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# TEN DIMENSIONS OF INCLUSION: NON-CATHOLIC STUDENTS IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

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*This article addresses the inclusion of non-Catholic students in Catholic schools. It provides a brief review of the literature on inclusion and the results of a study of inclusion from the perspectives of Catholic students and Catholic teachers in four Western Canadian urban Catholic high schools. The study employed grounded theory as its methodology and focus groups as well as documentary analysis as its methods. The results of the qualitative study indicate, among other things, that there are at least 10 dimensions to inclusion: pedagogical, social, psychological, racial, cultural, spiritual, political, financial, legal, and philosophical. Moreover, the dimensions form an interactive matrix which is of great importance to Catholic schools.*

## INTRODUCTION

The Catholic Church, with over 1 billion members, is international in its scope with Catholic schools present on every continent and in most countries of the world. In Canada, three Canadian provinces—Ontario, Alberta, and Saskatchewan—provide public funding for Catholic schools as they are constitutionally protected separate schools (Donlevy, 2005).

This researcher's children attended Catholic high schools and during those years, observed that many of their friends were non-Catholic students and hence began a study (Donlevy, 2003) into the presence of non-Catholic students in Catholic schools. That study involved a review of the relevant literature and focus group interviews with 75 Catholic students and 36 Catholic teachers. There were several research questions, but the relevant question for this paper was "What dimensions are evident in the phenomenon of inclusion?"

In reviewing the literature, there was an evident paucity of information dealing with the topic. In fact, after a search which included contacting individuals in the United Kingdom, Australia, the United States of America, and Canada, all that was revealed was a small 25-page, opinion-based pamphlet

entitled, "The Non-Catholic in the Catholic School" (Hawker, 1987), a short comment in a recent book (Mulligan, 1999), a series of qualitative studies primarily from one researcher (Francis, 1986), and a tangentially relevant number of doctoral and masters degree theses (Burwell, 2005; Cummings, 1996; Penn, 1985; Seeley, 2000; Jelinski, 1994). In all other respects, the academic literature was silent. Ostensibly, the topic seemed by this lack of attention to be of little significance to the Catholic community. However, further examination indicated the contrary.

## THE SIGNIFICANCE

The Ontario Catholic School Trustees Association (OCSTA, 2000) identified what they believed to be one of the major issues facing Catholic education in *Our Catholic Schools: A Report on Ontario's Catholic Schools & Their Future*,

Many are worried about internal factors that could threaten our existence. Some refer to this threat as the dilution of our Catholic education and attribute it to trends that seem to be occurring more frequently. Many wondered if the increasing number of non-Catholic students who are present in the secondary schools would change the tone of the school. (p. 17)

Mulligan (1999) quotes an Ontario Catholic school chaplain who says, "It is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to maintain, let alone deepen, the Catholic character of the school with...a large [32%] non-Catholic population" (p. 182).

In the United States (McDonald, 2000), the number of non-Catholic high school students in inner-city Catholic schools is often a majority of the student body, and on average, the number of non-Catholic students is approximately 13.5% of the student body (McDonald, 2004b). In Western Australia's four dioceses, Roger Walsh related that

each local Bishop sets the level of non-Catholic enrollments for the schools in his diocese. This is monitored by the Catholic Education Office. As a rough guide, the maximum non-Catholic enrollment in metropolitan schools...is about twenty percent....In rural dioceses, the non-Catholic ratio is around thirty percent. (personal communication, November 2001)

Although no reason for limiting the inclusion of non-Catholic students was given, the restriction and monitoring of the level of inclusion indicated the importance of the issue for Western Australia's Catholic schools.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the number of non-Catholic students in Canada's constitutionally protected Catholic separate schools varies widely from district to district and within each district from school to school but

that, depending upon the school district, it may range from 12% to 35% (P. Donlevy, personal communication, July 2004). The phenomenon of inclusion is significant both in numbers and to the ethos of Catholic schools (Francis & Gibson, 2001).

Researching inclusion in four urban Catholic high schools in the province of Saskatchewan, involved four points of investigation: the documents of the Church, academic papers, readings from various non-academic authors, and focus group research in those schools.

This essay will (a) briefly review the literature on inclusion, (b) provide an explanation of the methodology and methods used in the study, and (c) discuss the findings of the research in terms of 10 dimensions that emerged.

## PART I :

### A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE OF INCLUSION THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND INCLUSION

The Church Fathers of Vatican II gave the invitation to non-Catholics, Christian and non-Christian alike, to send their children to Catholic schools. In *Gravissimum Educationis* (Vatican II, 1965/1996b) the Church stated,

the Church considers very dear to her heart those Catholic schools...which are attended also by students who are not Catholics....This Sacred Council of the Church earnestly entreats pastors and all the faithful to spare no sacrifice in helping Catholic schools fulfill this function...especially in caring for the needs of those...who are strangers to the gift of faith. (§9)

In *Dignitatis Humanae* (Vatican II, 1965/1996a), the Fathers spoke of “the right of man [sic] to religious freedom” and that “no one therefore is to be forced to embrace the Christian faith against his own will” (§2) and that “in matters religious every manner of coercion on the part of men [sic] should be excluded” (§9). Indeed, it appears as though the Church had “accepted religious pluralism as integral to human freedom” (McDonald, 2004a, p. 209).

The Congregation for Catholic Education (CCE, 1977) stated in *The Catholic School*, “the Catholic school offers itself to all, non-Christians included, with all its distinctive aims and means, acknowledging, preserving and promoting the spiritual and moral qualities, the social and cultural values, which characterize different civilizations” (§85).

In 1979, John Paul II in his apostolic exhortation, *Catechesi Tradendae*, spoke of the ecumenical dimension of catechetics, which would apply to adult and Catholic school religious instruction, stating that,

a correct and fair presentation of the other Churches and ecclesial communities that the Spirit of Christ does not refrain from using as means of salvation...[as] the Church herself, can exist outside the visible boundaries of the Catholic Church...[would in effect] help non-Catholics to have a better knowledge and appreciation of the Catholic Church and her conviction of being the universal help toward salvation. (§32)

In 1982, the CCE stated in *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith*, “every person has a right to an integral education, an education which responds to all of the needs of the human person” (§3).

