomas do?) in an age so far removed from his. However, in a Church that has the history--and the credence--to keep constant its underlying principles while reinterpreting them in light of "signs of the times," an educated Catholic should be able to find shared meanings that reasonable people could agree upon. Just as in any exegesis, I could be accused of either "cherry-picking" or using only obscure teachings of St. Thomas to fit my argument. However, I have made an effort here to use his thoughts on theology that are either widely agreed upon (e.g., the two great commandments), recently discussed in the literature (e.g., the common good, rightful sharing of goods) or strongly associated with him (e.g., love is an act of the will). With that, I begin with some of Thomas' writing on the greatest commandments, to love God and our neighbor, from his sermon "On Perfection of the Spiritual Life":

[T]here are two precepts of charity; one pertains to the love of God, the other to loving our neighbor. These two precepts are mutually related.... After God, we are obliged by charity to love our neighbor, to whom we are bound by special social ties, due to our common vocation to happiness. What charity obliges us to love in our neighbor is this: that together we may attain to happiness. (Aquinas, as cited in Clark, 1972, p. 501)

In this short passage, we see allusions to themes from both Aristotelian/Thomistic philosophy and Catholic Social Teaching. Thomas repeats Jesus's teaching on the two commandments that must be obeyed above all others: love of God and of neighbor. The

love of God is inexorably bound up with love of neighbor, whom we must love as ourselves. We are bound together in communion and community while here on earth. If we love God, we will act charitably towards our neighbor, and seek our neighbor's happiness as we do our own.

But what does Aquinas mean by our “common vocation to happiness?”

Happiness here does not refer to a fleeting feel-good-ism, but rather to what Aristotle called *eudaimonia* (see Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, Irwin translation, 1999), or to what is often translated as human flourishing. Until we attain the final bliss in union with God, we must be devoted to our neighbor's happiness, or fullest flourishing. This is also reflected in the second theme of CST, the allowance for full participation of people in their various communities (spiritual, social, political) to permit them to fulfill their vocation of happiness, to become their best possible selves, or to flourish. The application to inclusion here lies in Aquinas reminding us that we are responsible for the full flourishing of all. Thus, if we offer what we believe to be the best type of education to some of our children to help them to become their best selves, shouldn't participation be open to all?

Thus far, in the love of God and neighbor, Aquinas and CST bind us together on our journey to seek happiness (which we have defined as flourishing), and may call us to offer participation in inclusive services. But, while we have defined what we are seeking for ourselves and our neighbor, how are we to seek it? In his interpretation of the command to love our neighbor, what might Thomas mean by love? Often, when we think of love, many of us think of "falling in love," as in the seemingly effortless "young love" or "mother-love" which may occur without our having consciously built it. How does one

come to love a neighbor as her/himself? In one of Thomas' most profound teachings, he turns the idea of "falling" in love on its head, and teaches that often it may have to be a purposeful act. He writes that love is not always a natural occurrence, but that *love is an act of the will*: "And so love is naturally the first act of the will and of tendency, and therefore all other tending motions presuppose love as their source and root" (*Summa Theologica* I, q. 20, a. 1, c and a. 3, from Clark, 1972 p. 159). He also writes,

And whenever anyone loves another he wills good to that other. In this way he is identifying the other with himself and considering the good done to that other as done to himself. Love then is a uniting force, since it joins the other to ourselves and relates his good to our own. And likewise the divine love is a uniting force because God wills good to others. (*Summa Theologica*, q. 6, a. 1, a. 3, as cited in Clark, 1972, pp.159-60)

Love here seems to mean willing all the good to another that God would will to us, and that we would will to ourselves and our families. For those of us who come from an education or psychology background, we might relate this to the humanistic concept of unconditional positive regard. When I try to explain this concept to my student teachers, I tell them that it means loving your students on days when you don't even like them (as on the days that children are, to quote my student teachers, "getting on your last nerve"), that you must continually remind yourself to be guided by wanting what is best for them. Mother Teresa taught her sisters to see the face of Christ in everyone--therefore making them mindful that they should will the best for each human being. This echoes the first theme of CST, to recognize the divine image in each person, and treat each in a dignified manner. In making the case to offer special educational services in Catholic schools, if we are willing ourselves to love each person, to see the reflection of divinity in each person, then can we call our schools Catholic while excluding those most in need?

So far, I have interpreted the writings of Aquinas as supportive of the first two themes of Catholic Social Teaching which I believe apply to offering inclusive services in Catholic schools; the right to be treated with dignity, and the right to full participation. I have used quotations in which I have interpreted Thomas to say that in following the two great commandments (loving God and our neighbor), that we are bound together in seeking our own and our neighbors' happiness, or flourishing. The journey to seek *eudaimonia* together, enabled by love, is an act of willing the best for each person.

Several concerns might arise at this point from the reader. Thomas was writing in the 1200s when schooling was not widespread among children *without* what we call today exceptionalities, much less for those *with* exceptional needs, so any opinion we derive here is certainly extrapolation. Even if his thought would appear to side with inclusion as being the right thing to offer to students with exceptional needs, would it be good for children without special needs—or would it harm *their* ability to become their best possible selves? Couldn't we, in good conscience, as Catholics, continue to educate children without special needs in our Catholic schools, (which we offer because we believe it will bring them to their fullest human flourishing), and assign children with special needs, for the good of the majority, to public schools which are legally bound to educate them and have existing programs? Here we need to address the issues of individual human flourishing, the basic rights of all to goods and services, and the common good.

Before we turn to Thomas to address those issues, we must turn to science, in order to help us to answer the question of whether other children in Catholic schools will come to harm, or at least be prevented from reaching their full human vocation, if exceptional children take up time and resources that would otherwise go to them. This is not

an unreasonable question to ask, and research helps us to answer it, at least partially. The overwhelming body of research on inclusion thus far indicates that, overall, inclusion is *at least* not harmful, and in many cases is a positive experience for ALL students, whether or not they are diagnosed as having special needs (see, for instance, Idol, 2006; Salend & Duhaney, 1999; Staub, 2005). This does not answer the administrators' concerns of where they will get the funds to provide the services, training or personnel, but it does remove the question of whether both the individual and common good are met through inclusive practices. So, now that we have seen that, in the access to full participation, there is little likelihood of harm to the common good of students, and more probably benefit, we must explore Thomas' teaching on the distribution of goods and services:

What belongs to human law cannot abrogate what is required by natural law or divine law. The natural order is founded by divine providence; material things are ordered to the alleviation of human needs. Therefore, the division of ownership of things that proceed from human law must not interfere with the alleviation of human needs by those things. Likewise, whatever a man has in superabundance is owed of natural right to the poor for their sustenance....(B)ecause there are many who suffer need, and because they cannot all be assisted from the same source, it is entrusted to the will of the individuals to provide from their own wealth assistance to those suffering need. If, however, there is such an urgent and obvious need that there is clearly an immediate emergency for sustenance, as when any person is immediately endangered without means of alleviation, then he may legitimately take from another person's goods what he needs, either openly or secretly. Nor is this, strictly speaking, fraud or robbery. (*Summa Theologica*, II-II, q.66, a.7.c)

This is a rather long segment, and requires some exploration. The first three sentences are unequivocal: human law cannot rescind what is divinely ordered, and in the divine order, material things are meant to be used for all, for the alleviation of human need and suffering. In other words, our conscience cannot allow our responsibility to love our

neighbor by providing for their needs to be over-ridden by the fact that human law may say that we are not responsible. In the case of Catholic schools, then, the moral requirement to serve the broadest spectrum of children possible cannot be negated simply because human law (*Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act*, or IDEIA, 2004) does not compel private schools to provide services to children with special needs. The next sentence from the above passage, saying that whatever we have a “superabundance” of must be shared, might be problematic in making the moral case for inclusion. Do Catholic schools have a superabundance from which they must share?

Far from having a superabundance, some Catholic schools struggle to keep their doors open--indeed, many have closed (Cruz, 2009)--while others have fared well either because of their location in wealthier areas, or because of state programs that allow funding to follow students into private schools (Anderson, 2012). The problem here seems to be both in a definition of superabundance, and who we believe “owns” whatever abundance is to be shared.¹²

Our understanding might be helped by both the overall tone and by the remaining three sentences of the quoted passage. The challenge to us here is to change our way of thinking. As Catholics, we are called to be in both community and communion with one another, and Thomas calls us to that community here, through the tone of this passage, in a particularly radical and egalitarian way. Not only are we our brother’s keeper, but our brother or sister may rise up and take from us what is necessary to human flourishing if

¹² I do not wish to cast Catholic schools as greedy, selfish or rich. The two Catholic schools at which I taught were institutions that were run, in excellent fashion, on a shoestring, by a mission-driven, talented, and underpaid faculty and staff. In fact, according to neighborhood demographics, both schools “overserved” both poor children and children of color. Alas, the children whom we did not serve were those diagnosed with exceptional needs, for the very reason given earlier in this paper—no funds for staff training or program development—to my great regret.

we do not offer it—and in such a case, it is not even considered stealing! *So, looked at in this way, funding for Catholic schools doesn't just belong to the families enrolled in, and/or parishes which fund the schools, but to all children whose families believe that their human vocation would best be achieved through Catholic education.*

It seems especially cruel that there are families who, through their parishes, support Catholic schools which their children cannot attend because of their disabilities. Whether what we have is need, abundance or superabundance, it is to be shared by all.

The idea of sharing the bounty (or the burden) equally would seem to be affirmed in Aquinas's writing regarding the common good: "Consider now the fact that right reason points out that the common good must be preferred to private advantage and that each part of whole is by nature dedicated to the good of the whole" (Aquinas. *On the Perfection of the Religious Life*. In Clark, 1972, p. 283). What does Thomas mean by "the common good?" Entire books have been written on this subject, so I can only allude here to a basic definition grounded in Catholic doctrine. The seven basic themes of CST noted earlier are all elements of the common good; reading them gives one a picture of the society (and, perhaps, of the Kingdom of Heaven) that would be achieved through working for it. The common good is achieved if we love God and our neighbor throughout our human journey, in which we are joined with all humankind, towards full human flourishing and our eventual fulfillment in unity with God. So, we must practice virtues that lead us to act in ways that seek what is in the common good (and shun what is evil), or that promote *eudaimonia* for the many over the "private advantage" of the few. (The virtues required, and virtue ethics will be discussed in the next chapter.)

But, having made a case here that the common good is achieved only when our goods are shared, another concern for the modern reader regarding Thomas's intentions might arise. Since he indicated that we must use all *things* in common, was he referring only to physical goods, such as food and shelter, rather than services, such as education? That might be a reasonable interpretation of common good in his time. However, in the same sermon, "On Perfection of Religious Life" quoted in the paragraph above (from Clark, pp. 283-289), Thomas writes about the three degrees of perfection that are to be aspired to in brotherly love.

The first degree of perfection lies in performing corporal works of mercy—meeting the bodily needs of others as if one was meeting the needs of Jesus. "(F)or the greater the goods we bestow on our neighbor, the greater the love" (Aquinas in Clark, 1972, p. 288). This plainly refers to goods, and might entail service as well, as in Thomas' reference in this sermon to the final judgment in Matt. 25: 31-46. The second degree of perfection requires meeting the spiritual needs of people but on the "natural plane." This would be rightly characterized as service, as Thomas actually gives the example of "teaching the ignorant." The third and highest degree of perfection in brotherly love is found in those "who bestow spiritual and supernatural gifts upon their neighbor, such as teaching them about God and the things of God" (Aquinas in Clark, 1972, p. 289). Therefore, the extension of Thomas' admonition to give to each what is needed to live decently and to flourish, beyond including material goods, to also include services such as education, is justified.

The purpose of this chapter has been to reframe the way that those who run Catholic schools approach what can and cannot be offered to students. If the moral argument

to offer inclusive services to children diagnosed with disabilities is accepted, many new questions are raised. Who is responsible for inclusion or exclusion? How inclusive can the services be—in other words, will all children be served, will most be served with the rest in public schools, or might there be a consortium or system of Catholic schools to offer a continuum of services? What are the practicalities, and what are the best practices—in other words, how would it work (see Scanlan, 2009)? If the moral case to offer inclusive services is not accepted, are there any implications for those “choice” program schools which accept tax-payer money to cover part or all of a student’s Catholic education? ¹³ If we cannot serve all children in our schools, is Catholic schooling the most effective way to catechize children in the faith and to help them become their best possible selves? While I will address some of those concerns in the next chapters, there must be ongoing dialog regarding these questions.

For now, the teachings of St. Thomas cited here and the seven basic tenets of Catholic Social Teaching both strongly support a moral mandate for offering inclusive services in Catholic schools. Remembering those with whom Jesus associated while on earth, the teachings of Aquinas and CST would lead us to envision our Catholic schools populated with those whom others might consider outcasts, those whom He loved, who would necessarily including children diagnosed with special needs. Now, just as with building the Kingdom of Heaven, all we have to do is make it happen.

¹³ As we discuss to whom we should offer a Catholic education, it is important to note that there are even more discussions which must take place (who should pay for Catholic schooling, the role of non-Catholic students, etc.) but I leave that to others. Rather, for the purposes at hand, I accept Catholic Schooling as it exists, and have taken my argument from that point of view.

Chapter 3: Look At Those with Whom He Eats: Who is Responsible for Exclusion, and Are Their Actions Just?

By whom, and on what basis, is the decision made to exclude children with disabilities from attending some Catholic schools? In Chapter 2, a case was made for a moral mandate, based upon Church teaching, for Catholic schools to provide inclusive services. However, as was pointed out in Chapter 1, at best, Catholic schools are educating no more than half the percentage of children diagnosed with disabilities than are public schools. Where does the breakdown occur between doctrine and follow-through? The decision to exclude children with disabilities from many Catholic schools, although a structural and systemic problem, is also an agential problem--some *person* or *persons* are making the decision. It does little good to decry an injustice for which no one is accountable. How might looking at one pillar of hermeneutical interpretation, the real, lived experience of children with disabilities, influence ethical decision-making?

This chapter will address the question: Does the Church, through its schools in the U.S., act virtuously in regard to children with disabilities? The question is meant to determine if there is injustice being done, and, if so, who has the responsibility for right actions. In order to appeal to a wide audience, the question will be examined using the language of the disability rights movement, disability liberation theology and virtue ethics, all of which give a privileged place to the experience of persons from marginalized groups who may not otherwise be heard.

Bernard Brady (2008, p. 18) explains the need to use different forms of moral reasoning for different audiences who might be influenced by different types of arguments. For example, arguments based on the Bible may appeal to Christians; Church tradition

often appeals to Catholics; philosophy (especially moral reason) can appeal to people of various faith backgrounds; and human experience usually appeals to all people of good will. Brady writes that Catholic moral discourse often relies on narrative taken from lived experience, prophetic voices, and ethical arguments (2008, p. 19), all of which will be used here. These ideologies do overlap, particularly in their interest in epistemology, use of the minority group paradigm, and view from “below” when dealing with power structures. All three lenses will help us to focus on how we talk to, and about, persons with disabilities, and how we can listen justly. Virtue ethics is particularly useful in that it gives us a framework to assign responsibility rather than merely to teach.