At times there are students in Catholic schools who do not profess the Catholic faith, or perhaps are without any religious faith at all. Faith does not admit of violence; it is a free response of the human person to God as He reveals Himself. Therefore, while Catholic educators will teach doctrine in conformity with their own religious convictions and in accord with the identity of the school, they must at the same time have the greatest respect for those students who are not Catholics. They should be open at all times to authentic dialogue, convinced that in these circumstances the best testimony that they can give of their own faith is a warm and sincere appreciation for anyone who is honestly seeking God according to his or her own conscience. (§42)

By 1988, however, the CCE had changed its tone somewhat on the topic of inclusion in *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*. It reiterated the invitation and that “the religious freedom and the personal conscience of individual students and their families must be respected” but went on to say,

On the other hand, a Catholic school cannot relinquish its own freedom to proclaim the Gospel and to offer a formation based on the values to be found in a Christian education; this is its right and its duty. To proclaim or to offer is not to impose, however; the latter suggests a moral violence which is strictly forbidden, both by the Gospel and by Church law. (1988, §6)

The invitation was again extended in 1997 by the CCE in *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, saying that, among many other important things but in particular that the institution “[Catholic education] is not reserved to Catholics only, but is open to all those who appreciate and share its qualified educational project” (§16).

To summarize, the Catholic Church invites all who sincerely wish to share and participate in the objectives of Catholic education to enter the Catholic school community. The promise is of a Christian-based education

within a faith community where knowledge of the Catholic faith is taught, lived, and shared with non-Catholics. They are sincerely invited to dialogue with others about their faith and beliefs in an atmosphere of both freedom of conscience and religion. It was through these documents that “the Vatican congregation with jurisdiction over the educational institutions in the Church [had] asserted control over Catholic schools at the pre-university level” (Nuzzi, 2004a, p. 17).

Although Rome had spoken, each country was to interpret the above documents in their implementation. In the United States, reference may be made to four documents, *To Teach as Jesus Did* (National Conference of Catholic Bishops [NCCB], 1972), *Teach Them* (United States Catholic Conference [USCC], 1976), *Sharing the Light of Faith* (USCC, 1979), and *Renewing Our Commitment to Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools in the Third Millennium* (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops [USCCB], 2005). However, in Canada the voice of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops has not produced similar guidance. Therefore, it was with the above Vatican documents in mind that the study was commenced in the province of Saskatchewan. As in Canada each province has constitutional responsibility for education, it is reasonable and important to set the statutory stage for inclusion within that province (Constitution Act, 1867).

The Saskatchewan legislature has addressed the issue of inclusion. Section 145 of the Education Act, 1995, provides for the inclusion of non-Catholic students in Saskatchewan’s Catholic high schools. Although student compliance with a Catholic school’s policies is mandated, the substance of those policies is left with the local Catholic school board and, in practice for special cases, the school principal.

In Saskatchewan, the Education Act, 1995, provides, in part, that non-Catholic students have a statutory right to attend Catholic high schools subject to completing the appropriate declaration and a willingness to comply with Catholic school board policies. Section 145 (1) reads,

Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, any person who is a resident of a city in which a public school division and a separate school division have been established may declare his or her intention to enroll one or more of his or her children who are eligible to register in Grade 9, 10, 11 or 12 in a school in either the public school division or the separate school division.

Further, subsection 3 prohibits charging tuition from non-Catholic students who choose to attend the Catholic high school. Subsection (3) reads,

(3) Where a declaration of intention is made pursuant to this section, the maker of the declaration is entitled, on behalf of his or her children, to access without

tuition to a public high school or a separate high school in the school divisions affected.

Lastly, subsection 5 states that student compliance with the policies of the Catholic school board is both a condition for the non-Catholic student's enrollment and continued attendance at the Catholic high school.

(5) Notwithstanding subsection 182(3), where a pupil attends a public high school or a separate high school as the result of making a declaration of intention pursuant to this section, the pupil shall abide by all the policies of the board of education of the school division in which the high school is situated, including any policies relating to religious instruction, religious activities and other programs conducted by the high school.

In sum, in Saskatchewan, the Education Act, 1995, provides that non-Catholic students may attend Catholic high schools if they are willing to participate in certain religious activities as stated by the local Catholic school. The four Catholic high schools which were part of the study which founded this paper all required the attendance of non-Catholic students at their schools' religious and liturgical services. However, in one case, a school administrator was willing to consider on a case-by-case basis a dispensation from that unwritten policy if there was a strong resistance by one or two non-Catholic (and for that matter Catholic) students if their reasons for seeking the dispensation were not frivolous or vexatious, but rather faith-based. That administrative position was not endorsed by other Catholic school administrators, and as one Catholic teacher of Christian ethics stated, "If we didn't say that everybody had to go [to school Church services] almost no students would go!"

In keeping with the documents and statutes mentioned above, non-Catholic students are welcome within the Catholic school which promises to respect those students' freedom of religion and conscience while requiring a *quid pro quo* of respect for others and a willingness to participate, albeit in a limited way, in the religious life of the school community. The idea of inclusion sounds positive, but there have been dissenting voices. Francis and Gibson (2001) suggest that, "the presence of non-Catholic pupils may...have a deleterious impact on the overall school ethos as reflected in the attitude toward Christianity of the student body as a whole" (p. 52). The Canadian Catholic Schools Trustees' Association (CCSTA; 2005) notes that inclusion had become a major issue in Saskatchewan in 2004-2005, as public school districts sought financial compensation for the loss of students to Catholic school systems.

The urban public school boards in Saskatchewan have challenged the government's funding of non-Catholic students attending Catholic schools. This ongoing constitutional challenge would have major implications for Catholic schools not only in Saskatchewan but possibly Canada-wide, should a decision be reached to fund only Catholic students in Catholic schools. Catholic provincial associations and the CCSTA are working closely with the Saskatchewan Catholic School Section on this important issue.