As a way of presenting how Church and society treat individuals and groups who are marginalized, the first part of this chapter will briefly explain elements of the disability rights movement and liberatory theology for persons with disabilities, and will be based mainly upon the work of Nancy Eiesland, author of *The Disabled God: Toward a Liberatory Theology of the Disability* (1994). The second part of this chapter will outline the main ideas of Miranda Fricker (Fricker, 2007), whose unique theory of epistemic injustice provides a new way to view what the Church calls “structural sin.” This chapter will also present real life examples that seem to be representative of Fricker’s theory. The third part of the chapter will examine the question of U.S. Catholic schools’ possible justice or injustice toward children with disabilities, using the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Pastoral Letter on Persons with Disabilities (USCCB, 1978/88) as the main teaching document, along with other Church teachings and communications from the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA). The last part of the chapter, will apply Fricker’s virtue ethics. If it appears that there is no injustice, either the issue

must be looked at in a new way or Catholic schools may continue their individual practices in good conscience. However, if injustice is found, a proposal will be made to take a first step of Fricker's "virtuous hearing" as a way to include the voice of the disabled regarding who is allowed to attend Catholic schools, and to act justly toward them and their families.

Disability Rights and Liberatory Theology of Disability

The focus of liberation theology is not only the eternal salvation of souls, but also the possibility for socio-political justice for marginalized, embodied souls while on earth. The Book of Exodus from the Old Testament, and the Gospel teachings about the already-but-not-yet Kingdom of Heaven are central to liberation. These theologies have many forms and rely heavily on Vatican II teachings that stress human dignity, enshrined by humans being made in the *imago Dei*, and by the Incarnation of Jesus. In each of the liberation theologies, we are called to live out the Beatitudes.

One of those theologies, disability liberation theology, has made the Church more aware of those formerly hidden in shadows. Although people with disabilities (or as some self-advocates prefer to be called, "differently-abled," or "persons with impairments") are still marginalized in the Church and in society, there is a growing call for full inclusion, no matter where our bodies fall on the abled-disabled continuum. Nancy Eiesland (1994) describes the accomplishments of the disability rights movement and proposes that Christianity accept a liberationist theology in which those with disabilities identify with the broken Body of Christ before and during crucifixion. In the introduction to Eiesland's work, theologian Rebecca S. Chopp writes:

Eiesland identifies her work as a liberation theology. Like other liberation theologies, her work focuses on the voices of persons with disabilities, on oppressive structures and beliefs, and on fashioning new images and practices...Eiesland creates new narrative textures that name the possibilities of transformation in the fundamental symbol of the Disabled God and through a new construction of eucharist. (Eiesland, 1994, pp. 9-10)

Eiesland says of a liberation theology centered on a disabled God:

In this project, the historical moment of remembrance is embodied in Jesus Christ, the disabled God, present in resurrection and in the church and broken anew at each eucharistic reenactment...The dissonance raised by the nonacceptance of persons with disabilities and the acceptance of grace through Christ's broken body necessitates that the church find new ways of interpreting disability. (Eiesland, 1994, p. 23)

Eiesland builds on the work of the disabilities rights movement which rejected the view of disabilities as a medical problem to be cured. In the past, if the disability could not be "cured," the focus was on teaching the disabled person to adapt to the dominant society. The movement won legislative victories partly due to its ability to change the way people with disabilities were perceived by society. For instance, at one time, left-handedness was thought to be abnormal, dysfunctional, and even evil, and is now just considered different than the dominant right-handedness. Similarly, *disabled* people became *people* with disabilities, differing from the mainstream in abilities but people who had civil rights such as access and participation *just like other people*. Part of what this movement has done for both the disabled and fully abled is to give us language that is non-demeaning and to define words that have been used interchangeably but should not be. For instance,

'Impairment' refers to an abnormality or loss of physiological form or function. 'Disability' describes the consequence of impairment that is an inability to perform some task or activity considered necessary... 'Handicap,' on the other hand,

generally denotes a social disadvantage that results from an impairment or disability. Thus, an impairment does not necessarily result in a disability and a disability need not be a handicap, so defined. (Eiesland, 1994, p. 27)

The foci of the movement have generally been independence and self-advocacy, although problems with these foci will be discussed later. Eiesland finds the “disabled God” through Jesus’ torture, disfigurement, and death, and through the stories that, after he had risen, he still carried his scars with him (John 20:20). Eiesland challenges Christianity, which has often treated those with disabilities as objects of pity, to treat them as what they are, the Body of Christ.

People with disabilities will accept no less than the church’s acknowledgement of us as historical actors and theological subjects and its active engagement in eliminating stigmatizing social practices and theological orientations from its midst. (1994, p. 67)

Eiesland’s book and her work since, including the 1998 book she edited with Don E. Saliers, *Human Disability and the Service of God*, have been ground-breaking in calling churches to task for their exclusion, whether through sins of omission such as not making buildings accessible, or commission such as actively excluding those with disabilities from leadership, especially from clerical roles. As with other liberatory theologies, the viewpoint is not from the mainstream but from the margins. Eiesland, and many others in the disability rights movement and disability liberation theology view persons with disabilities as a minority¹⁴ group. Using the minority group model, those with disabilities were able to achieve civil rights protections. It is instructive to examine the

¹⁴ While some may view the use of the term minority as pejorative, I am using Eiesland’s language here, and it is neither her intention nor mine that it should be construed as such.

Church's movement, or lack of it, and history with other minority groups, because U.S. society has sometimes led as the Church followed in allowing full membership.

The minority group paradigm relies on the definition of a minority group as a 'group of people, who because of their physical or cultural characteristics, are singled out from others in the society in which they live for differential and unequal treatment, and who therefore regard themselves as objects of collective discrimination.' (Eiesland, 1994, p. 63)

This is unfortunate, in Eiesland's opinion:

On the whole, denominational support for this social movement has lagged far behind that given to the movements of women and African Americans.... Many religious bodies have continued to think of, and act as if access for people with disabilities is a matter of benevolence and goodwill rather than a prerequisite for equality and the foundation on which the church as a model of justice must rest. (Eiesland, 1994, p. 67)

When the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was passed in 1990, a number of religious organizations fought government jurisdiction over their buildings, citing financial hardship and separation of church and state, and were successful in avoiding mandated changes (Eiesland & Saliers, 1998, p. 293). Mary Jane Owen, executive director of the National Catholic Office for Persons with Disabilities (NCPD), said, "If bars are more accessible than altars, or theaters more welcoming than Churches, more is the shame for us" (Eiesland & Saliers, 1998, p. 293).

Theologian Hans Reinders (2008) looks at ways persons with profound disabilities, as opposed to those with mild to moderate disabilities, are served, or not served, by the disability rights movement. The category of profound disabilities has numerous definitions that are somewhat in flux. The definition used here of persons with "profound" disabilities applies to those individuals who, due to severe and/or multiple physically and/or psychologically disabling conditions, have difficulty communicating their needs to

others and are unable to meet their basic needs themselves. Reinders questions the benefit to this group of people, noting that the focus of disability rights is mainly to allow people to participate in activities they *choose* that are open to the partially- or fully-abled. This view presupposes intellectual agency in making one's choices known. His critique may be a bit harsh, because disability rights is a socio-political movement that does not purport to be a theology, yet his point is valid in that the movement tends to address the needs of people only above a certain level of demonstrable intellectual capacity--and therein lies part of the problem.

Self-advocates are the vanguard of the movement, but, of course, the limitation is in the title. Self-advocates must have the capacity to advocate for themselves. A writer with disabilities has a natural place of privilege when writing regarding the physical, spiritual, psycho-social, and psycho-sexual needs of those with disabilities. However, because our schemas (Piaget, 1958) are somewhat constrained by the limits of our own experience, those whose disabilities allow them to act as their own agents cannot fully represent the viewpoint or lived experience of those with handicapping conditions so profound that they cannot make their needs known linguistically.

Reinders and Molly Haslam (2012) are among only a handful of writers who have attempted to look at Christian anthropology through a lens other than one based on self-agency or capacities. Both writers are correct in their critiques of the limitations of the disability rights movement in that it centers on "choices." However, there has been objective good accomplished, even if we only look at the most basic physical changes that have been made to buildings covered by disability law, which, unfortunately, excludes churches and religious schools. In places where persons with profound disabilities live

(private homes, group homes, or institutions) or travel to (hospitals, clinics, or schools) there has at least been improved ease of movement. And, there has been even more benefit to those who have less serious disabilities in educational and employment opportunities. Additionally, the legislation for which the movement was partly responsible, the ADA and the Individuals with Disabilities Education (Improvement) Act, commonly known as IDEA, made it mandatory for public schools to accept and accommodate *all* children, no matter how serious their disabilities might be. Because the laws do not cover religious schools, and because those schools have not seen inclusion of students with disabilities as a moral mandate, there is no such “zero reject” policy for most Catholic schools in the U.S.

Reinders makes a much stronger point in agreeing with Mary Jo Iozzio (2009), Margaret Farley (2002), Susan Ross (2012), Haslam (2012), and others who argue that we should not assume, as is current practice in most schools, that independence is at the top of the list of wishes and hopes for those who cannot make all of their needs known. Additionally, while the research cited in Chapter 2 shows the beneficial effects of inclusion to most or all children, these thinkers remind us that children with special needs do not have to “earn” their place by being an example of patient suffering or as the trigger for kindness from non-disabled children. They “earn” their spot by being born in the *imago Dei* and having that re-affirmed through the Incarnation at their baptism. They “earn” it by simply abiding in God’s love. Although the case is made here that inclusion *is* beneficial to children without disabilities, Christian anthropology tells us that it is not a requirement for entry into schools, churches, or society.

As we all do, Eiesland writes from her own perspective and has the capacity to make her needs known. Eiesland advocates for radical love and acceptance here on earth, as it will be in heaven. But, to hear from an advocate whose voice was not heard, or understood, for most of his first 18 years, we can look to the Irish writer Christy Brown (1932-1981). Brown came into the world the hard way, very nearly dying and taking his mother with him. However, they both lived to go home and join a family that had thirteen children live past early infancy. Christy seems to have had cerebral palsy, probably caused by a lack of oxygen during childbirth. He was part of a loving family, yet apart; baptized in the Church, yet isolated from the Church and school communities. In his autobiography, *My Left Foot*, he remembers being aware that his status as a person was doubted:

Most every doctor who examined me labeled me a very interesting but also hopeless case. Many told mother very gently that I was mentally defective and would remain so. That was a hard blow for a young mother....They assured her that nothing could be done for me. She refused to accept this truth, the inevitable truth—as it seemed—that I was beyond cure, beyond saving, even beyond hope. She could not and would not believe I was an imbecile...She had nothing in the world to go by, not a scrap of evidence to support her conviction that, though my body was crippled, my mind was not....Finding that the doctors could not help in any way beyond telling her not to place her trust in me, or, in other words, to forget I was a human creature, rather to regard me as just something to be fed and washed and then put away again, mother decided then and there to take matters into her own hands. I was *her* child. No matter how dull and incapable I might grow up to be, she was determined to treat me on the same plane as the others, and not as the “queer one” in the back room who was never spoken of when there were visitors present. (Brown, 1996, pp. 10-11)

With the exception of his left foot, Brown had little voluntary control of his body. He learned to scoot across the floor of the family’s home on his bottom, and was able to make grunts, which eventually turned into a few functional words that only those in his family could understand. If our definition of what it means to be human through

the lens of Christian anthropology was based only on demonstrable agency or rationality, at this point in Christy's life he would not have met the criteria to be considered human. Therefore, a definition of humans as unique due to their desire for relationality with God, God's desire for us, and our relationality or solidarity with one another is more Catholic both with a capital "C" and a small "c." Christy could not attend mass, but rather listened on the radio, and he did not fully feel the welcome of the Church until he went to Lourdes, which he described as the most beautiful moment of his life:

I saw that, far from being alone and isolated as I thought myself to be, I was merely one of a brotherhood of suffering that stretched over the whole globe. I remembered the courage and perseverance that shone in the faces of the afflicted people who came from all parts of the world to hope and pray at the feet of the Virgin in the Grotto. There I had seen the story of my own life reflected in the eyes of those I had prayed with, those men and women who spoke different tongues and who lived according to different ideals, but who were now made all brothers and sisters, all part of one family, by right of a common heritage of pain. No one thought of anyone else as a 'foreigner' in that holy little village; all the barriers that separate single persons and whole nations from one another were broken down and burned away by the common need for understanding and communication which we all felt and which suffering alone could have inspired. (Brown, 1996, p. 102)

Eventually, Christy became able, first through mastering writing with his left foot, and then through therapy, to communicate his wishes and needs. He became a patient, a student, and finally a helper of younger children at a special clinic. The clinic included a school—something, like the mass, in which he had never before been included:

In the schoolroom, the more backward of the children, those who have never been able to attend normal schools with their sisters and brothers because of their 'difference', are given an ordinary primary education.... Thus one more gulf is bridged, one more link is forged in helping these children to establish ordinary contact, with ordinary people. (Brown, 1954/1996, p. 154)

The starting point of most liberation theologies would be that of Eiesland, in which the marginalized group, along with those in the faith community who wish to accompany them, use scripture to advocate for themselves. How do we implement a liberation theology for people with disabilities based on membership in the Body of Christ, on their very humanity, rather than on the judgment of the world as to what their gifts are or are not? Christy Brown's (1954/1996) desire for "ordinary contact with ordinary people" would seem to be an argument for inclusion of children with special needs in Catholic schools. But how do we allow these children's voices to be heard, including those who cannot speak for themselves?

Brief Summary of Fricker's Theory of Testimonial and Hermeneutical Injustice

Miranda Fricker's theory, as outlined in her book, *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing* (2007), was a philosophical response to the influence of positivist linguistic analysis. She and other critics thought the positivist philosophy lacked agential responsibility for injustice and neglected the study of ethics. Her theory is aimed at making epistemology more relevant to current experience. Fricker says, "[E]pistemology is gradually being broadened...to cultivate a closer relationship to actual epistemic practices...when we take our primary subject matter to be those human practices through which knowledge is gained, or indeed lost" (Fricker, 2007, p. vii). So, while not directly tied to theological problems, her work is applicable in terms of how knowledge is shared, understood, built, and conveyed. One of the foci of Catholic theological ethics is experience. Therefore, Fricker's focus on the injustices in socially situated, lived experience would include the Church and its schools as places where the study of ecclesial knowledge, or ecclesial epistemology, would occur.

The culpability for some of Fricker's injustice is largely agential, meaning that the injustice is committed by one person to another, as is the case in *testimonial injustice*. One person disbelieves another in testimonial injustice because “prejudice causes a hearer to give a deflated level of credibility to a speaker’s word” (Fricker, 2001, p. 1). Other injustices are largely structural, in which society as a whole (or a representative or segment of that society in power) commits the injustice. In *hermeneutical injustice*, people are disbelieved because “...a gap in collective interpretive resources puts someone at an unfair disadvantage when it comes to making sense of their social experiences” (Fricker, 2007, p.1). In other words, this sort of injustice often occurs in closely held power structures such as the Church’s hierarchy, or with a school board and principal, where a lack of input from marginalized groups results in neither group having the language to serve as a basis for belief in, or understanding of, the experiences of the marginalized group. We are all epistemologically blocked.

Fricker’s use of virtue ethics, with a strong foundation in Aristotle, gives us a way to imagine how individuals may identify and overcome testimonial (personal) or hermeneutical (structural) injustice, to hear people with disabilities virtuously, and to take action based upon what they hear. Spohn (1997, p. 107) also explains the importance of using virtue ethics as a tool to identify agents and move them to action:

Virtue ethics focuses on a pattern of dispositions...that guide the moral agent to recognize action which is consonant with the biblical exemplar. Those same dispositions provide the motivation to carry the discernment into action...Affectivity deteriorates into sentiment when it shuns action. As Oscar Wilde noted, ‘A sentimentalist is one who desires to have the luxury of an emotion without paying for it.’