Moreover, the Saskatoon (Saskatchewan) Board of Education wrote the Saskatchewan Minister of Education a letter dated October 9, 2001, stating, among other things, its concern regarding the deleterious impact which inclusion at a Catholic high school was having upon the public school system in that "at least 300 non-Catholic students attend St. Joseph [the Catholic high school]....We are also concerned that our elementary school enrollments...suffer because some non-Catholic parents have decided to start their young people in Catholic elementary schools" (D. Morgan, personal correspondence, October 9, 2001).

Mulligan (1999), as earlier stated, echoes the above concern, believing that the inclusion of non-Catholic students in Catholic schools, "is a concern common to Catholic educators in Ontario, Saskatchewan and Alberta" (p. 182). Mulligan offers four reasons for this difficulty: (a) the mission of the Catholic school is to evangelize Catholic students, not to seek to persuade non-Catholic students to join the faith; (b) school policies require non-Catholic students to accept all Catholic dimensions of the school programs in order to discourage attendance by non-Catholics for mere reasons of convenience; (c) evangelization is not schoolwide nor all inclusive as non-Catholic students cannot receive the sacraments; and (d) religion teachers are hindered in their religious mission as,

How can a teacher, in the same religion class, help students who have an active faith to grow in knowledge and deepen in commitment; try to help the unchurched Catholic students to discover new meaning in the church and faith they have definite but tenuous ties to; and respect a significant number of students for whom Catholic faith is a foreign language that they have no, or next to no, interest in learning about? (p. 183)

Jelinski (1994) found similar concerns among Saskatchewan's Catholic school administrators, examining the procedures, practices, and policies for admission into Saskatchewan's Catholic schools and noted the comments of in-school administrators regarding the perceived difficulties associated with the admission of non-Catholic students. Among those comments: if the number of non-Catholic students is too great, the reason for existing as a Catholic



school is destroyed, the addition of non-Catholic students to non-practicing Catholic students puts a heavy burden on Catholic teachers, the simplification of Catholic teachings to accommodate others weakens the Catholic school's reason for existing, once non-Catholic students are admitted they never undergo reevaluation to determine if they should remain in the system, and younger children do not feel part of the sacramental preparation process.

In sum, the inclusion of non-Catholic students in Catholic schools is a topic whose time has come in Canada and as Francis (1986) suggested in the United Kingdom, "the place of non-Catholic pupils in Catholic secondary schools is a proper subject for educational research" (p. 1).

## **PART II: THE METHODOLOGY, METHODS, AND EMERGENCE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

The methodology chosen for the research into inclusion was objectivist grounded theory. Charmaz (2000) describes grounded theory methodology as being split into two schools: objectivist and constructionist.

The objectivist school is divided into two camps, typified by the works of Glaser (1998) and Strauss and Corbin (1998). Both accept that there is a reality independent of the researcher, and thus Charmaz (2000) designates their methodological schools as proffering an objectivist grounded theory.

Glaser's position often comes close to traditional positivism, with its assumptions of an objective, external reality, a neutral observer who discovers data, reductionist inquiry of manageable research problems, and objectivist rendering of data. Strauss and Corbin's (1998) stance assumes an objective external reality, aims toward unbiased data collection, proposes a set of technical procedures, and espouses verification. Glaser (1992) holds that rigidity is inherent in the quantitative paradigm due to its dependence on an *a priori* research question, strict and prescriptive operating procedures, and its stress on validity and verification of the emerging theory and hypothesis. That is why Glaser and former student, Strauss, developed grounded theory. Glaser argues for a version which stresses that the research question emerges from the data *a posteriori* and that there must be great flexibility in the process of researching wherein the researcher receives guidance from the participants. It is this consonance with basic qualitative flexibility of method that leads to the discovery of understandings and beliefs within the context of the participants' life world. Glaser holds this to be of utmost importance for both research and to the development of theory and further argues that to focus on process methodology rather than the development of theory from the data is wrong-headed and in fact not true grounded theory. In effect, it is

suggested that Glaser's position is reminiscent of the advice to the caterpillar that it ought not to focus on its number of legs or how they move in sequence but on the experience of walking. Glaser (1998) holds that this focus on procedures and method forces data into categories. This "forcing is a normative projection, a learned preconception, a paradigmatic projection, a cultural organization....As the intolerance of confusion increases so does forcing" (pp. 81-82). Glaser's contention is that all data are lost when one focuses upon the process of coding and creating categories,

In prematurely focusing on a theoretical code, such as pacing, or a unit, the researcher becomes lost in description instead of generation of theory with theoretical completeness....Focusing only on one unit fosters (1) the quantitative canons of evidentiary research linked with time and place, such as verification, not generation, and (2) making a false distinction between quantitative and qualitative research. (p. 85)

This researcher chose to employ the objectivist school of grounded theory as posited by Glaser.

## **METHOD**

The Congregation for Catholic Education (CCE, 1988) states, "What makes the Catholic school distinctive is its attempt to generate a community climate in the school that is permeated by the Gospel spirit of freedom and love" (§1). With that statement in mind, it seemed consistent to seek the expression of Catholic students' and teachers' experiences within a group. In other words, it seemed intuitively correct to seek the experiences and meanings of Catholic students and teachers within a group setting. Isolated interviews might have produced individual experiences and meanings. However, those same experiences and meanings when expressed in a group setting could reasonably be expected to spark the memories of others in recalling their experiences and how they viewed them. Therefore, focus group research became the chosen method for this study.

The study dealt with the collection of visual, audio, and thorough transcription of data derived from focus group meetings. Each of four Catholic high schools in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, presented with 10 students from each of Grades 10, 11, and 12. These students were purposefully selected and balanced between genders in each focus group. Each school also provided one focus group pool of 10 Catholic teachers, again, purposefully selected as volunteers by the Christian ethics teachers from their respective schools.

## EMERGENCE OF THE 10 DIMENSIONS

Grounded theory is an inductive methodology which utilizes specific analytical processes: micro-analysis, axial coding, and selective coding. What follows is a brief explanation of those concepts of analysis and how they resulted in the emergence from the raw data of the 10 dimensions of inclusion.

Having completed the video-taping, each tape was viewed twice before any written analysis. Thereafter, the video recordings were transcribed by the researcher, stopping and starting the tapes to grasp what was being said, how it was being said, noting the facial expressions and body language of the participants, and making marginal editorial comments as the process progressed. Words and gestures of the participants were noted in an attempt to understand what was being said not only verbally but also emotively by the participants. Choosing particularly significant moments and text, the researcher focused upon the following questions. Were the expressions repeated frequently by the participants? Were the usages of expressions consistent or were multiple meanings expressed? Were expressions spoken of with emotional intensity and if so, was it consistent with appropriate body language and text? Which ideas were expressed articulately? Were some ideas avoided by the participants, evidenced by their demeanor? Was agreement or disagreement visually evident among the participants when a single participant expressed an idea? The above questions represented the criteria for determining the meaningful and significant events in the video-taped sessions.

Following the above process, a professional transcriber was retained to type the audio portion of the video tapes. Thereafter the texts of those transcripts were compared with the researcher's earlier notes. It was clear that the transcriber's text alone would not have been sufficient to gain an understanding of the participants' ideas in the focus group sessions. The visual cues expressed by non-verbal participants in response to verbal participants' ideas, at times during the sessions, were very valuable in discerning the group's understandings. The initial analysis of the data by the researcher and further analysis using the transcriber's text represented the micro-analysis stage of the analysis.

Following the above analysis, simple and tentative categories of participants' ideas were created which related significant and meaningful ideas expressed in the transcripts. The visual data provided concurrence. Negative concurrence was also noted. This axial coding took into account the contingencies of time and space as well as continua along which a word was used and produced a "thickness" to those categories.

Selective coding followed the above, which related the categories to each other (i.e., Category "A" Community, Category "B" Faith, "Unified

Category” Faith Community). A further review of the video tapes provided depth of data to those categories after which followed a linking of the various unified categories into broader concepts which in turn were inter-related where it appeared to be reasonable to do so. Samples of the process using actual text from the focus group sessions were provided in the final document (Donlevy, 2003).

It was from the above analytical process, as well as data from other sources as stated hereafter, that 10 major categories emerged in relation to inclusion. Other matters were evident in the data, but none had the same significance or clarity as the 10 dimensions.

### **PART III: THE FINDINGS—10 DIMENSIONS**

The study from which this paper was derived was not seeking to discover or examine the various dimensions of inclusion. Rather, it sought to understand the participant Catholic teachers’ and Catholic students’ experiences with inclusion. With that objective in mind, it was expected that pedagogical, social, psychological, spiritual, and philosophical themes would emerge from the focus group sessions. However, secondary themes—racial, cultural, political, financial, and legal—fortuitously become apparent from data supplied by central office administrators, school principals, various pieces of correspondence from third party sources, as well as a reading of the enabling educational statute. These secondary themes, although ostensibly tangential to the basic study, were clearly of great importance to a broader understanding of the phenomenon.

#### **THE FIRST DIMENSION (PEDAGOGICAL)**

The first dimension is pedagogical in nature. Hawker (1987) notes that inclusion requires a specific administrative approach and recommends that non-Catholic student applicants be pre-screened with interviews and that regular subsequent assessments take place to ensure conformity to the denominational norms of the school. However, beyond Hawker’s administrative approach to the issue, there is a much deeper reality which deals with the demand which inclusion implicitly puts on a school’s teaching staff. In particular, it appears to be incumbent upon both administrators and teachers to be sensitive to the non-Catholic student’s sense of being the “other” among the Catholic student body. There is a necessity for recognizing and valuing the individual, notwithstanding disagreement and at times discord in the class, due to the non-Catholic student’s opinions on belief and faith within classes. This means maintaining a balance between an appreciation and respect for difference, yet pursuing the evangelization of the Catholic youth

within the Catholic school community through the clear centrality of the Catholic message. This is not an easy task to achieve or an easy balance to maintain.

## THE SECOND DIMENSION (SOCIAL)

The second dimension is social in nature. In 1982, the CCE stated in *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith*, that it recognized that the communitarian dimension of the person is crucial for a sense of community and spoke of the Catholic school's "communitarian dimension" (§22) and its "communitarian structure" (§24). Secular writers have spoken of communitarianism.

Bellah (1998) describes the nature of a communitarian society saying:

A good community is one in which there is argument, even conflict, about the meaning of the shared values and goals, and certainly about how they will be actualized in everyday life. Community is not about silent consensus; it is a form of intelligent, reflective life, in which there is indeed consensus, but where the consensus can be challenged and changed—often gradually, sometimes radically—over time. (p.16)

Communitarianism is about the individual living in community where the individual maintains free will, but where personhood is formed through common language, values, and concepts, which in turn frame the individual's reality and cause him or her to be related to that world and the people in it with the values of the community. It is not about the individual becoming, it is about belonging. The Catholic school claims to be such a community, seeking to provide its language, values, concepts, and beliefs to Catholic students transmitted through the community both intellectually and experientially, and further by the example of others. This community includes the non-Catholic student and his or her family. In this study, several Catholic students expressed the view that everyone in their school community should be invited and encouraged to join in.

Regarding non-Catholic students, a Grade 10 student said,

It's kinda like [they are]...new people. You want to make them feel comfortable around the school and you don't want them to feel left out so you just...[talk with them but] it's not like feeling sorry for them.

This is especially true during times of crisis within the school. As a Grade 12 student said,

During moments of school crisis the school community gels, both Catholic and non-Catholic students. We'll come together and get down on our knees and...pray...[even non-Catholics] get together [with us to] mourn the loss....They're still coming together in the same way we are. . . .They're just participating in a bit of a different activity. . . .Even though they don't know it they're still praying—they might not do it by crossing themselves....But honestly, I think in their head they're saying...we need some answers for this....I think they're entering a level that we enter when we pray....The faith community is like battling the crisis that's happening outside...or inside the community.

The social dimension of inclusion is based upon a communitarian understanding that espoused common values permeate the group and are crystallized at least in expression at times of crisis, yet difference is also accepted and allowed to flourish in a respectful social atmosphere.