Simply stated, testimonial injustice occurs whenever prejudice on the hearer's part, caused by the hearer's stereotypic judgment of the speaker (or "knower" in Fricker's terminology), causes the *hearer* to give the *knower* less credibility. Therefore, the knower is not "heard," resulting in the primary harm of being unjustly disbelieved, thus being devalued as a person. Secondary harm occurs both in whatever the practical, immediate consequences of being disbelieved, discredited, or disregarded might be (i.e., being denied access to a Catholic education), and also epistemologically, in being prematurely removed from further dialog and access to the capacity to engage in further dialog.

Fricker uses the example of the trial in Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960) to explain testimonial injustice. In that trial, a black man, Tom Robinson, is wrongly accused and convicted of the sexual assault of a white woman, in spite of facts presented that proved that he could not have committed the crime. So, despite physical evidence to the contrary, because Robinson was black, his testimony was judged by the white jurors to be either not credible or untrustworthy, and he was found guilty of a crime he did not commit. The primary harm done was that he was not "heard" as any human being should be. The secondary harm in this case was much greater--he was murdered by vigilantes before he could appeal his sentence.

To illustrate hermeneutical injustice, Fricker uses the experience of sexual harassment. Prior to the mid-to-late twentieth century, power was closely held by white men in Europe and America, with limited input from women in the realms of academia, law, religion, and politics. Because there were few women in the power structure, they were hermeneutically marginalized, unable to participate equally in the practices through which social meanings are generated and shared. Because men were only familiar with what we

now call sexual harassment from their own point of view, it was inadequately conceptualized in society and therefore unable to be fully shared and understood. In addition, because of prevailing attitudes of guilt and shame, women did not readily discuss harassment, further hampering development of the concept. The harm done to many women, beyond being disbelieved or misunderstood, was both physical and psychological. It was not until consciousness-raising groups were initiated during the women's movement of the 1960s and 1970s that women began to discuss this phenomenon, and to name it.

Although generally unnoticed, in the case of hermeneutical injustice, not only is there situated hermeneutical inequality (in which members of the marginalized group are unfairly disadvantaged in rendering themselves intelligible), but there is also harm done to the hearer. The *hearer* in this particular case refers to Catholic schools and the *knower* to children with disabilities and their families. The hearer, who is part of the dominant group, also suffers from hermeneutical lacuna and cognitive disablement, or the inability to understand certain concepts for which we lack shared vocabulary.

In this case, children without handicapping conditions would be deprived of the language needed to understand children with disabilities and be therefore deprived of the gifts and graces of those children. Although this chapter will discuss the application of virtue ethics to this idea in a philosophical sense and the harm to full communion in a theological sense later, for now understand that in hermeneutical injustice, the common good is thwarted, dignity is not accorded, the truth is not understood, and justice is not served. With that as the context of testimonial and hermeneutical injustice, we temporarily leave Fricker's theory to examine, as a case in point, the history of the creation of the

pastoral letter on the role of disabled in the Church, which is one of the main teaching documents from the U.S. bishops regarding Catholic schools.

Official Teaching Regarding Students with Disabilities and U.S. Catholic Schools

As mentioned In Chapter 2, Church documents that arose from Vatican II, *Octogesima Adveniens*, and *Gaudium et Spes*, exhorted Catholic individuals and Church institutions to honor the need in all persons for equality and participation as expressions of our God-given human dignity. The documents also called for every type of discrimination to be eradicated (Brady, 2008). The Church's teaching on these subjects has been clear and consistent. Why, then, is the teaching not being followed in many Catholic schools? Part of the answer may lie in the chain-of-command and governance structures. While Catholic schools are expected to follow Church teaching, most of these schools in the U. S. are overseen by a local archdiocese or diocese and/or a religious order rather than by the Vatican or the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. However, the main governance usually occurs at the local parish or school level, with most day-to-day decisions being made by school principals. But, assuming that those in charge of schools are familiar with general Church teachings, where do they look for direction in moral decision-making?

The Catholic teaching authority in this nation comes from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). The bishops issued the *Pastoral Statement of U.S. Catholic Bishops on Handicapped People* in 1978, addressing the dignity, needs, and rights of persons with disabilities. The teaching was reaffirmed in 1988 and published as the *Pastoral Statement of U.S. Catholic Bishops on Persons with Disabilities*.

The language in the original version, while sensitive at the time, was changed from “*Handicapped*” to “*Disabilities*” in 1988 to reflect more current preference in the community of disabled persons (USCCB, 1978/88). In that statement, the bishops committed themselves “to understand more deeply the pain and the potential of our neighbors who are blind, deaf, mentally disabled, emotionally impaired; who have special learning problems; or who suffer from single or multiple disabilities” (USCCB, 1988, p. 1).

The statement is a call to action. For example, page 5 calls for fuller integration in the Church and society so that we may “discover the Kingdom of God in our midst.” It also seeks an end to the sinfulness of prejudice and discrimination, both institutional and individual. Perhaps more surprisingly, it is also an apology: “...at times, we have responded to the needs of some of our disabled people only after circumstances or public opinion have compelled us to do so” (USCCB, p. 5). The letter calls on Catholics to support the rights of the disabled, including “rights that enable the disabled individual to achieve the fullest measure of personal development of which he or she is capable. These include the right to equal opportunity in education...” (USCCB p. 8). It calls on the faithful to actively work for justice for the disabled, and, “...moreover, individuals and organizations at every level within the Church should minister to persons with disabilities by serving their personal and social needs” (USCCB, p. 9). It recognized those with disabilities as a marginalized group, before use of the term was widespread, and as the kind of people whose company Jesus sought. “The Church finds its true identity when it fully integrates itself with these ‘marginal’ people, including those who suffer from physical and psychological disabilities” (USCCB, p. 10).

The statement continues by clearly stating that “mere cost must never be the exclusive consideration” in providing accessibility (USCCB, p. 15). Lest there be any question regarding whether they are addressing schools, the bishops write, “Catholic elementary and secondary school teachers could be provided in-service training in how best to integrate disabled students into programs of regular education” (USCCB, p.29). They urge the creation of liaisons between facilities for persons with disabilities “under Catholic auspices (e.g., special, residential, and day schools; psychological services...); and Catholic school programs” to lay a structural foundation for the integration, where feasible, of children with disabilities into regular education programs (USCCB, p. 22).

When reading the pastoral teaching on disabilities, neither the language nor the policies called for are demeaning or prejudicial—in fact, the document was ahead of its time, and clear in its message of calling for inclusion as the standard position for Catholic schools. An implementation guide was published to accompany the letter in 2003 by the NCPD entitled *Opening Doors to Welcome and Justice* which included not only many pragmatic strategies for schools and parishes, but also the following:

Catholic education has a long history of taking into the learning environment the rich diversity within a neighborhood. The contemporary idea that students with disabilities cannot fit into our excellent Catholic Schools seems strangely alien to this sense of unity in Christ...A commitment to the vision of inclusive education is needed to successfully educate all students. Vision and commitment are the keys. (USCCB, 2003, p. 38)

Using Fricker’s Model to Assign Responsibility and as a Method for Change

That we have exclusionary policies in many Catholic schools has been documented. If Catholic archdioceses, dioceses, parishes, and religious orders in the United

States have created schools that can truly call themselves Catholic, can they exclude children diagnosed with special needs and remain just in light of Catholic teaching?

One way to help us determine whether actions are just or unjust is through the use of virtue ethics. In examining whether an injustice has been committed through this lens, a definition of terms is necessary. Virtue ethics, as understood here, refers to a form of ethics that emphasizes the development of virtues, particularly prudence, in an attempt to discern what attitudes and actions will bring about human flourishing and the common good. Both the common good and human flourishing are the result of just actions determined by right reason, and require recognition of the dignity in each person. Before addressing the question of injustice, the assumption is made here that Fricker's ethical theory, although secular, is compatible with the Church's long embrace of Aristotelian/Thomistic teaching on virtue and ethics. This case will be centered on the cardinal virtues of prudence, perhaps more readily understandable in another common translation, practical wisdom, and justice. From the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (retrieved from the Vatican website) come these definitions of terms:

A virtue is an habitual and firm disposition to do the good. (1803)... *Prudence* is the virtue that disposes practical reason to discern our true good in every circumstance and to choose the right means of achieving it...Prudence is "right reason in action," writes St. Thomas Aquinas, following Aristotle (1806) *Justice* is the moral virtue that consists in the constant and firm will to give their due to God and neighbor...Justice toward men disposes one to respect the rights of each and to establish in human relationships the harmony that promotes equity with regard to persons and to the common good. (1807)

If we begin by looking at the language used and the actions called for in this bishops' letter, the actions appear just, in that they are sensitive to those that the document addresses, insist on dignified treatment and participation for all, and call for inclusion as

part of the common good. One sometimes inadvertent reason that discrimination occurs in structures such as the Church is that marginalized groups, such as those with disabilities, are not always among those consulted when policies are established. Were there more prudent practices to include the voices of the disabled used when writing this document, or do the bishops always write in the same manner?

Four other USCCB pastorals were issued during the same general time period. Two of the documents, one on war and peace, *The Challenge of Peace* (USCCB 1983) and the other on the economy, *Economic Justice for All* (USCCB, 1986) used, aside from the bishops themselves, experts in the social sciences. The background knowledge of these experts was reflected in the documents' sensitivity to the victims of war and poverty. Two other letters, *Brothers and Sisters to Us* and *Strengthening the Bonds of Peace* were written regarding marginalized groups. The first of these in 1979 addressed race, especially focusing on African Americans. The second, regarding women in the Church, was begun in 1972, and published in 1994. Neither of these letters as published made more than nominal use of social scientists, or, perhaps more importantly, members of the marginalized groups (Carlson, 2016; Massingale, 2010). The language used was less than sensitive, reflecting the lack of writers from those two groups. In contrast to the letters regarding the aforementioned groups, the language in the disabilities letter is remarkable. It is often difficult to find the names of the authors of the letters, since they are usually signed as written by the USCCB. After some investigation, it was discovered that the main staff writer for the document was Dave Byers, Ph.D.¹⁵ Byers was born with spina

¹⁵ I am very grateful to Dr. Byers, not only for his advocacy and original work on the pastoral, but for the background information provided in several e-mail correspondences in January of 2015.

bifida, so he was speaking not only from the perspective of a writer using Church teaching, but also from his lived experience, so that those reading the document could *hear* him justly, to use Fricker's terms.

Aside from Byers, several other staff writers were either experts in the field of disabilities and/or had disabilities themselves. Thus, a key tenet of Fricker's theory is demonstrated—when members of a marginalized group are welcomed as both knowers *and* hearers, we can understand one another better and propose solutions that support both individual dignity and the common good. Fricker calls this “virtuous hearing.” If we apply the “look-judge-act” model, the bishops looked prudently at an existing situation with fresh eyes and heard the knowers, those with disabilities and their advocates with prudence. Then, they judged the actions of the schools, and found them wanting. They acted justly by releasing a statement directing schools to begin admitting students with exceptionalities. So, it appears that the USCCB listened virtuously to the voices of the disabled, such as their writers, and asked Catholic schools to do the same.

And, yet, at the local level, children with disabilities are often not admitted to their parish school. The literature suggests that many people believe that this policy is in the best interest of the child (Carlson 2014; Durow, 2007; Young, 2013) in that the schools do not have the resources or the staff training to provide what these students need. Yet, this sort of thinking, most probably done by people with good intentions, has brought the discussion of inclusion to a stalemate. The voices of children diagnosed with special needs and their advocates may not have been heard or understood when those local policies were formed. People who make decisions *for* members of marginalized

groups, thinking they know what is best without wide consultation with group members or advocates, may do real damage, as in the following example.

Although this incident occurred in a public school, it is not difficult to analogize what exclusion means to children in other situations. Identity prejudice on the part of the hearer, in this case, the teacher, makes testimonial injustice possible. And, stereotype threat, in which the student is aware that he/she is a member of a group that performs better or more poorly on certain measures, and thus performs that way, may be exacerbated by institutional hermeneutical injustice. When that occurs, the knower is denied the deposit of knowledge and the very language to express him/herself that might make him/her more credible as a knower. Fricker says, “[I]t is not hard to imagine how, in general, prejudicial stereotypes might help to determine teacher expectation in a negative and unjust manner” (Fricker, 2007, p. 57).

Fricker agrees with Claude Steele’s idea of stereotype threat, which she also refers to as “negative identity-prejudicial stereotype” (2007, p. 57). Although the length of this chapter prevents a full explanation of Steele’s concept (2010), for our purposes, Fricker says that Steele’s concept of stereotype threat is just one part of the complex set of assumptions that happen between people, perhaps without our being fully aware, when we try to judge the credibility and sincerity of speakers and hearers.

The following example of apparent testimonial injustice was drawn from a case study done recently by a Marquette University student in her field placement, a second grade class for children who were diagnosed as being deaf or hard of hearing. In this class, the students were at various levels of proficiency in “total communication,” which is the use of both speech (with lip reading) and American Sign Language. According to

reports from the field student throughout the semester, the teacher actively discouraged signing and encouraged speaking. The two eight- year-old boys in this case study were given the direction by the field student to “Draw a person,” as is common in using human figure drawings (HFD) for diagnostic purposes (Koppitz, 1968, p. 5). Here are the drawings the boys produced (see *Figure 1* and *Figure 2*, unpublished drawings).

Figure Drawing 1



Figure Drawing 2



Figure 1, reported to be a self-portrait, was drawn by a boy with fluent signing skills, which he practiced at home with his parents. Although he had some articulation difficulties common to children with hearing loss, his speech was readily intelligible. The field student reported that she witnessed many positive interactions between this boy and the classroom teacher. Note in his drawing that he is smiling, and that his right hand, which was his signing hand, has extra fingers.

Figure 2, also reported to be a self-portrait, was done by a boy whose speech was almost unintelligible. Although the reasons for the speech problems were unknown to the university student, numerous possible explanations include; severity of hearing loss,

lack of early intervention, poor quality of therapy, obstacles obtaining early therapy, parental neglect, etc. The university field student reported that she and the boy could communicate well using sign language, in which he was fluent. The only times she saw him smile were the times that they signed together.

Sadly, for unknown reasons, his family did not know sign language, and the classroom teacher, we can only guess, was either not proficient or had a strong ideological preference for speaking. So, the field student was one of the few people with whom the boy could practice his signing. With most other people, he gestured to make his needs known. The field student, on more than one occasion, witnessed the boy's teacher shout at him that if he wanted to answer he had to learn to speak, which usually brought him to tears. As the semester went on, she reported that the boy spent more and more time uninvolved with the class, often with his head down.

Notice that *Figure 2* has no mouth. Also, although he has drawn a partial right hand, his left hand, which was the hand he signed with, is completely missing. In case he had forgotten to finish the drawing, the field student did use the prompt, which is allowed, "Did you draw a WHOLE person?" to which he answered "Yes." Without drawing too many psychoanalytic conclusions, we can see this as a picture of the harm done in a case of testimonial injustice. Because he was not "heard" using sign language, his mouth, already mostly useless in speech, disappeared entirely in the drawing, along with his only other means of communication, his signing hand. It is no surprise, then, that the university student reported the boy's gradual withdrawal from attempts at communication

over the semester. And, once he became unengaged, he was removed from the very educational system that should have brought him into closer communication with society, leaving him epistemologically marginalized.

We might ask, as a young doctoral student colleague did, if this rises to the level of injustice, or if it is simply one of the very sad vicissitudes of life? And, if it is an injustice, whom should we hold responsible? While the emphasis of this chapter is on a possible remedy to injustices it is important to explore Fricker's concepts of injustice to apply the remedy correctly. This case, if we are to follow Fricker's theory, would involve both testimonial and hermeneutical injustice.