In keeping with that communitarian spirit, it is the Catholic school's "communal emphasis regarding human and Christian existence" (Groome, 1996, p. 108) evidenced by inclusion which stresses the "virtue of solidarity" (John Paul II, 1988, §9).

### **THE THIRD DIMENSION (PSYCHOLOGICAL)**

The third dimension is psychological in nature. Rarely in the academic literature has this dimension been explicitly mentioned with respect to inclusion. It is subtle and less obvious than other dimensions, yet it speaks to the nature of the unstated relationship between the Catholic students (Donlevy, 2006) and teachers and their relationship with non-Catholic students within the school. It comes as no surprise that most teenagers want to belong—to look cool—and not be seen as separate or apart from their peers. Neither do they wish to see others left out. To quote a Grade 10 student:

If you have non-Catholics [in the school] you can benefit from that because...then you wouldn't want to be snobby to them saying they weren't good enough to be around....It gives you the opportunity to practice your faith in accepting people.

The participants in the study asked themselves, "How would I feel being in a minority? How would I want to be treated?" Moreover, when a non-Catholic student was acting out in religion class, a student expressed sincere sympathy for her confusion and lack of direction.

She was in Christian ethics class. She was bitter about [being in class and] not respectful towards the Catholic faith....She sat in the back of the class and made sarcastic comments....It was aimless rebellion....She was creating that

feeling [of separateness although] there was no exclusion coming from us or any hard feelings towards her regarding faith....I felt really bad for her because she was obviously really confused and it seemed like she wanted answers but she was going about it in the totally wrong way.

At the same time, the view was expressed by some student participants that inclusion alleviated the feeling that the Catholic Church could be accused of being a cult or that Catholic students were some sort of “royal family” or only for the “cool.” Many students certainly recognized that inclusion precluded the possibility of a future fear of the “unknown other,” particularly after Grade 12 graduation. A Grade 12 student said,

Everybody has to practice their own beliefs, that’s freedom of speech and... [they] should be allowed to come to school and express [their]...opinion. I kinda feel sorry for people who feel they are a minority...and they have to argue with everybody and be right about everything because it’s them against everyone. [Do you think non-Catholics feel that way?] Yep, some of them.

One student participant who, in a lighter moment remarked that once a non-Catholic student in his class was being rather difficult in challenging the Catholic faith. The Catholic student said, “I feel bad for him cause when he dies all the stuff he says will come back to kick him in the head.”

There was also a concern by Catholic teachers for the comfort level of non-Catholic students. It was stated that not knowing which students were non-Catholic in classes removed possible teacher bias, actual or perceived, and ensured the comfort level of the non-Catholic student in that he or she would not feel publicly marked as different. One Christian ethics teacher stated, “I won’t put my non-Catholics into positions where they are uncomfortable” while another related “I don’t record it [if it is disclosed] and I don’t make a point of remembering it...to prevent bias by me...[or] that they feel it.”

During the teacher focus group sessions, the overall impression was that teachers were well aware of the adolescent angst and meaninglessness prevalent among many teenagers and that it was their task to imbue the following sense in such students,

Trust, trust in the world, because this human being exists—that is the most inward achievement of the relation in education. Because this human being exists, meaninglessness, however hard pressed you are by it, cannot be the real truth. Because this human being exists, in the darkness, the light lies hidden, in fear salvation, and in the callousness of one’s fellow-men the great Love. (Buber, 1947/2002, p. 116)

## **THE FOURTH DIMENSION (RACIAL)**

Inclusion's fourth dimension is race. This is not a topic normally raised in Canadian Catholic schools in relation to non-Catholic students. This is in counterpoint to the United States where O'Keefe (1997) states,

In June 1992, members of the Black Clergy Caucus wrote, "Catholic social teachings have been bold and uncompromising." The sad problem, it added, is that these teachings "are all too often unknown, un-preached, un-taught, and un-believed" (Gibson, 1996, p. 8). Even when they are known, preached, taught and believed they most often are not acted upon, with one clear exception: inner-city Catholic schools. Tentative analysis of the Urban Catholic School Study indicates that most non-Catholic students in these schools are African American. Thus, religious diversity in the schools enhances racial justice. In light of our history of outright discrimination or complicit silence in the face of such behavior, Catholics in the United States must be committed to the welfare of African Americans. (p. 10)

Race, although not ostensibly connected to inclusion in Canada, is however an issue, unspoken perhaps, but an issue nevertheless. In Saskatchewan's urban centers, there is a substantial aboriginal population. Moreover, following the first Gulf War, a significant Islamic population, sponsored by religious groups, immigrated to Canada and settled in Saskatchewan. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the Catholic schools, with their overt set of religious values and an appreciation for religious matters, have been attractive to that religious minority.

In the one school with a significant aboriginal student population, there were no comments by teacher or student participants regarding the aboriginal population in their school respecting inclusion. This leads to the tentative conclusion that there is a distinction between inclusion and that subset of the student population. However, the distinction between race and inclusion was evident in one of the high schools in the study.

## **THE FIFTH DIMENSION (CULTURAL)**

The fifth dimension is cultural in nature. Non-Catholic students enter the Catholic school community without having been acculturated into the rituals, symbols, and practices of the faith.

The purpose of ongoing institutional enculturation is targeted toward the Catholic students, that is, to evangelize and to further socialize them into the Catholic faith community. However, that is not the intention of the institution or the school community with regard to non-Catholic students. From them,



the school requires respect for the denominational norms within the school and adherence as required by statute. The non-Catholic student's previous personal and peer culture might be quite distinct from that of the Catholic school, or at least its espoused behavioral expectations. Further, related to the fourth dimension of race, the non-Catholic student's cultural norms may differ widely from the other students in the school in dress, diet, norms in personal relationships, and the student's understanding of authority and his or her relationship with institutional power structures. Inclusion may therefore have a distinct cultural dimension which ought to be recognized by a prudent school administrator. This administrative sensitivity was noted in the high school with a significant number of Muslim students, as the administrator stated,

We try to be sensitive to their [Islamic students'] religious holidays and to the fact that their dress is not in line with how the other kids dress. We point out in the classes that variety is acceptable and to be honored.

Nuzzi's (2004b) words, although spoken in the American context, ring true for Canadian Catholic schools, "every aspect of society is being touched in some way by the increasing cultural diversity of the...population, multicultural sensitivity will be a special challenge for religious educators in the beginning of the third millennium of Christianity" (p. 78).

### **THE SIXTH DIMENSION (SPIRITUAL)**

The spiritual dimension of inclusion is number six. Nuzzi (2004b) provides details respecting the connection between spirituality and religious instruction and a review of the leading theorists in that area. The study which was the fountainhead for this paper reaffirmed the importance of the spiritual element to Catholic education but also determined that the phenomenon of inclusion impacts that spiritual dimension and should be considered by Catholic schools.

In the study, many Catholic students and some teachers, when confronted with the spiritual and religious views of non-Catholic students, found themselves asking deep questions about their own faith. It is fair to say that most of the student participants separated their faith from their religion. Their faith was viewed as experiential whereas their religion was definitional. Therefore, the term spirituality is used in this dimension as faith experienced by the participants. However, it is useful to describe how the term spirituality is defined by one leading secular educator and a leading Christian educator.

Noddings speaks of the difference between spirituality and religion, at least in so far as the secular school system is concerned, saying, "Spirituality is an attitude or a way of life that recognizes something we might call spirit.

Religion is a specific way of exercising that spirituality and usually requires an institutional affiliation. Spirituality does not require an institutional connection” (as cited in Halford, 1998, p. 1).

Groome (1998) suggests that,

In Christian tradition, the spirit in spirituality is also God’s Spirit. The Holy Spirit moves within human spirits to entice us into relationship with God and to allow this primary relationship to permeate all relationships—with self, others, and the world. Christian spirituality, then, is a partnership between God’s Spirit and human spirits—working in kinship. Spiritual growth is a lifelong journey, sustained by God’s Spirit through our own, into living as a people of God. (p. 325)

The difference between the two definitions is striking. Nodding’s spirituality is singular, individualized, whereas Groome’s definition requires as a prerequisite, community and relationship with others, especially the Holy Spirit. This is consistent with what Groome (1998) calls a Christian cosmology. It was Groome’s perspective which was evident in both the teacher and student focus groups.

One Christian ethics teacher remarked, in recounting a story involving a contentious non-Catholic student in a Christian ethics class:

[Non-Catholic] kids...their faith has been made stronger by having that individual in my class, and my faith and my knowledge have increased tenfold since the beginning of this semester, because I’m on my toes, more aware, and having to explain the Catholic faith more because he’s in my class....He challenges everyone in the class, for good though. At the beginning of the class, it was annoying. I’ll say it was annoying! He stimulates conversation, and if anything, I’m more excited to go to my church on Sunday.

Teachers (Donlevy, in press-b) have had moving experiences in their relationships with non-Catholic students. “When you have a non-Catholic kid, who you know is non-Catholic, come to you and ask you to pray for her family, you know you’ve done something beyond just Catholicism. There’s more to it than just being Catholic.”

Included in significance was the concept of opportunity, both for the “other” to grow in an understanding of the Catholic faith, but also for the Catholic student to practice her or his faith. A Grade 10 student said,

Non-Catholic people help me grow my faith not so much that they share views...not that I’m going to convert, I’m still Roman Catholic, but they make me view something different in...[my] life. [I think] Oh yeah! That would be an interesting way to praise God.

Moreover, it is the presence of the non-Catholic student and thus the relationships which Catholic students have with their non-Catholic friends in the school, which demand that the Catholic student listen and accept the others for who they are as persons and thus live the ideals or beliefs of acceptance, understanding, and respect. To quote one Grade 11 student, "We need these people [the non-Catholics] to put into practice Jesus' teachings."

There was no distinction made by teachers or Catholic students regarding the exact nature of the non-Catholic students' religion or lack thereof. Indeed, for the Catholic students it was often a surprise to find out that one of their friends was a non-Catholic and if it became known it was usually self revealed.

In the case of the majority of the student participants, spirituality meant faith and faith meant experiences which were related to something communal, larger than the individual, based upon relationships and to which they were emotionally affected. Religion was a conceptual construct proffered to them by teachers and the Church. Teachers were more closely divided and tended to perceive spirituality or faith as the lived experience of a religion: not necessarily the Catholic religion. As earlier stated, Groome's (1998) perspective was present in both the teacher and student focus group sessions. It is this phenomenological approach to a spirituality of faith, orthopraxis, rather than what many saw as the pre-Vatican II catechetical approach, orthodoxy or catechesis, that dominated the focus group sessions (Rummery, 2001). The study certainly confirmed Nuzzi's (2004b) statement that, "the spiritual quest of many young adults can properly be understood as a search for more instruction and more catechesis, for more information and more personal relevance" (p. 68). This topic is discussed in more detail under the 10th (philosophical) dimension.

## **THE SEVENTH DIMENSION (POLITICAL)**

Politically there is also an interest, at least where public funding is provided to Catholic schools, to exhibit an inclusionary vision as the unspoken but accepted *quid pro quo* for public support for Catholic schools.

Indeed, it is arguable that there is an implied social contract between Saskatchewan's Catholic schools and the broader society. The argument goes like this, "If Catholic schools want to continue to receive public funding, which they do in Ontario, Alberta, and Saskatchewan, it behooves them to have an open climate where non-Catholic students from any or no faith may attend Catholic schools." Some might say that this is a poor argument as Catholic schools in Ontario, Alberta, and Saskatchewan have a constitutional right to such funding: excepting for high schools in Ontario. That is so, but

the Catholic schools in Newfoundland-Labrador had such constitutional protection and have lost it.

Beyond the constitutional argument, it is helpful to say to the Canadian body politic that Catholic schools benefit all of society, as they contribute to the society's common good as the Catholic school's focus on community, referred to under the second (social) dimension, can result in "a potentially unique contribution" to the common good in society (Hollenbach, 1996, p. 100).