The doctoral colleague offered that the teacher of the deaf might not have known sign language, and/or could have thought that she was serving the boy's best interest in trying to get him to speak. In the first case, the teacher could have been kind to the boy, told him that she didn't sign well, and made it her mission in life to learn to sign so that she could give this boy and others a chance to be heard. It may seem like a lot to ask of the teacher, but this *was* a class for deaf children. In the second case, if the teacher felt that speech would be better heard by society, she could have brought the boy closer to recognizable speech with love, patience, and rudimentary signing rather than by yelling at or ignoring the child.

In addition, the boy's school, and society in general, marginalize persons with disabilities whether consciously or unconsciously (Eiesland & Saliers, 1998; Reinders, 2008). Fricker's hermeneutical injustice occurs because those in power structure our collective social understanding. This may lead to cognitive disablement of the knower, both because society may lack a recognition of an experience, such as deafness or disability,

and the language or communicative tools to describe the experience. Because of this gap in understanding and the failure of the dominant culture to remove obstacles and/or build bridges, being part of that marginalized group may lead to epistemological harm. Not only is the knower prevented from articulating his/her experience, but he is also removed from both the societal conversation and from the educational means with which he might learn the language of the dominant culture, and so be able to join the dialog. Ironically, that very knowledge would help the dominant culture to understand the marginalized and help to bring those persons in from the margins.

The reader may reject the example here of a child diagnosed with what may have been a more severe disability than many Catholic schools could easily accommodate.¹⁶ However, the point is not that all Catholic schools will be able to provide what every severely disabled student might need (which will be discussed in Chapter 5). The point is that exclusion, especially among the marginalized, is more than stigmatizing--it can be debilitating and psychologically devastating. Fricker discusses the experience of being ignored or rejected due to negative identity stereotype:

To be wronged in one's capacity as a knower is to be wronged in a capacity essential to human value. When one is undermined or otherwise wronged in a capacity essential to human value, one suffers an intrinsic injustice....No wonder then, that being insulted, undermined, or otherwise wronged in one's capacity as a giver of knowledge is something that can cut deep. (Fricker, 2007, p. 44)

So deep is the injury in the case of the boy in the self-portrait in Figure 2, he was rendered figuratively and literally mute.

¹⁶ Depending upon the type of hearing loss the boy had, there are microphones that can be worn by the teacher which send the sound directly to hearing aids or implants, in which case, the other accommodations for the child are minimal.

How can we prevent children with disabilities from being rendered mute? Since the USCCB at the national level has issued a statement that was just, and we can agree that children with disabilities are not being heard prudently and charitably, according to Church teaching, then who is responsible at the local level, and are those persons committing an injustice? Fricker acknowledges that many virtues are historically contingent, and therein lies the question of culpability. The degree of culpability is determined by what a reasonable person of the period, practicing prudence or practical wisdom, should have known. Thus, in the case of the bishops' letter, there is culpability on the part of the individual bishops (some of whom appear not to have made the mandate known in their local arch/diocese), superintendents, pastors, school boards and principals, because if the USCCB knew what was just, a reasonable person would be able to know, and act upon, what was just. Bello (2006) asserts that the decentralized governance of Catholic schools suggests autonomous decision making, and that the result of that orientation:

...is a large degree of variation...with school principals being responsible for virtually all decisions related to school operations (Bryk et al., 1993; Hunt, et al., 2002). Other than the additional burden that inclusion places on these principals, this variation in governance structures makes it difficult to generalize how school governance issues might impact...inclusive practices. (Bello, p.477)

So, the challenge is to make the responsible agents, the principals and those who have influence over them, aware that admitting school children with disabilities is not an option, but a moral mandate. If they know that, and refuse to change, then they are culpable for the injustice. The NCEA also has responsibility. While it is laudatory that the NCEA provides a yearly conference to address effective strategies for students with special needs, their statement (NCEA website, 2015, "About Us") to families that Catholic

schools are “happy” to take children with disabilities as long as they only have to make “reasonable accommodations” merely repeats the low legal threshold.

Fricker does not cite Aquinas, but they would agree that the earthly ends of virtuous conduct are the common good, as well as human flourishing and happiness. The first step to achieving these ends would be to apply Fricker’s theory of injustice to the exclusion of children with special needs, and to recognize that the flourishing of all is diminished by the exclusion of any. Aside from the children and families who are harmed by the actions of the principals, pastors, school boards by being denied their credibility as knowers, those in power are also excluded from the fullest grace of the Catholic communion by their failure to understand this group’s language. While Fricker depends upon philosophical models of the common good including Aristotle’s, in which the flourishing of the community and the flourishing of individuals are connected, our Catholic tradition of Eucharist makes our mutual dependence clearer--we are joined, body and soul, with Christ and one another, so the diminishment of any is injurious to all. In this case, local agents are denying the validity of a pillar of Christian ethical reflection, the lived experience of children with disabilities, to the detriment of all children in Catholic schools.

In looking towards Fricker’s remedy of virtuous hearing, we can take inspiration from liberation theologies, centered on the dignity of the human person, in which marginalized groups seek their rightful place at the table. Brady (2008) writes that when we look at approaches to questions of social justice, we often ask, “Ought we work to change systems, structures and laws? Or ought we work to change people’s hearts and minds?” (Brady, p. 179). To Brady, it is not an either/or, but a both/and, and he addresses the universal good that liberation theologies can bring to the Church, using language that can help

us to understand how, as Fricker says, “Two streams of input---collective and individual--continually generate a person’s moral sensibility” (Fricker 2007, p. 82). It is no small feat to overcome testimonial, and, especially, hermeneutical injustice. Theologian Bernard Lonergan speaks about the difficulty in overcoming our collective blind-spots. Much like the danger posed to a researcher in a single blind study, the uncritical, biased mind sees only evidence that confirms its own thinking and beliefs. ”How is a mind to become conscious of its own bias when that bias springs from a communal flight from understanding and is supported by the whole texture of a civilization?” (Lonergan, 2002, p. 39).

How can members of the Church, bishops, local parishes and schools begin this difficult task, and avoid bias that may be unconscious? There must be a fundamental re-orientation, beginning with bringing in families of children with disabilities and other experts in the field as decision makers. Then, each of us needs to cultivate, through experience and right thinking, an openness to become moral, ethical people who try to correct for societal prejudices. To bring about testimonial justice through virtuous hearing, we must realize, “What is needed...is a corrective anti-prejudicial virtue that is distinctively *reflexive* in structure” (Fricker, 2007, p. 91, italics author’s). For those who may be part of a hierarchical structure, Fricker warns of the strong role that social identity plays. “The virtuous hearer, then, must be reflexively aware of how the relation between his social identity and that of the speaker is impacting on the intelligibility to him of what she is saying and how she is saying it” (Fricker, 2007, p. 169).

A prerequisite to fighting hermeneutical injustice is being aware of our own identity, and the unconscious rights, privileges, stereotypes and psycho-social baggage that

accompany it. While testimonial justice can become reflexive practice, applied to particular subjects, or knowers, hermeneutical injustice must be developed objectively. Fricker says that we need to learn to allow for the possibility that, due to the life experience of another, there might be more than one valid interpretation of truth.¹⁷ This is not pluralism--it merely acknowledges that we have only seen the world through our own eyes. We must go out of our way to ask if what

... the speaker is struggling to articulate *would make good sense if the attempt to articulate it were being made in a more inclusive hermeneutical climate--one without structural identity prejudice....* The guiding ideal is that the degree of credibility is adjusted upwards to compensate for the cognitive and expressive handicap imposed on the hermeneutically marginalized” (Fricker, 2007, p. 170, italics author’s).

This must be done consciously at first, but, if practiced over time, our sensibility can be reconditioned through sufficient corrective experience to become habitual.

Imagine two brothers from a Catholic family. Their parents want both to grow in their faith, to receive an excellent education worthy of their inherent dignity, and to be brought to their fullest human flourishing. Now, imagine that the older brother is already in the parish school, and the parents have come to register their younger son who has a learning disability. The principal turns them away because, “although we would be happy to take him, we don’t have the resources.” Now look back at the self-portraits done by the little boys earlier in the chapter. Our Church, through our schools, is marginalizing children because we are not listening to their voices, and the kind of heartbreak it produces is shown in the contrast between those drawings.

¹⁷ Such diverse thinkers as Aristotle, William James, Piaget, Maxine Greene, bell hooks, Bryan Massingale, and Margaret Farley are all helpful in understanding the interplay of identity, schema, and truth.

Chapter 4: Lord, When Did I See You? How can the Church's Schools Use Liberation Theology to Respond?

What is the ethical response of the Church, through its schools, to the issue of serving children diagnosed with special needs? In Chapter 2, the case was made that it is a matter of traditional Catholic Social Teaching, based upon the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas, that Catholic schools should offer special education services. As discussed in Chapter 1, most Catholic schools still do not admit children with disabilities, nor has there been a systematic national debate regarding inclusion. Furthermore, while the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has listened justly to the cries of the disabled and their families (Chapter 3), their calls for offering special educational services for children have gone largely unheeded. This chapter will add a liberatory hermeneutic to existing arguments, to help rouse U.S. Catholics from our slumber, to have that debate, and to make a conscious, ethical choice to serve or not to serve students with disabilities.

As discussed in Chapter 1, there is little-to-no existing literature regarding the conjunction of a Christian, liberatory pedagogy and special education. In investigating this conjunction, one would usually begin with a critical (or liberation) educational pedagogy. Liberation psychology would be a logical addition in that it has practical, therapeutic, and theoretical applications to special education. Liberation ethics are called for by the question this chapter seeks to answer. However, rather than beginning at one of those more likely starting points, we begin with a less obvious component, liberation theology. Because liberation theology's application to the marginalized, including children with disabilities, is such a large part of the moral mandate for offering special education, this

chapter will attempt to synthesize liberation theology with liberation psychology, liberation ethics, and liberation pedagogy. Although each liberation theory stands on its own, the disciplines are all undergirded by the tenets of liberation theology, and the writers cited in this chapter drew upon each other's work and that of other liberation theologians. This Liberation Theology represents the heart and soul of this work.

After a brief description of liberation theology, based mainly on the work of Gustavo Gutiérrez, there will be an introduction to the liberation psychology of Ignacio Martín-Baró, S.J., who was murdered for his work with the poor in El Salvador in 1989. The third section will be a brief treatment of the liberation pedagogy of Paulo Freire, using his concepts of annunciation, denunciation, and conscientization. Freire is referenced by Gutiérrez, Enrique Dussel and Martín-Baró and his work has been widely used in Catholic higher education. The fourth section will discuss basic elements of the philosophical ethics of Enrique Dussel. Finally, there will be an examination of the shared elements of the theories and how they might lead to a pedagogy that is more successful in helping children with special needs reach their full human potential and to be recognized as full members of the Church.

The Basic Tenets of Gutiérrez's Liberation Theology

The tenets of Liberation Theology are radically inclusive and rooted in Sacred Scripture. Liberation theologians place a great deal of emphasis on the Book of Exodus and Jesus' teachings regarding the Kingdom of Heaven, including the Sermon-on-the-Mount and Beatitudes (Mt. 5-7), and the Judgment of the Nations (Mt. 25).

In 1968, the bishops of South America (CELAM) met in Medellin, Columbia, and produced a revolutionary document that named poverty as sin, preached liberation rather than macro-economic development of the peoples, and created small base ecclesial communities, or Christian Base Communities, in which the main voices heard would be those of the peoples. Following Medellin, in response to the oppression of the poor and the repression of the indigenous peoples and their culture, Gustavo Gutiérrez published *The Theology of Liberation* (Gutiérrez, 1973/2001). Gutiérrez was born in 1928 in Peru and currently teaches at Notre Dame.

The book was partly a prophetic call to dismantle unjust socio-economic structures, partly a denunciation of structural and personal sin, partly a contemporary narrative of the poor and the clergy who were joining in their struggle, and, wholly theological. The first liberation theology work widely read outside of Latin America, it demanded that theology be looked at from the “underside” of history, from the vantage point of the marginalized. His theology, aside from being inspired by the “irruption” of the poor peoples of Latin America and their example of hope, was also greatly influenced by Vatican II, which he attended. Additionally, Gutierrez’s theology shows evidence of his training with Karl Rahner, and Rahner’s reliance on the teachings of Aquinas regarding our orientation towards God and the common good (Clark, 1972; Gutierrez, 1973/2001; Rahner, 2010; Sobrino, 2004).

Gutiérrez named the problem as daunting structural injustice, which robbed the marginalized of both their dignity and their full status as members of humanity and of the Church. He presented the case for a new kind of theology, Liberation Theology, as the Church’s necessary response. Liberation theology would be

“...a *new way* to do theology. Theology as critical reflection on historical praxis is a liberating theology, a theology of the liberating transformation of the history of humankind and also therefore that part of humankind—gathered into *ecclesia*, which openly confesses Christ” (Gutiérrez, 2001, p. 12, author’s emphases)

Gutiérrez moved from theory to praxis in outlining the various aspects of liberation, or the struggle for a new creation. He yoked liberation to salvation and to the ways that aspects of liberation reflect the role of the Church as sacrament. The sacramental role is both sacramental in the usual sense of our full communion with one another—in, as, and of the body of Christ in the Eucharist--and as an eschatological promise of the already-but-not-yet Kingdom of Heaven. When Jesus announced, “The time has come; the Kingdom of God is upon you” (Mark 1:15), he was declaring the beginning of the end of the exploitation that prevented marginalized peoples from being fully human. Jesus pronounced that: “a Kingdom of justice which goes even beyond what they could have hoped for has begun... They are blessed because the Messiah will open the eyes of the blind and give bread to the hungry” (Gutiérrez, 2001, p. 171).

Because we have encountered God in specific moments of history, Gutierrez said we must read the signs of the times, and write the corresponding theology of the times in response to that categorical moment. This theology of our times tells us that without liberation from sin, there is no social, economic, or political liberation; without historical liberating events, there is no growth of God’s Kingdom (Gutiérrez, 2001, p. 104).

Gutiérrez used Paulo Freire’s ideas of *annunciation*, *denunciation*, and *conscientization* to explain the process of liberation. In order for the marginalized to *denounce* and reject the current unjust and dehumanizing situation, the Church must *announce* the Word of God, the coming of the Kingdom. “This means that the people who hear the

message and live in these conditions by the mere fact of hearing it should perceive themselves as oppressed and feel impelled to seek their own liberation” (Gutiérrez, 2001, p. 153). This conscientization, or the process of developing a critical awareness of one’s own social reality through reflection and action, will produce a will toward revolution in the poor. It should also produce that same will in the Church as it accompanies the poor. Faith, hope, and charity (love) must enlighten the struggle. Gutiérrez said that only at that point can we apply the social sciences to our historical human praxis to build a just society and new humanity.

There has been much development of Liberation Theology since Gutiérrez’s work, both in terms of Latin America and in terms of broadening liberation theologies to embrace other marginalized groups (e.g., see Copeland, 2010; Eiesland, 1994; Ellacuría & Lee, 2013; Massingale, 2010; Phan, 2001; and Sobrino 1994), including the disabled. Many models of liberation theology employ some form of a look-judge-act model emphasizing a cycle that begins by looking through the lens of our faith, judging what action needs to take place, and then acting. This method is taught in Pope John XXIII’s encyclical *Mater et Magistra*:

There are three stages which should normally be followed in the reduction of social principles into practice. First, one reviews the concrete situation; secondly, one forms a judgment on it in the light of these same principles; thirdly, one decides what in the circumstances can and should be done to implement these principles. These are the three stages that are usually expressed in the three terms: look, judge, act. It is important for our young people to grasp this method and to practice it. Knowledge acquired in this way does not remain merely abstract, but is seen as something that must be translated into action. (*Mater et Magistra*, 1961, 236-237)

Many liberation theologians use what they call the hermeneutical circle. Gutiérrez wrote:

Revelation and history, faith in Christ and the life of a people, eschatology and praxis: these are the factors that, when set in motion, give rise to what is called the hermeneutical circle.... It is clear from what I have been saying that when I call reflection in the strict sense a *second* stage of theological work I am by no means saying that it is *secondary*. Discourse about God comes second because faith comes first and is the source of theology; in the formula of St. Anselm, we believe in order that we may understand (*credo ut intelligam*). (Gutiérrez, 2001. p. xxxiii, italics author's)

After we act, we turn to theology to contemplate whether we are acting in a manner we believe is compatible with building the Kingdom of God (orthopraxis, or right practice). Fueled by our belief in the death and resurrection of Jesus (orthodoxy, or right thinking), we must try to judge our actions in light of the example of the compassionate way that Jesus lived (orthopathy, sometimes translated as right loving or right feeling). So, according to this liberatory theological approach, in excluding children with disabilities from Catholic schools, we would have to think that exclusion was Christian orthopraxis, based on orthodoxy and reflecting orthopathy.

The Life and Liberation Psychology of Ignacio Martín-Baró

Ignacio Martín-Baró, S.J., taught psychology at the Universidad Centroamericana José Simeón Cañas, or UCA, from 1967 until 1989. At the time, he was the only person to hold a Ph.D. in psychology in El Salvador. UCA was founded by the Jesuits in the belief that other Central American universities were perpetuating oppression of the poor. The Jesuits believed that liberation of the peoples should be the underlying theological, philosophical, and intellectual underpinning of the university. Martín-Baró wrote widely on traditional psychological topics; however, as time went on, his work became more closely linked to liberation theology. He lived at UCA with two prominent liberation theologians and fellow Jesuits, Ignacio Ellacuría and Jon Sobrino, whom he quoted in his

works. Martín-Baró, Ellacuría, four other Jesuits, and their housekeeper and her daughter, were murdered by an American-trained, Salvadoran-government-sanctioned military squad on November 16, 1989. The work that most probably brought about Martín-Baró's death was done between 1985 and 1989, when he founded and ran the National Institute for Public Research. He dared to speak truth to power, allowing the Salvadoran poor to do the same, and to finally have their voices heard through his opinion polls:

His 'crime' was to align himself with the Salvadoran people in their collective resistance to oppression and their struggle for peace and justice. He had embraced the 'preferential option for the poor,' a central tenet of Liberation Theology. This was his stance as a Jesuit, parish priest and theologian. It was also the center-point of his work as a psychologist. (Martín-Baró, 1994, from the forward, p. vii, by Elliot G. Mishler)

Martín-Baró's work could not be separated from his faith or his life. Through his work, he sent forth an urgent call to develop a new praxis for psychology, one in which theory and research could be brought to their full, liberatory potential. By placing himself with the marginalized, Martín-Baró had a privileged view of psychology from the underside. Enmeshed with the people's struggles, with primacy given to their needs and lived experience, he wanted to reframe some of psychology's standard concepts. He critiqued the scientific view of "attitude, ideology, identity and community" as being too ahistorical, too centered on the individual rather than community, and too universalistic to be relevant to the Salvadoran people.

While Martín-Baró worked from within the field of psychology, he became more critical of how it was practiced, feeling that it comforted the more comfortable rather than the afflicted. He saw both his pastoral and clinical work as opportunities to work toward the Kingdom of God. His weekend pastoral work in Jayaque was close to his heart and

kept him mindful of the everyday joys and struggles of those for whom he was writing. The children of Jayaque were of special concern to him. He reportedly greeted them with sweets, and was fondly known by them as “Padre Nacho.” He was especially conscious of the psychosocial trauma that was inflicted upon them in situations of poverty and war, and encouraged the community to come together to reestablish trusting social relationships for children in order to aid in their healthy identity development. Despite having death threats made against him and having his office bombed, Martín-Baró remained, until the end of his life, hopeful and committed to transforming his theological and psychological practices into a liberatory psychology, one in service of the peoples of El Salvador in their struggle for justice (Mischler from Martín-Baró, 1994, pp. 25-41). Although he later elaborated upon and expanded his theory, Martín-Baró laid out the basics of his liberation psychology in *Writings for a Liberation Psychology* (1994) in which he proposed three essential elements for the building of a liberation psychology:

1. A New Horizon

Martín-Baró criticized Latin American psychology for being more interested in gaining scientific and social status in European and North American eyes than in seeing and treating the needs before their own eyes. Rather than a more universal horizon of gaining control over one's existence, if the horizon was more local in praxis, the needs of the majority of the population could be served:

And at the present time, the most important problem faced by the vast majority of Latin Americans is their situation of oppressive misery, their condition of marginalized dependency that is forcing upon them an inhuman existence and snatching away their ability to define their own lives...psychology has often contributed to obscuring the relationship between personal estrangement and social oppression, presenting the pathology of persons as if it were something removed from history and society, and behavioral disorders as if they played themselves out entirely in the individual plane. (Martín-Baró, 1994. pp. 26-27)

Because Martín-Baró was a Catholic Jesuit priest and pastor who pitched his tent among the poor, liberation theology was as necessary a foundation for liberation psychology as psychology itself. Imposing Freire's structure here, as Gutierrez did in liberation theology, we might call this the *annunciation of a new horizon* for psychology and for the peoples. This new local horizon would mean that the practice of psychology could help people break the chains of oppression and throw off an existential fatalism which frequently occurs in what he and Ellacuría referred to as "limit situations." The concept of limit situations (Martín-Baró, 1994, p. 25-26), adapted from German philosopher Karl Jaspers, refers to being at the limits, or boundaries of normal human endurance. These same situations that may produce despair and fatalism, however, are also incubators for being. This is not being as in existential "being," but being as in "being more" (*magis*). This new horizon, produced by the limit situation, may actually be a horizon of hope.

2. A New Epistemology

The point of a liberation psychology would be to not just understand the world, but to change it. To do that, one of liberation psychology's first tasks would be to help the peoples to critically revise the image of the world that was so carefully presented to them by oppressive governments and materialistic media conglomerates. In Freire's framework, we might say that this entails a *denunciation of the world view* presented by those in power.

Psychology would need to help the peoples find new ways to build knowledge that were not dependent on the government or on an overly materialistic world. "The truth of the popular majority is not to be found, but made" (Martín-Baró, 1994, p. 27).

Martín-Baró published polls in which the opinions of the peoples, rather than of the government, were heard. Part of the new epistemology comes from academics or practitioners attempting to view psycho-social processes and educational psychology from the vantage point of the marginalized or illiterate:

This is not a matter of thinking for them, or bringing them our ideas, or solving their problems for them: it has to do with thinking and theorizing with them. Here, too, the pioneering insight of Paulo Freire asserts itself. He put forth a pedagogy ‘of’ the oppressed, not ‘for’ the oppressed. (Martín-Baró, 1994, p. 28)

Martín-Baró’s liberation psychology would share this vantage point with the pedagogy of the oppressed and with liberation theology and ethics in helping to discover and build an existential truth of Latin American peoples, a process that other marginalized groups could use as well.

3. A New Praxis

Only by acting on reality and transforming it can human beings begin to know what reality is. It is easier in theory than in practice to place ourselves politically and professionally among the marginalized:

There is an assumption that taking a stand represents an abdication of scientific objectivity, but this assumption confuses bias with objectivity....If we were not able to take an ethical stand while still maintaining objectivity, we might easily condemn as murder a death caused by a guerrilla, but condone, and even exalt as heroism a death produced by a soldier or the police. (Martín-Baró, 1994. pp. 29-30)

To use our training while located in that place, and to allow our training *to be used* rather than “wielding” it as power is challenging. As an element of Freire’s framework, participatory psychology and research must lead to people becoming the protagonists of not only their history, but their future, which is *conscientization*.

Based upon these three essential elements (a New Horizon, a New Epistemology, and a New Praxis) Martín-Baró laid out three urgent tasks. *First*, he said there must be a *recovery of historical memory*. Desperation forces individuals to focus on the present (to stay alive, housed and fed) without the luxury of past or future. Recovering historical memory means “...to discover selectively, through collective memory, those elements of the past which have proved useful in the defense of the interests of exploited classes and which may be applied to the present struggles to increase [*conscientization*]” (Fals Borda in Martín-Baró, 1994. p. 30. Brackets are author’s). This allows the peoples to rely on their traditions and culture to assist in their own liberation.¹⁸

Second, he called for the *de-ideologizing of everyday experience*. From many viewpoints, including the pragmatic, critical/historical, and cognitive/constructivist schools, knowledge is a social construct. That construct is generally the “common sense,” which is the projection of the consumerist mass media and the government, neither of which represented the everyday experience of the majority of Latin Americans. What Martín-Baró called common sense would probably be translated as what we call in English, “common knowledge” or “what everyone knows.” To remove the ideology means to question what “everyone knows” and to retrieve the original experience of groups and persons, and to return it to them as objective data (inasmuch as that is possible). They can then articulate a consciousness of their own reality. So, for instance, one might want to be thought of as differently-abled rather than dis-abled.

¹⁸ In applying this to children with disabilities, there has been research that has indicated strong creative thought processes and problem solving ability, especially in children with learning disabilities and autism spectrum disorder. For instance, see Eide and Eide’s *The Dyslexic Advantage: Unlocking the Hidden Potential of the Dyslexic Brain*. (New York, NY: Penguin/Plume. 2012).

Third, he called for the *utilization of the peoples' virtues*. Rather than looking outside for remedies, liberation psychologists should look to the peoples. There are many virtues alive in popular traditions, in popular religious practices and in social structures that have allowed people to survive in untenable conditions and to keep hope alive for a future. A psychology of liberation requires, *a priori*, the liberation of psychology, and that liberation must come from a praxis that is rooted in, and committed to, the hopes and sufferings of marginalized peoples.

His urgent tasks are related to a specific task of psychology, which is understanding the processes of human consciousness. In accomplishing these tasks, Martín-Baró outlined a particular role for psychologists. To him, consciousness, rather than representing our subjective knowledge and feelings, represents the confines within which each person encounters the impact of his or her being and actions in society (Martín-Baró, 1994, p. 38). Therefore, the psychologist must assist people in taking in and working through knowledge about the self and about reality that permits people to have a personal and social identity of their own. By including children with special needs among others, we help *all* children to form a more complete idea of humanity. This knowledge of reality would ostensibly contribute to the humanization of individuals and help the peoples to take command of their own existence.

Elements of Paulo Freire's Liberation Pedagogy of the Oppressed

Paulo Freire (1921-97) was a Brazilian, Catholic, Marxist philosopher whose work was influential not only in Brazil and other Latin American countries but around the world. While his writings were not those of a theologian, and he sometimes had harsh

criticism for the hierarchy of the Catholic Church (see Freire, 1985), the themes of Liberation Theology were clear and present throughout his work. Freire praised those priests, nuns, and bishops who took up a prophetic life and cast their lot with the poor under the Brazilian dictatorship (Freire, 1989). Not only was he frequently quoted by liberation theologians, he was also asked by the bishops as an outside expert to co-author the education section of the Medellin document of CELAM (1968).

Like many liberation theologians, Freire was jailed, and exiled, more than once, for standing with the marginalized and critiquing government policies, especially with regard to education. Like many liberation theologians, his viewpoint was that of the “wretched of the earth” (Freire, 1998, p. 22) of the rag-pickers, of the excluded. His work centered on helping the peoples to be treated as dignified persons, to be allowed to achieve their full human flourishing and to have control over their own destinies. Freire grounded his work in a universal human ethic:

In truth, I speak of a human universal ethic in the same way I speak of humanity’s ontological vocation, which calls us out of and beyond ourselves. Or, as I speak of our being as something constructed socially and historically and not just simply a priori. A being born in the womb of history, but in the process of coming to be....In other words, our being in the world is far more than just ‘being.’ It is a ‘presence’, a ‘presence’ that is relational to the world and others. (Freire, 1989, p. 25)

For Freire, using dialogue was a central means to discover our relationship with others, a dialogue which is grounded in respect and in love.

Love is at the same time the foundation of dialogue and dialogue itself....Because love is an act of courage, not of fear, love is a commitment to others. No matter where the oppressed are found, the act of love is commitment to their cause--the cause of liberation. And, this commitment, because it is loving, is dialogical. (Freire, 2000, p. 89)

Freire's work was that of an educational philosopher who was critical of the ivory tower and who demanded a connection between research and dialogue, theory and praxis. He insisted that "right thinking" meant "right doing," diminishing the distance between what teachers said and what they did. He called this the virtue of coherence. Freire believed that teacher education must go beyond technical preparation and be rooted in ethical formation, both of the teachers themselves and of their view of history. "The ethic of which I speak is that which feels itself betrayed and neglected by the hypocritical perversion of an elitist purity, an ethic affronted by racial, sexual and class discrimination" (Freire, 1998, pp. 23-24). This ethic had a beginning point of a recognition of the equality and dignity of all. This recognition was not a "favor" to be done, out of charity, but a demand of justice.

Aside from espousing a mix of Christian, socialist, democratic and utopian ideals, Freire's pedagogy demanded that teachers recognize themselves and their students as unfinished people, thereby casting the world in a hopeful light. This awareness of being unfinished is what makes us all educable, and reminds us that while we have been *conditioned* by our history, we are not *determined* by it. He urged solidarity among the classes, a 'being with' others, a love of others, which liberates not only the oppressed but the oppressors as well. This solidarity "is found only in the plenitude of this act of love, in its existentiality, in its praxis" (Freire, 1970, p. 50).

Several main principles or practices were championed by Freire. In his advocacy of adult literacy, Freire introduced his idea of *conscientization*, as a process through which teachers and students first decoded the *world* through critical pedagogy (in literacy

circles much like Christian Base Communities) and only then decoded the *word*. Experience in the world was recognized as an asset. In both the education of children and adults, he eschewed the “banking system” of education in which teachers “deposited” knowledge into disengaged students, who were later asked to produce the deposit upon demand. Rather, he encouraged an authentic education, in which curiosity about the real world leads to an examination of real problems to be solved through education. Students are “subjects” rather than objects, and they name the world and its problems in order to achieve transformation. This kind of education would make children with disabilities “subjects” who, through education, name and solve problems, both societal and their own, and thus achieve transformation. This kind of education, Freire believed, would be a denunciation of dehumanization and an annunciation of the dream of a new society.

A Brief Exploration of the Philosophical Ethics of Enrique Dussel

Born 1934 in Argentina, Enrique Dussel has studied, taught, and written widely, with his main focus being liberation philosophy, especially in the areas of politics and ethics. Because he wrote under the pressure of socio-political events as they unfolded, much like the other theorists in this chapter, Dussel has endured threats, had his home bombed, and was exiled from his home country. He currently (2016) teaches in Mexico.

Dussel’s ethical philosophy, or philosophy of ethics (Dussel, 2003. p. 2) goes beyond accepted philosophy to “reach back or down into the core of the philosophical which is the ethical relation” which takes into account the whole earth and its common fate. In the preface of *Beyond Philosophy* (Dussel, 2003), he tells us that his work will explore theological, economic/political, historical, and ethical themes, with no mention of philosophy itself--hence, the title. He puts forth liberation theology as the foundation on

which the other liberation theories are built. Dussel's locus is the horizon of world history, "not a mere chapter in empirical-historical science; instead it is a critical 'location' or 'point of departure'" (Dussel, 2003, p. x). This locus from the periphery allows him to reject Euro-centric philosophy as being inadequate to interpret historical conditions in other parts of the world, especially in the southern hemisphere, or for other marginalized groups. What he characterizes as the "central" world view habituated the North, "through the centuries, to see them [the subjugated peoples] as a part of the landscape, and not as human beings" (Dussel, 2003, p. xi).