This strengthens the argument for public funding of Catholic schools at least in the three provinces earlier mentioned. By welcoming non-Catholic students into Catholic schools, its political capital may grow among the body public, protecting it in times of political pressure for it to dissolve into one public school system.

A third political consideration is sometimes seen as the Catholics' secret, insofar as the participating school district is concerned. When the participating school district was asked for information about the number of registered non-Catholic students, that information was not disclosed. A school district administrator said, "We don't make those figures public because we don't want the public school system to know them." There was no further explanation offered. Certainly the letter from the Saskatoon Public School Board to the Minister of Education in Saskatchewan (D. Morgan, personal correspondence, October 9, 2001) provides ample reason for this administrative response to that question.

It appears that there is thus a political dimension to inclusion respecting the number of non-Catholic students allowed into Catholic schools. Moreover, on the school level, it is a political question respecting how much input many non-Catholic parents should have in the Catholic schools' parent-advisory councils. In one case, a diocesan priest attended such a meeting in Saskatchewan to find that none of the elected parent representatives for that school's parents' council were Catholic. Is this a concern? Yes, but the political concern is not that non-Catholic parents are involved in their children's school, but rather that Catholic parents failed to become involved, let alone take a leadership role in the parent-advisory council. Politically, such news made public would have caused scandal in the school district. The diocesan priest quickly appointed Catholic parents to that council.

## **THE EIGHTH DIMENSION (FINANCIAL)**

The eighth dimension of inclusion deals with finance. In Saskatchewan, school districts have two sources of funding. The first is from the municipal mill rate which is set by the local public and separate (Catholic) school boards. In the normal course a municipality's public and Catholic school

boards act in concert, by way of a “gentlemen’s agreement,” to ensure that their mill rates are the same in order to prevent municipal rate-payers from choosing to send their children to the least expensive school district.

The second source of funding for each school board comes directly from the Saskatchewan government in the form of a grant. In 2005, the provincial government paid school districts the following sums for each student registered within their jurisdiction: Kindergarten (\$2,478), Grades 1-5 (\$2,478), Grades 6-9 (\$5,070), and Grades 10-12 (\$5,618).

Although the actual cost of educating a student in a school district varies from district to district, it normally costs more per student than the value of the grant. Hence, Catholic school districts which admit non-Catholic students receive the provincial grant but not that student’s parents’ municipal tax levy, thereby subsidizing such attendance (Paslawski, personal communication, October 12, 2005). The public school districts’ position is that a portion of the grant for each non-Catholic student attending Catholic schools should be allocated to the public school system, or another source of funds used to compensate the public school system for the loss of the grant.

Beyond the above, once a Catholic school district has admitted non-Catholic students at, for the sake of argument, approximately 30% of the student population, that percentage translates into buildings, supplies, support staff, teachers, and administrators to serve those students (Donlevy, in press-a). Further, all of those requirements coalesce into various vested interests, largely unarticulated, involving teachers, administrators and the Catholic school bureaucracy itself, to maintain, if not expand, the presence of non-Catholic students in the Catholic school district. This very concern was stated by Mulligan’s (1999) research into Canada’s Catholic schools, which noted that some districts actually recruit non-Catholic students into Catholic schools. What results is, paradoxically, an economic and bureaucratic dependence on inclusion. This financial dimension of inclusion can affect the formation, or lack thereof, of a district’s inclusionary policy. It is ironic that Saskatchewan’s Catholic high schools which are compelled by statute to accept any high school student who seeks admission were founded for reasons of faith, and for which so much was sacrificed by the originating members of the Catholic community, should now be in a situation where their financial security is defined at least in part by the apparent financial dimension of inclusion.

## **THE NINTH DIMENSION (LEGAL)**

The legal dimension of inclusion is well known, at least in part, by school administrators (Donlevy, 2002). Within the province where the study was conducted, the law figures prominently in the issue of inclusion.

As stated earlier, in the Province of Saskatchewan the *quid pro quo* of constitutional protection is that Catholic schools, as part of the public institution of education are more regulated than private schools. Moreover, beyond the Education Act, 1995, there are other legal issues surrounding inclusion.

In Canadian law, parents cannot waive the rights of their children provided by the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (1982). The children's rights are separate and distinct from their parents. Yet, older children attending Catholic schools have been assumed to have had their rights waived by their parents insofar as is necessary to be admitted and to be part of the Catholic school community. Arguably, Section 1 of the *Charter* or section 29 would allow for the suspension of those rights due to the nature of the Catholic school and its history prior to confederation (Donlevy, 2005). This is problematic. A high school student who is living in a common law relationship with another student is acting contrary to the norms of the faith insofar as the Catholic school is concerned, but it may not be presumed that he or she has waived any rights under the *Charter* merely because his or her parents wish it. This results in a legal anomaly. A second area of some concern is in matters of procedural justice. Do the non-Catholic parent and student have the same canonical rights as do Catholic parents and students? Some may say that this type of concern is academic and moot. Lastly, at the administrative level, what ought the procedures to be when considering the admission of the non-Catholic student (Donlevy, 2002) and indeed, what ought to be the continuing requirements for maintenance of that privilege?

## THE TENTH DIMENSION (PHILOSOPHICAL)

The last dimension and perhaps the most controversial of the 10 is the philosophical dimension. There is no pedagogical Catholic dogma, nor is it suggested that such is the case. However, the following quotations may raise concerns amongst some Catholic educators. Remembering that the area of inclusion was the topic for conversation, one student responded,

I just want to say that Jesus didn't come for the Christians. There weren't any. He came for the Gentiles....He came for the poor people of the time, the people who did not believe in God....He spent His life for those people. He lived for those people and not to convert them to Christianity. He wanted to convert them to love....I think that's this school....And other people who sort of embody the spirit of Jesus like Mahatma Ghandi, [who] all his life he spent trying, promoting unity between the faiths and he spent his time not with the other Hindus or Muslims trying to get along, but he spent time with the untouchables. [If Christ comes again, is He coming back as a Catholic?] I'm sure He's not. I'm sure He's not.