He compares the road traveled by the peoples (including many exiles and emigrants) to the Holy Family's flight into Egypt. He finds his theological bases in the Egyptian Book of the Dead, in Isaiah and Exodus from the Old Testament, and in the Last Judgment (Matt 25) from the New Testament. Dussel calls his method, which attempts to recover Latin American symbolics and hermeneutics, the analectical or ana-dialectical method. The analectical rejects the dialectical method which has been predicated on exclusion of "a vilified, despised, exploited, annihilated other" (Dussel, 2003, p. 5). Dussel prioritizes ethics as the "first" philosophy--we cannot imagine a just philosophy without ethics to establish "the other" as a dignified person with whom to dialogue. But to enter into that ethical relationship, we must first affirm that "the other" is our equal:

To say 'yes' to my neighbor, the system must first be broken into, opened up...The ana-lectic (what is outside the system), the absolute 'Other' the Word...breaks into the closed system and becomes flesh....The servant, the prophet or the poor in spirit, acting from the ranks of and together with the oppressed carry out the praxis of liberation. (Dussel, 2003, p. 27-28)

Dussel calls this a subversive orthopraxis. He says that the starting point for liberation theology, upon which he bases his ethics and philosophy, is always the situation at

hand. Since the in-breaking of Jesus, and the announcement of the Kingdom of Heaven, we are called to break down the barriers at hand, “to move a system which acts oppressively towards becoming a new system which acts to liberate” (Dussel, 2003, pp. 29-30).

Therefore, liberation theology is situational, in that it must be based on the experience of real people in a categorical, historical moment, whether that be in a society, a church, or a school. However, its principles are universal and timeless, in that

The revealed category is clear enough: ‘I was hungry and you gave me no food’ (Matt 25).....the theology of liberation ...is based on the praxis of liberation, on moving from sin as dominating influence exerted by various systems (political, sexual and educational) to irreversible salvation in Christ and His Kingdom (the *eschaton*). This movement is accompanied by every man, all people and every age—in short, by the whole of human history. (Dussel, 2003, pp. 33-34)

Dussel looks at the history of oppression by examining groups that have been conquered physically, politically, economically, and psychologically. He begins by quoting Jesus, Isaiah and Hammurabi regarding the moral imperative against oppression in the *political* aspect (what he calls brother-to-brother) in which men who are perceived as weak, poor, or "other" are oppressed; the *sexual* aspect (man-woman) in which women are oppressed; and the *educational* aspect (father-son) in which children are oppressed.¹⁹

This chapter will focus on the *educational* starting point, which goes back thousands of years. Dussel writes that political and sexual domination are completed through education. Self-replication and/or preserving our privilege is a cultural conquest, or expansion of the self, who is often white, fully-abled, male, and middle-to-upper class. Through the dialectical process, the ideas of the “father” are shot through the “son” so

¹⁹ The androcentric and hetero-centric terms throughout are Dussel’s.

that the son is subservient to and praises the father. So, schools' admission policies are a means of maintaining the status quo.²⁰

The pain of oppression allows the materially poor (and others who are marginalized, such as the disabled) to be poor in spirit--to have the divinity of God revealed to and through them because they are not blinded by the false divinity, the "perfection" of the ruling system. Dussel lays out the elements of a Christology from below:

The Kingdom of Heaven demands an adequate integration of the historical project of popular liberation with the eschatological dimension. Anti-Utopian Christianity criticizes the historical project as irrational and obstructionist. (Dussel, 2003. p. 95.)

If the essence of sin is oppression of the poor and alienation of the fruits of their work, then the essence of religion is 'service' of the poor as liberation and as restitution of the fruits of their work. To evangelize is to turn the multitude into a people who can free themselves and be transformed into the people of God and subjects of his Kingdom. (Dussel, 2003. p. 98. Italics are author's.)

Dussel draws the lines quite starkly. It is impossible for those of the empire to be poor in spirit because it is only the materially poor, or those who are in misery, who are spiritually available to God. Dialectically, the poor are defined by the rich, the oppressed by the oppressor--and, by extension, the disabled by the (temporarily) abled. Poverty is the result of sin, there is no poverty without someone else's wealth, so the wealthy cannot call themselves poor in spirit. "The poor are the sign, the bleeding wound of the deep, structural sickness of the system" (Dussel, 2003, p. 98). The poor, the oppressed, the marginalized, the nobodies, provide both the origin of the call to the Kingdom and mediation of salvation (Dussel, 2003, pp. 98-99). In the act of the liturgy both

²⁰ Many authors in education have addressed class, race, and schooling. See, for instance, Jean Anyone's "Social Class and the Hidden Curriculum of Work," 1980; Jonathon Kozol's *Savage Inequalities*, 1991; and Lisa Delpit's *Multiplication is for White People*, 2012.

the Word and the Eucharist should also bring to the fore others who hold privileged positions in the Kingdom, other marginalized groups, such as the disabled.

The liturgy of our Church is meant to give life. It is the work of human hands, done by all of us together, each in the way that we can contribute, each recognized as being *able* to contribute, equally worthy to contribute, but with some having a more preferential place at the table. Dussel reminds us, as does the tradition and teaching of our faith, that the Eucharist is but a foretaste of what is to come, a sort of premonition and also enactment of the Kingdom. We cannot truly do this work of God without recognizing the dignity of the marginalized, the preferred. If we did not have those preferred among us, we would have no epiphany of the face of God, no entrée into the Kingdom of Heaven. To share at table with everyone, to have our lives (our society, our Church, our schools) mirror the Eucharist table and to reflect the Word, to recognize the dignity common to us all is the first step on the road to the Kingdom.

Dussel questions the critical function of ethics in situations needing profound social change. He answers that state, national, and international organizations, whether seemingly neutral or even benevolent, present ideas that are based upon *reform of existing systems* that have established norms, values, and virtues. So, the task of liberation ethics is to *destroy the old system*. Only when the old systems of ideological domination are quashed can a transcendent basis for just living be established with new norms, values and virtues (Dussel, 2003, p. 138).

Ethics must clarify "...the fact and reality of the continual presence of the other 'beyond' any totality" (Dussel, 2003, p. 139). He calls "the other" the "analectical exteriority" (Dussel, 2003, p. 139). The other appears as an epiphany, as the locus of God's

manifestation, and as the one who demands justice. It is only because the poor or marginalized person is outside the system that he or she can serve as the locus of God's epiphany to us. God, the "other absolute," is revealed in a historical, categorical way only by what is outside the mainstream of history, whether it be through Jesus or through the marginalized.

The question from the periphery is "What is the ethical basis of the praxis of heroes when they rise against laws, rules, alleged virtues and values, against the ends of an unjust system" (Dussel, 2003, p. 141)? Dussel portrays the struggle that must be undertaken to eradicate sin from the system as a journey, as he has alluded to in comparisons to the Exodus and the flight into Egypt. He frames the journey with four questions: "From what position am I asking? ...What are the practical and historical conditions? ...Is it possible to believe? ...What is the eschatological reality" (Dussel, 2003, p. 140)?

If we ask from what position or under what historical conditions we begin, we acknowledge that there is a *departure from somewhere specific*. This "somewhere," which we must be liberated from, is the lived experience of those who are part of the system (with established values, laws, virtues, and norms), or of those who are other, the alienated, who are outside of the system.

If we ask if it is possible to believe, there must be a *journey* in which we seek to believe, not by way of our historical/categorical norms, but by way of the stories of heroes/saints who act on ethics which lie outside of time. The eschatological reality is that there is, through salvation, *an arrival, somewhere*, which is in a new order, not yet in force.

The ethics of liberation is a re-thinking of the totality of moral problems from the point of view and the demands of 'responsibility' for the poor, for a historical reality which *allows struggle*...a journey through the desert in the time of transition and the building of the promised land (Dussel, 2003, p. 142. Italics author's).

The journey for the marginalized begins with an impulse that they already have, within their culture, their virtue, their wisdom, and their resilience, which enables them to realize their position as being oppressed. But what of the journey of those of us within the system? Much as Aquinas gave criteria for loving our neighbor as ourselves, Dussel lays out three criteria for the achievement of ethical validity of those within the system:

1. Respecting the dignity of the ethical subject;

This recognition (*re-conocimiento*) of dignity begins with the acknowledgment of the oppressed as a person. That assumes that the one in power is aware of: the existence of the oppressed (as one would notice a thing); that the oppressed is a human being (a living part of the political/economic system); and then that the oppressed is more than just a cog in the machine and is worthy of respect (Dussel, 2003, pp. 170-171).

2. Fulfilling the requirements for the reproduction of life;

Once we recognize the other as a person who is owed dignity, we must then accord him/her the necessities of a dignified life. People have universal, corporeal needs which are “a criterion of ethical validity” (Dussel, 2003, p. 173), such as decent housing, clothing, food, water, education, and health care.

3. Communal Solidarity;

To exemplify solidarity, Dussel quotes the language of the communiques used by the Mayan Zapatistas in the uprising in Chiapas, Mexico, in 1994 (Dussel, 2003, pp. 167-183). The language, which is stunning in its beauty, depicts an idea of a utopian community, where...

It is reasonable and the will of good men and women to seek and find the best way to govern and be governed. What is good for the many is good for us all. But, the voices of the few may not be silenced, rather, let them be in their place, hoping that the thought and the heart might become shared within the will of the many and in the view of the few (Dussel, 2003. p. 174).

The peoples have cried “enough!” and we must respond in solidarity: “These are ethical situations that demand a solidarious co-responsibility with the oppressed, the poor, and the excluded” (Dussel, 2003. p. 177). It is important to remember, although this theology was developed with the poor in Latin America, it can be applied to any marginalized community, from immigrants to the LGBT community to children with disabilities.

Common Elements of Liberation Theology, Psychology, Philosophy, and Pedagogy

The chart on the following page shows the locus of each discipline, the elements that might be considered annunciation, denunciation, and conscientization, and the goal, or orientation. All share the starting point of the underside of history, or viewpoint of the marginalized; have central themes of love, liberation, communion/community/common good, and human dignity; and have common goals of people reaching their full human flourishing and bringing about the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.

	Liberation Theology	Liberation Psychology	Liberation Pedagogy	Liberation Ethics
Viewpoint/ Locus	The poor, the marginalized, the crucified peoples, the underside of history	The poor, the marginalized, those in “limit situations” the underside of history	The poor, the marginalized, the illiterate, the workers, the “wretched” of history	The poor, the alteriority/ exteriority of “the other”
Annunciation	Hope in the Kingdom of God, as proclaimed by Jesus	A New Horizon: Hope for historical liberation leading to building of the Kingdom of God	Right to live as dignified, literate citizens with hope for a better life: call for common good	Recognition of “the other” as dignified and deserving of respect and the “requirements for the reproduction of life”
Denunciation	Structural and personal sin which is responsible for misery and oppression	(Through a New Epistemology) Structural and personal sin which puts people in limit situations	Oppression by the wealthy, the military, and the powerful; The “Banking System” of education	Alienation of the poor; machismo (in sexual realm), capitalism (in socio-political realm) and ideological domination (in educational realm)
Conscientization	Christian Base Communities study the Bible, and how biblical concepts can be applied to socio-economic realities	A New Praxis: Groups recover historical memory; deideologize experience; utilize virtues of the peoples	Widespread literacy circles tackle community problems and re-visit historical “reality” through critical pedagogy	Struggle/journey of the poor, accompanied by Church and academics, to follow the praxis of heroes/saints; old systems cannot be fixed, but must be destroyed.
Goal	The Here-but-not-yet Kingdom of God	The Here-but-not-yet Kingdom of God	Utopian, egalitarian, democracy with (socialist elements); people reaching their full ontological vocation.	Communal solidarity in overthrowing unjust systems and building equitable socialist systems, compatible with Christianity and The Kingdom of God

Common Elements: Liberation Theology, Psychology, Philosophy & Pedagogy (Carlson, 2015)

Elements of an Ethical Christian Pedagogy for Children with Disabilities

What is the ethical response of the Church, through its schools, to children with disabilities?

To admit them.

And, once they are admitted, to include them as fully as is beneficial to them.

It will not be easy, and there may be exceptions. But, in general, we must admit them---and at the head of the list. Dussel would have us destroy the old system that admits fully-abled children first, and only then considers, on a case-by-case basis, whether there is a place for children with disabilities. Not only would Dussel's ethics allow children with disabilities to become subjects of their own destiny in a Catholic setting, they would allow fully-abled children to practice compassion and to be beneficiaries of the gifts that children with special needs possess. Research has shown that not only is inclusion *not harmful* for children without special needs, but in most cases, it is actually *beneficial* to all (e.g, see Salend & Duhaney, 1999).

Pedagogy is considered the art and science of teaching. One's pedagogy is generally founded on his/her philosophy of teaching. This chapter will address the art of teaching rather than the science, such as instructional methods, and content, so it will not supplant an evidence-based pedagogy. Instead, it will pull together elements of the four disciplines explored here to form a Christian, ethical, philosophical basis from which one might form a liberatory praxis to add to scientific best practice. The next chapter will expand upon these and other ideas for inclusion.

Gutierrez wrote that liberation is all embracing, and includes:

the struggle to construct a just and fraternal society, where persons can live with dignity and be the agents of their own destiny....This viewpoint, therefore, permits us to consider *the unity, without confusion* of the various human dimensions,

that is, one's relationships with other humans and with the Lord... (Gutierrez, 2001, p. xiv, Italics author's)

A school would certainly be a place where one should be treated as a person with dignity, and, through education, begin the struggle to become an agent of one's own destiny. So, to follow Gutierrez, if we begin with the belief that the Kingdom of God is all inclusive, and that liberation is all embracing, then children, especially those diagnosed with disabilities, who are often among the marginalized (e.g. Eiesland, 1994; Scanlan 2009), should be included and embraced in Catholic schools. As stated earlier in this chapter, a school's administration would have to believe, illogically, that denying children with disabilities a Catholic education was Christian orthopraxis, based on orthodoxy, and reflecting the orthopathy of Jesus.

The pedagogical practice would begin for Martín-Baró during the diagnostic and prescriptive stage, before the child enters the classroom. He says that educational psychologists spend much of their time doing diagnostic work with children with special needs which is meant to achieve:

...an adjustment, a good fit, between each individual and the society, that would never for a moment put into question the basic schemata by which we live, nor, therefore, how social roles are determined for people... (E)ducational psychology with conscientization presupposes an effort to construct alternative social schemata: the critical and creative ability of students as opposed to what school and society offer them; a different style of confronting social and occupational life.... For this, what is needed is... a different conceptual vision, and perhaps also new methods of diagnosis and intervention. (Martín-Baró, 1994, p. 44)

So, a Christian liberatory pedagogy would begin with the diagnostic process--- seeing the child as a child of God, as a human being with dignity, as one with legitimate hopes and gifts, and as one who should be embraced and included in the school and the community. Fit into the earlier framework, in this new chart, that is our locus:

Viewpoint/Locus	Annunciation	Denunciation	Conscientization	Goal
Children of God	Recognition of dignity of all	Exclusion	Destruction of old system	Inclusion
Children who have disabilities, are marginalized, or considered “other”	Education in academics, social skills, political-economic theory and Catholic faith as a birth-right	Able-ist, classist, racist, sexist or other inauthentic education	Recognition, celebration and utilization of virtues, gifts and strengths found in various cultures, communities, and marginalized groups and individuals	Universal Design in curriculum and instruction to help each child succeed
Children in Limit Situations	Hope for building the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth	Structural sin that leads to limit situations		Authentic Education for common good
Those who will accompany them in community and communion, working for the common good		Ideal of fully-abled people w/ conventional minds and appearance		Unconditional love to mirror the love of God, bring each child to full flourishing, and hasten the coming of the Kingdom

A Catholic, Liberatory Ethical, Framework for Inclusive Catholic Education (Carlson, 2015)

Being diagnosed with a disability, in Martín-Baró’s schema, would place the child in a “limit situation.” However, while a limit situation is often traumatic, it is also often the place of resilience, hope, and creative solutions to problems. Therefore, an important part of the diagnostic process would be an emphasis on the child’s strengths and aspirations. He wrote:

Trauma has a dialectical character...trauma must be understood in relationship between individuals and society... We also have to underscore the possibility that exceptional circumstances, just as they may lead to deterioration or injury, may also lead to people’s growth and development. (Martín-Baró, 1994, p. 124)

Freire, who believed that education isn’t something that is done *for* students, or *to* them, but *with* them, would agree (Freire & Faundez, 1989, p. 34). “The starting point for a political-pedagogical project must be precisely at the level of the people’s aspirations and dreams, their understanding of reality and their forms of action and struggle” (Freire

& Faundez, 1989, p. 27). The goal of education is... “a critical understanding, of the real world which, instead of being simply described, has to be changed” (Freire & Faundez, 1989, p. 6). Just as Freire spoke of the starting point for Latin American peoples as being their aspirations and dreams, so must the beginning point for the disabled community be their own aspiration and dreams. The situation cannot be changed, there cannot be a project or a struggle without hope and vision to provide direction.

Each of the four models empowers marginalized peoples to view reality in a way that takes a skeptical look at history and at their social, economic, and political situation (*conscientization*). This empowerment, in a Christian liberation pedagogy, would begin with the announcement of the Kingdom of God as preached by Jesus, followed by a practice of critical pedagogy that would help those with disabilities to denounce a system that excludes and marginalizes them. While persons with mild to moderate disabilities are capable of that conscientization and making their desires or demands known, that may not be true of those with more severe or profound disabilities. In most liberation theologies, we would lead with the voice of those seeking liberation. However, in the case of those who cannot lead with their own voices, there may need to be a sort of liberation guardian or advocate, most likely the parent or teacher—one who interprets the child’s needs, using scripture, through love, who fights on their behalf.²¹

The community dimension of both education and therapy is sometimes neglected. One of the greatest strengths of all four models is the use of groups—whether called base

²¹ This dichotomy was demonstrated in the late 1800s by Annie Sullivan and her student Helen Keller. Annie, a legally blind orphan, was living in a “poor house” which offered no schooling. She heard that a state superintendent was coming, so she threw herself in front of him and said, “Mr. Sanborn, I want to go to school!” Her “irruption” paid off—he sent her to Perkins School for the Blind. Helen Keller, her student, who was blind and deaf, could not make her needs known, so Annie and Helen’s parents assumed, on Helen’s behalf, that she wanted to learn. Years later, Helen was able to confirm this herself. (Retrieved from American Foundation for the Blind website, www.afb.org/asm/ on 3/21/16.)

groups, support groups, or literacy circles. In these models, the child would never be alone, or seen as one who “doesn’t fit” in a world that fetishizes a conventional intellect, physical perfection, and self-sufficiency. Rather, journeying along the road to the Kingdom in a group provides a collective identity: “A source of collective identity opposes pedagogical norms based on competitiveness and individualism, which reinforce the most anti-social tendencies in people, fomenting in them a selfish perception of reality” (Martín-Baró, 1991, p. 237). These children would be defined not as *disabled children* of a lesser god but as *beloved children* of our God *with disabilities*.

The person-centered language has more than just semantic significance. It allows for a disability to be just one part of who a person is, rather than the defining element. Dignity is enhanced, and a more holistic identity is formed.

Freire often uses the term communion to describe the intimate relationship between people who work together for the common good, to bring about a Utopian society. No learning or growth or revolution can be put upon people--it can only be arrived at together with others. So, an ethical, liberatory pedagogy of disabled persons would raise the consciousness of the rest of us to their marginalization, and would, in company with them, seek remedies and accommodations. An “irruption” of those with disabilities into our consciousness affords us as teachers, principals, priests or therapists a privileged position to accompany persons with disabilities:

This irruption is the source of a collective or communitarian journey toward God...as Bernard of Clairvaux has expressed it in the area of spirituality, it is necessary for us to “drink from our own wells,” from our own experience, not only as individuals, but also as members of a community...through which a people becomes conscious of its human dignity and its value as sons and daughters of God. (Gutierrez, 2011, p. 114)

If the individual with disabilities is viewed as a full member of the community, both those with disabilities and rest of the community must be part of the solution. And, a community seeking the common good, and oriented toward God, cannot help but to find ways to help the “blind to see and the lame to walk,” but *also* to accept those with disabilities as equal in their present states. Perhaps as a part of the community, the academy could begin a discussion of such a pedagogy and see what other theologians, psychologists, educators, philosophers, and those who are differently-abled might add to it. The next chapter will explore this line of thought.

We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that. This allows us to do something, and to do it very well. It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest. We may never see the end results, but that's the difference between the master builder and the worker. We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs. We are prophets of a future not our own.
 ~Attributed to Blessed Oscar Romero

**Chapter 5: The Kingdom Of Heaven Is Upon Us:
 Summary; Interpretation; Limitations; Recommendations and Implications; Conclusion**

Summary

Why do parents desire a Catholic education for their children? Answers vary, but an excellent academic education and education in the Catholic faith (Durow, 2007) are among the top reasons given. Through Catholic schools, the Church hopes to bring children to their full, human flourishing, to recognize their dignity, and to benefit the common good, in line with Catholic Social Teaching. If the Church through its schools offers this to some children, shouldn't it be offered to all, especially the most vulnerable?

This work has summarized the level of services offered to students with special educational needs in Catholic schools and found that children with disabilities are not only underserved, but that there is insufficient research regarding the extent and types of services offered. More importantly, this work has examined the practice of Catholic schools non-admission of students with special needs using: traditional CST, especially the doctrine of St. Thomas Aquinas; virtue ethics; the hermeneutic of real, lived experience; and liberation theologies. Through the light of each of these lenses, current Catholic school practice, in the majority of cases, is unjust. As St. Thomas reminds us, God gave the goods and services of the world for the use of all—not just those who meet certain criteria. The schools, in order to remain true to Christian theological ethics and Catholic

Social Teaching, must begin a practice of *admission, as a rule, with some possible exceptions* for children with special educational needs as opposed to the current process of *non-admission, as a rule, with some possible exceptions*. And, once admitted, they must be included as fully as meets their individual needs.

Liberation theology (Gutierrez, Eiesland), philosophy (Dussel), psychology (Martín-Baró), and pedagogy (Freire, Scanlan) along with Fricker's epistemic injustice all share the viewpoint that our collective understanding is shaped by those in power. Power structures in the Church, business, government, and entertainment promote an image of fully-abled, light-skinned, heterosexual, middle- to upper-class, *individuals* (as opposed to people in community) with conventional intelligence not just as being the norm, but as being the ideal. Instead, the above authors and theories call us, not just to reject the conventional wisdom and stereotypes, but to destroy them. Our first step must be to destroy the old norm-based system of admission to Catholic schools.

Interpretation

My current students, who are pre-service teachers, will often describe the classroom they are assisting in as something like this: a class of 37, half living in poverty, several gifted students, a third learning English and 7 or 8 students with diagnosed disabilities in learning, language, and behavior. They ask me how they are supposed to meet all the needs of each of the learners. I tell them they can't—and yet they must try. I tell them what Mother Teresa said: "God doesn't require us to succeed, he only requires that you try." I also share the quote attributed to Blessed Oscar Romero that began this chapter. Yet, we ask the same question when faced with our task, which seems enormous and

impossible. How can we begin to do justice? We need not know all the answers, but following are some suggestions regarding how to begin this radical re-orientation, based both upon this work and others' work in the field.

If Catholic schools, in response to a moral mandate, offered special educational services for children with disabilities, those services could be enhanced by using a Christian, ethical, and liberatory pedagogy. This pedagogy could draw from Gutierrez, Martín-Baró, Freire, and Dussel, as in this work, along with others. This pedagogy would enhance, but not supplant, a scientific best practices pedagogy/methodology. The locus of this pedagogy would be from the viewpoint of children with disabilities, who are often marginalized. It would begin with, and always be informed by, the annunciation of the Kingdom of Heaven as preached by Jesus, a kingdom in which they occupy a privileged position (Gutierrez). A diagnostic process would follow in which the child's familial, cultural, and religious capital would be recognized. Along with the child's strengths and talents, that capital would be a wellspring from which an educational plan could be drawn. That plan would include problem solving in groups which included other children with disabilities and those who wish to accompany them in faith, hope, and love.

Part of that group process would be a conscientization, a critical reflection of the challenges of children's lives in the current socio-historical moment (limit situations) and a denunciation of shallow standards of perfection (Martín-Baró). Each child's education would be an authentic one, based upon her/his lived experience (or the perceived experience by their advocates or guardians), and would have the goal of bringing each to her/his fullest human flourishing (Freire). Dussel calls the Eucharist a foretaste of the Kingdom of Heaven, and reminds us that all aspects of a just society should mirror

the communion table. Should not Catholic schools, then, look like a banquet for which Jesus drew up the guest list? If we heed this call and work together to bring all to their fullest human flourishing, we begin building the Kingdom on earth. But, where do we begin this huge task, and what might it look like? We can use the chart from Chapter 4 and program summaries from Chapter 1 to start.

Viewpoint/Locus	Annunciation	Denunciation	Conscientization	Goal
Children of God; Children with disabilities, who are marginalized, or considered “other.”	Recognition of dignity of all; Education in academics, social skills, political-economic theory and Catholic faith as a birthright;	Exclusion; Able-ist, classist, racist, sexist or other inauthentic education;	Destruction of old system; Recognition, celebration and utilization of virtues, gifts and strengths found in various cultures, communities, marginalized groups and individuals	Inclusion Universal Design in curriculum and instruction to help each child succeed;
Children in Limit Situations Those who will accompany them in community and communion, working for the common good	Hope for building the Kingdom of Heaven on earth	Structural sin which leads to limit situations Ideal of fully-abled people w/ conventional minds and appearance		Authentic Education for common good: Unconditional love to mirror the love of God, bring each child to full flourishing, and hasten the coming of the Kingdom

A Catholic, Liberatory, Ethical, Framework for Inclusive Catholic Education (Carlson, 2015)

A Liberatory, Ethical Framework for Inclusive Education in Catholic Schools

What do parents expect for their children from a Catholic school? What does the Church wish to impart from a Catholic education? The Church and parents desire the same things for a child with special needs as they do for a non-disabled child: to form

children in the faith, to give them an excellent education, and, most importantly, to bring them to their fullest human flourishing. Dussel tells us that this will be a journey: one that must begin with the child of God as our *locus*, especially a child who is in the “limit situation” of having a disability. Following Aquinas’ teaching that the goods of the earth are here for all, an important prerequisite will be changing our mindset from one of how can we afford to do this monetarily, to one of how can we afford *not* to do this ethically.

We begin with the reality of Catholic schools today. The journey will sometimes be difficult, partly because each child is unique, partly because there are not well-disseminated maps for the road ahead. But there are strengths of Catholic schools that would allow for the kind of sea change that I am pointing to here. For instance, since there is much less bureaucracy than in public schools, changes can be made more quickly. And, because the mission of every Catholic school is rooted in our faith, the theological and philosophical bases to justify the change are already part of the school’s theoretical underpinnings. Most Catholic schools already emphasize the uniqueness, yet equality, of every child, so this would not be a change in that outlook, but a more truthful and just version of it. Additionally, inclusion is a logical extension of the Catholic emphasis on rejection of the shallow ideals of our society. So, this practice of inclusion is a *denunciation* of the “ideal” of the fully-abled child with a conventional intellect.

There could be many starting places for inclusive practices. One logical place to start the journey would be with an *annunciation* on the school’s website and other recruitment materials welcoming all kinds of learners, and announcing that this Catholic school strives to be a place that, like the Eucharist, is a foretaste of the Kingdom of Heaven. Another first step could be to survey parish families, or to put notices in parish bulletins, to

see if families that have children with disabilities would like to enroll them in the parish grade school or a diocesan high school.

One necessary ingredient of inclusion is to practice solidarity and welcome. The Beatitudes' challenge to welcome the stranger has been imagined by a number of authors. Martin Scanlan, who argues for fully inclusive service delivery in Catholic schools in *All are Welcome* says that as Catholics, we are called to welcome "...all comers. This commitment to community, this instinct to include is a core Catholic value" (2009, p. 1). In *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church*, Bryan Massingale (2010) links justice for the marginalized with images from a Black spiritual about the "welcome table," which he depicts as a potent image in African American cultural tradition. His words make the image applicable here, too. He says

First, the image of the 'welcome table' is the polar opposite of exclusion and neglect.Justice is described as being recognized with respect, treated with dignity, welcomed as an equal in social and cultural life, and regarded as fit to be invited to the table (2010, pp. 138-139).

The work of Jeffrey LaBelle with English Language Learners has shown both the importance of decisions that may not even be on our radar screen, such as choosing textbooks that depict *all* kinds of children rather than an exclusionary "ideal" image (LaBelle & Shaw, 2011) and the importance of kindness and patience towards students who may be struggling to fit in (LaBelle, 2007). Doris Walker-Dalhouse and co-author Victoria Risko, in *Be that Teacher!* (2012) have words of both encouragement and urgency for teachers. They point out that students with exceptionalities may have multiple risks for marginalization and exclusion: "Students living in poverty and representing racial and ethnic differences are overrepresented in special education (Artiles & Kozelski, 2007),

underrepresented in gifted education programs (Ford, 1998), and often positioned in classrooms as disabled (Collins, 2011)" (Risko & Walker-Dalhouse, 2012, p. xi). Still, despite the odds against them...

we all know students who return to school each year hoping that this is the year, that you are the teacher who will help them become successful learners, readers and writers. We advocate for instruction that is sensible, grounded in authentic reading and writing engagement, and designed to position students as successful learners. (Risko & Walker-Dalhouse, 2012, p. xi)

My suspicion is that most Catholic school teachers already *are* "that teacher" and understand the importance of community, communion, and the welcome table. As referenced in Chapter 1, they report feeling, in most cases, that they just need more in-service training and a special educator to consult with them, plan with them, and to help them to alter curricular materials and instruction.

Once we have surveyed our applicants for exceptionalities, we can begin to plan for individual needs. Most Catholic schools will not have to be ready to include children with every type of exceptionality from Day 1. Some of the work will have already been done by the diagnostic team that determined the child's areas of disability and/or giftedness. The teachers could then meet with the parents and a consultant from the diagnostic team to begin planning.

So, we have started our journey from the locus of children with special educational needs, announced inclusive schooling and welcome, and denounced exclusion and shallow norms. How do we arrive at our goal, which is an authentic education for the common good and brings all children to their full human flourishing? Risko and Walker-Dalhouse (2012) advocate for teachers to use authentic instructional methods. Authentic instruction encourages the use of real-life problems and gives students the skills to solve

them. The instruction is either: anchored to something of interest to the student (a video, game, puzzle, vexing question, real life problem); has cross-curricular connections; or it is something that the student clearly enjoys reading and learning about. This is compatible with Freire's insistence on meaningful, participatory education during which children solve real life problems. It also honors Martín-Baró's belief that children in limit situations can use their gifts and strengths to achieve heights that we might never have thought possible. These authentic methods are effective with learners across the learning spectrum (Camburn & Wong, 2011), are solidly grounded in cognitive learning theory, and can be initiated by individual classroom teachers.

The most effective changes, though, will not be confined to individual teachers or students, but will be principal-led and school wide. Merely admitting students to Catholic schools does not guarantee that children will be included fully in general education classrooms. To begin the mandated process of radical re-visioning and systemic and systematic change, we can return to the models from the literature review in Chapter 1:

1. *Consultant* models (Durow, 2007; Scanlan, 2008) in which Catholic schools would take advantage of consultant services offered to teachers in private schools serving children with IEPs (funded by IDEA), or children with 504 plans (funded by the Rehabilitation Act) and/or schools might hire consultants with their own funds;
2. *Collaboration* models (DeFiore, 2006; Russo et al., 2002), in which Catholic schools would band together to offer services of one type at each school (i.e. for students with learning disabilities at one school, services for children with cognitive delays at another);

3. *Teacher's Aide/Tutor* models (Crowley & Wall, 2007; Durow, 2007) that use teacher's aides or tutors (or possibly peers) trained to work individually with children diagnosed with special needs, and that often make heavy use of existing technology and software;

4. *Resource Room* models (DeFiore, 2006; Durow, 2007) that follow the public school resource room model of hiring licensed special educators, who “pull out” students for their areas of high need, or in situations when the student’s behavior is dysregulated, and often involve some funding through proportionate set-asides from IDEA; or,

5. *Retraining* models (MacDonald, 2008; Scanlan 2009; Storz & Nestor, 2007) that are based on retraining staff to be fully inclusive through methods such as: Universal Design for Learning (Meyer, Rose, & Gordon, 2014), a multi-step planning process for teachers to present, and students to demonstrate, knowledge and skills; the Pyramid Planning (Gould & Vaughn 2006), which breaks content and products into appropriate levels so that students with varying needs can demonstrate meaningful learning of main ideas: and/or which are patterned after the IDEA program known Response to Intervention, or RtI, with multi-tiered levels of planning and intervention. This type of model usually requires grant money to provide the extensive training needed.

The most successful programs *must all* begin by using the radical re-training model advocated in model 5, but may use elements of most or all of the above. And, the best programs will be those chosen jointly by individual principals, faculty, and staff in which everyone has buy-in after deliberation. These programs must be compatible with the school’s Catholic mission, meet the criteria of justice as defined in CST, with the goods and services belonging to all, and meet the needs of their students.

Special educators as co-teachers may be used in any model, as can teacher's aides and tutors. In the best cases, they can form Vygotskian scaffolding using a team approach. However, if the tutors and aides are not well-trained, or if the aides and special educators are not equal members of the planning team, these accommodations may fail. Student group work and peer tutoring can also be used in any model, and may help to impart solidarity and community *if* students understand the mutual benefits, and if the teacher plans group work using students' various gifts well.

Probably the strongest models, following the example of Frattura and Capper (2007), involve retraining and realigning faculty members, and reallocating funds.²² Not only will this create a more efficient, just, and effective system, but it will benefit all students by focusing on ever-changing individual and group needs. Frattura and Capper's program, Integrated Comprehensive Services™ (ICS) is one that would require extensive faculty and staff retraining and make use of special education teachers. However, one of their main principles is that whether or not a child needs the services of a special education teacher, full inclusion is standard practice.

Drawing on their work and the work of Fitzgibbons et al. (2008), Scanlan has proposed a version of ICS™ which relies on special education consultants and "Care Teams" as an effective way for Catholic schools to reach and teach marginalized children. "Care Teams are groups of key educators in the school community who meet regularly to address situations in which students are facing difficulties" (Scanlan, 2009, p. 49). These Care Teams have a core of professionals from the school who have undergone training,

²² One way that our Catholic High school faculty and administrators helped to fulfill the part of our mission that sought to help the 75% of our students who would be the first generation in college, was that we agreed to substitute teach for one another. We then used the sub money to hire an additional guidance counselor to help the college-bound get admitted, and to succeed once they were in college.

but they may also contract with outside experts when needed. Scanlan feels that anything less than full inclusion is antithetical to CST. I suspect Scanlan, Frattura, and Capper may be right, but I have a more equivocal view.

“Full” inclusion means that each student spends the entire day with his/her peers in a general education classroom, rather than being “pulled out” for parts of the day. I contend that full inclusion should be the norm. However, some of my former students did not function well in a noisy or visually busy environment. When Colleen Capper presented at a Department of Public Instruction Seminar I attended, I told her I was almost convinced about full inclusion, and my heart told me it was right, but then I thought about a former student named David. David periodically became overwhelmed by a number of things and either needed to go to a sterile wooden carrel and put on earphones or to curl up in the fetal position in the back of my resource room, cover his ears, and rock until he felt better. This could prove distracting to other students and/or embarrassing to a student who was overwhelmed. I told Colleen that I thought it was important for students like David to have somewhere to go, such as a resource room. She thought about it and said that maybe what was needed was a room where *anyone* could go when they were overwhelmed. This would take away the stigma and also allow students who weren’t diagnosed with a disability, but were going through some sort of life trauma, to use the room. She may be right.

What we do agree on is that all the children in the school “belong” to all faculty and all staff members, and, with training, every member will be ready to act as part of the team. We would also agree that there is no “one size fits all” model for students with or

without disabilities. The key is, through the diagnostic and Individual Educational Planning (IEP) process, to choose placements, curriculum, and instructional practices that are compatible with a student's inherent dignity, utilizing their strengths and accommodating their disabilities. There are challenges in providing therapies and medical services for the small percentage students with multiple and/or profound disabilities. Focusing on what will bring them to their fullest flourishing and treating them with the dignity which is their birthright will be the key in deciding if a child can be served in the local Catholic school or if there may be a consortium of Catholic schools which could provide services. If there is public school placement, there must be outreach, through programs of religious education such as the Special Religious Education program, (SPRED, www.spred-chicago.org) or the *Adaptive Finding God Program* (www.loyolapress.com/special-needs-products.htm) that will allow children to participate fully in the sacramental life of the Church.

I think we would also agree with the liberationists that being part of a loving, diverse, egalitarian, and inclusive community makes us all stronger. I was able to witness the power of love in a recent classroom visit. I was observing pre-service teachers in an elementary school where a former student, Dana, was student teaching. She had given me an open-ended invitation to visit any time. She and her cooperating teacher had decided that the most effective way to teach their 30 first graders was to split the class in two and have each of them be responsible for 15 children. Both teachers understood the importance of building relationships, and also understood that it is easier and more effective with 15 than with 30. I knocked on the door, and entered to find Dana and her 15 first graders in a rather cramped classroom created by an accordion divider. They had

formed their chairs into a circle, and they were eating breakfast together. All of her students were eligible for free breakfast due to poverty levels, all of them were African American, and it was estimated that almost 20% of the students had diagnosed disabilities.

It was close to the end of the school year. I introduced myself as Dana's teacher, and said she had told me how kind they were, and what good readers they were. Reading by the end of first grade would be a given in most schools, but, this particular school was one of the lowest performing in the city and was plagued with poorly prepared faculty and/or staff and/or administration and the problems common to school in poverty. I asked, "Which of you are learning to be good readers?" and looked at each child in turn around the circle. Each child said he or she could read, or they nodded shyly. Roughly halfway around the circle, a little boy, who was obviously a class leader, stood up. He said that he could read, and then thoughtfully looked at each child, and said, "Yeah, he can read, she just learned to read, he's reading now..." Then he paused and looked at the remaining students and said proudly, "Yeah, *we all* coming along. *We all* reading now." He beamed as he gestured to the whole group. It was everything I could do to hold back tears. Dana had been well trained in reading methods. But, just as importantly, Dana had built a community of love, a community where each child was responsible for the success of all, and that community had pushed, pulled and dragged each child along so that everyone would be a reader at the end of the first grade. That is the power of love.

Limitations

There are a number of limitations to this work. Following are those that I am aware of. One blessing in disguise is that there has been a recent increase in the number of papers being written, and websites and programs springing up, which means that this work may not contain the most recent literature. So, while the new publishing is limiting for this work, it bodes well for children with disabilities. Another limiting factor was the localization of many of the papers that I referenced, which may make it difficult to generalize results to different populations. Additionally, the literature I worked from was frustratingly incomplete, particularly in term of what special education services are offered, to whom and by whom. The interdisciplinary focus of this work, itself, could be thought of as a limitation. Although it has been a strength to be able to make a theological and philosophical argument to support the main work of my life, special education, people may prefer scholarship that is either pure social science or pure humanities. Additionally, while this type of scholarship has allowed me to focus on a very specific problem in depth, the breadth of study across the disciplines is not as great as it would be in a single-discipline. The certainty with which I approached this argument is also a limitation. I admit that I am so blinded by my interpretation of the Gospel message that I never seriously entertained the notion that denying admission to students with special needs was just, thus, making me susceptible to “Loneranian blind spots” or confirmation bias. Although I read widely and was lucky to have devil’s advocates to assist me along the way, my belief in the social justice teachings of Jesus never left me with much doubt about what Jesus would do. As I write those words, I understand that they are dangerously close to those used by religious fanatics. I can only hope that using sources ranging from the voices of the disabled, to Scripture, to Aquinas to twentieth and twenty-first century

educators, theologians, and philosophers focusing on the common good has helped me not to fall victim to extremist thought.

Recommendations and Implications

Second only in importance to changing the admissions process and inclusionary practices, Catholic colleges and universities must step up and lead in several ways.

Catholic teacher education programs must immediately begin to: prepare general education teachers to expect inclusion as a rule and equip them with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions which will make them successful in inclusion classrooms; prepare students to become special education teachers, at both undergraduate and graduate levels; and, work more closely with service learning offices to provide field placements for Catholic schools which are practicing inclusive learning.

Catholic universities must: examine creative solutions to the “publish or perish” practice, which makes it difficult for faculty to get release time to work with Catholic school teachers who teach students with special needs; consider, in lieu of some publishing, that faculty be allowed to either provide in-service or participant research opportunities; provide reduced-price classes for principals and teachers of Catholic schools (as some do now); and, form consortiums with other local colleges, diocese and Catholic schools in projects such as Milwaukee’s GMCEC (Greater Milwaukee Catholic Education Consortium, www.gmcec.com), which provides in-service, expertise, and support for local Catholic schools.

For those in power (whether persuasive or decision-making) at national or local levels: The **USCCB** must re-teach the inclusion that was so clearly outlined in the *Pastoral Statement of U.S. Catholic Bishops on Persons with Disabilities (1988)*; **Local bishops** must examine the practice in their own diocese and encourage inclusion both through their leadership and through providing assistance in navigating the red tape of federal funding and private grants.

The **NCEA** must move from the role of benevolent encourager to fearless leader in espousing the expectation that children with exceptionalities will be admitted to Catholic schools. They must find out, as soon as possible, how many children with special needs are served by Catholic schools, in what way, and by whom. This could be accomplished by merely adding to the questions that the NCEA already asks of schools in their annual surveys. While the NCEA now provides some links on its website, it should establish a clearinghouse of “what works” in conjunction with the **National Catholic Partnership on Disability (NCPD)**. This could link Catholic special education sites such as <http://www.fullinclusionforcatholicschools.org>, which is dedicated to full inclusion in Catholic schools, to more localized sites such as the Catholic Coalition for Special Education in the Washington DC/Maryland area (www.ccse-maryland.org) and non-Catholic best practice sites such as the IRIS Center (<http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/>) which links with higher education and government sites. **Catholic education journals** must continue and increase their efforts in soliciting and disseminating ideas for funding, differentiation, and inclusion.

Catholic School **Superintendents** must either hire someone to coordinate public/private services, especially for the diagnostic and consultation processes, or provide a

list of consultants to local schools. **Principals (and/or their pastors and/or their boards)** must listen virtuously to the families who approach them for admission. They must begin by adjusting credibility upward, meaning that they give the wisdom and witness of the families of the disabled the same just hearing that they would give to families of non-disabled children. They must also include self- or parent-advocates for those with disabilities on the committee of those who decide admissions policy. They must keep in mind that, as Aquinas said, the goods and services of the earth belong to *all* of us—not just those who arrived first at the table. The existing funds for Catholic schools do not belong only to those who have bodily or intellectual privilege, any more than food belongs to only those with monetary privilege.

Finally, to those who are most important to students, but have the least power:

Teachers must open their minds and hearts and make every effort to structure lessons so that every student can be successful, remembering that success might look different for different children. Practices such as Tiered Lessons (Dodge, 2005), the Planning Pyramid (Gould & Vaughn 2006), Universal Design (Tomlinson & McTighe, 2006) take time to learn, but are ultimately beneficial to ALL students.

Conclusion

According to Church teaching, what is the Church called to do through its schools for children with disabilities? It is called to admit them and to give them the best Catholic faith formation and academic education possible, alongside other children, as befits their dignity.

Why is full inclusion such an important ideal? Throughout this work there has been a strong current of liberatory disability theology, along with its links to other liberation theologies, the virtues of justice and prudence, and CST. However, I have not held up the very purest, highest forms of these theologies, such as the challenge issued by the work of Jon Sobrino, a prominent Latin American liberation theologian. Sobrino (1994, 2008) wrote that if we are not poor ourselves, if we are not the crucified peoples ourselves, we must either join them in their poverty or their struggle, or actively help them to free themselves from poverty or other crucifixion. Without that, there is *no* salvation for the rest of us. No salvation.

So, a kind of radical witness and solidarity is called for. Hans Reinders (2008) issues a similar call to what liberation theology asks of us. The strongest part of Reinders' book is his summary of the story of L'Arche, and its founder Jan Vanier. Similar to Dorothy Day's deep commitment to the poor through the Catholic Worker Movement (in which people choose to live in voluntary poverty with the poor) Vanier founded the L'Arche communities²³ for those without disabilities (called the assistants) to choose to live in friendship with those with disabilities (called community members). Reinders quotes an assistant, Odile Ceyrac, who equates the community members with the "poor" of the beatitudes, and who says the poor bring us to the recognition of our own prejudices, handicaps and weaknesses:

The most important and most difficult thing, Ceyrac indicates, is to learn to see *oneself* in truth. Given the reality that persons with intellectual disabilities confront us with, this truth is about limitation, about fear, sometimes even about disgust. Most of all it is about learning to see one's own brokenness. (Reinders, p. 339, *Italics author's.*)

²³ For a fuller explanation of L'Arche, see Jan Vanier's *An Ark for the Poor: The Story of L'Arche*. (New York, NY: Crossroads Publishing. 1995).

One of the risks of accompanying persons with disabilities on the journey toward the Kingdom of Heaven is that it is often painful for the temporarily able-bodied, who can suddenly see only too well the ways we have ignored or been insensitive to Jesus' message in the Beatitudes. The irruption of the disabled into the consciousness of the typically abled exposes the rupture in our notion of full communion. The journey towards that communion holds reminders of our inability to "fix" people or situations—and holds the knowledge that it is inappropriate to even desire to "fix" someone who is not broken, but different. The example of L'Arche is probably as close as we can come to the eschatological reality of the Kingdom of Heaven here on earth. And, for most of us, it is a shining ideal to strive for, but something most of us will never be able to bring ourselves to do (any more than many of us would sell our possessions and live in a Catholic Worker House in voluntary poverty). What can we do short of that? We will never be in full communion, never be the body of Christ, without *all* of our members. By admitting children with exceptionalities to Catholic schools, by including those who remind us of the "broken" or "marked" body of Christ, we may get our closest glimpse of the Kingdom of Heaven.

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