Notwithstanding the positive aspects of inclusion expressed by some of the student participants, there were concerns expressed by some students that the acceptance of the other opinion may be going too far in the Catholic school. The student's debate was as follows.

I think [listening to and debating non-Catholics' religious beliefs is] keeping an open mind. God is a very personal thing, even to different Catholics. God has many different faces. That's why the Hindu faith has so many different gods; they're all expressions of the one God which is so difficult to understand. Part of the problem in teaching our faith is that God is a very personal thing and people come to know God in very different ways. I don't think you can say an expression of God is wrong when you are teaching. You cannot say to your students that, "your idea is not really correct and that this is the correct idea of God."

In response, another student said,

I agree that open-mindedness is important in a Christian ethics classroom, but I also think that there is a really fine line between great discussions and open discussions where almost every Catholic belief is...thrown out the window just for the sake of a good discussion....My experience with some of my teachers [has been], even though the discussions might be really intriguing, is that Catholic values are not enforced [in class discussion]. Everyone interprets God differently. [But] I still don't know if being that open minded is really beneficial to the God of Catholic education....The Catholic school is not meant to be a moral or spiritual neutral zone.

Teachers also had some concerns. One said,

Oh, I don't know about that. I think we're probably, based on my experience in teaching, and the way we were raised, I think our Catholic schools are not conservative Catholic institutions, or that we are conservative. We're middle-of-the-road. We're not ultra-conservative institutions and we're not at the very liberal end. We're pretty much middle-of-the-road, and I'd say that the presentation of Catholicism in our schools is moderate, middle-of-the-road. And therefore when I present a picture of Catholic education or a Catholic school, that would have less traditional symbols in it, be more post Vatican II. That's what I see as a picture of our identity, not pre-Vatican II [images].

A statement from a Christian ethics teacher perhaps best captures how most teachers from all the sessions felt about this theme:

I don't think at this level of education we offer a theological basis beyond kids

understanding, and I think we provide, in the Catholic school system, a very strong foundation of faith and Jesus and God and the teachings of Christ. I don't think we go beyond that to a theological stretch [saying] that we can't include all religions in what we see in these children, these students, non-Catholic, Catholic whatever they are. [We are] providing a very sound foundation in the teachings of Christ and a foundation they can apply to any faith that comes into our building.

In response to the question, "Are there differences?" one teacher responded in what was on some teachers' minds, who questioned the above position,

Well, if there aren't [any differences] then it shouldn't be relevant whether or not I'm Catholic, as long as I'm Christian. What makes me unique as a Catholic?...I went to a...religious school, a multi-denominational school where virtually everybody belonged to a church. The expectation was different, should be different [in the Catholic school]. If it isn't, why bother to define what Catholic is and what isn't Catholic?

This theme remained a murky and contentious area throughout the teacher sessions. The traditional position was that the purpose of Catholic education was to instill the Catholic faith in students, in other words, to evangelize youth into the faith. As one teacher stated,

I guess I feel that my purpose is to evangelize. That's part of what I'm directed to do by the Church, to teach in a Catholic school, and regardless of their background, Catholic or non-Catholic, that is my purpose, to evangelize.

Another commented, "Our mandate is to teach Catholicism and not just Christianity." Indeed, the mandate for the Catholic school was seen by that teacher as given by the Catholic Church,

My understanding of our history is that our mandate as a school system is an extension of the family of the faith....That's clearly the mandate of the Church. It wasn't just to say God loves everybody and we all go to heaven.

The second position was quite different. In response to the question, "From whom does the mandate come?" one teacher responded:

From the parents. The Catholic community wants this institution to exist. They've wanted it to exist, and I'm not sure if there's been a reality check lately. You look at the negative reaction to the Catholic schools...but you sometimes wonder whether people really are giving it a lot of thought. As educators we are



aware of what our mandate is, because we are Catholic. I think it's social justice. The things that we show kids help define us as more than just Christian. It's social justice. Not that there's no social justice in public schools, but I think that's something our Christian ethics department works very hard at...social justice.

The third position is quite different from the first two and is humanist in approach. Several teachers saw the purpose of Catholic education as instilling basic human values, primarily the golden rule, into their students. One Christian ethics teacher said:

I don't care what faith anyone is...I tell my kids this, as long as we're all working towards making this world a better place, to the best of our ability, that's all that God, your God, my God, can ask. I hope that's what my faith reflects to the students I teach...I think that respect is the key. That's what I want my kids to know, that regardless of what you believe, as long as you are living life to the best of your ability and you're living a positive life, then you're living a life of faith and that's all I ask...I'm looking to the day where I get in trouble for that because that's what I teach in my Christian ethics class. I don't believe you have to be a Catholic to get to heaven. As long as I'm willing to walk into heaven and have God introduce Himself to me as Buddha, Mohammed, whatever, I'm ready for it, as long as we're all working toward the same thing.

Lastly, perhaps in defense of the variety of positions taken by different teachers, and a sense of frustration, a participant stated, "Catholic education does not just fall on our shoulders alone. There's the Church and the home."

In sum, it is fair to say that, consonant with the sixth and 10th dimensions, Catholic teachers have a variety of understandings of the word faith. Its meaning within the Catholic context is determined by the particular philosophical position of the teacher: fundamentalist-conservative, postmodernist, liberal. Those variations produce a multiplicity of understandings which impact upon both the mandate and the purpose of Catholic education. This divide appears evident as there is a distinction between Groome's (1998) expression, borrowed from Joyce (1922/1998), "Here comes everybody" to the words of *Dominus Iesus* (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 2000a, 2000b) and the voice of McLaughlin (1996) stating that with respect to Catholic education,

[The] Catholic faith must be presented in its entirety under the guidance of the Magisterium...respecting the hierarchy of truths...and ensuring integrity of content....There is therefore a persistent need to discern the essential features of the Christian message which is to be transmitted to pupils. (p. 143)

The confusion and anxiety among Catholic teachers may be due in part to the paradigm shift in the role of the Catholic school teacher

(Shimabukuro, 2004). It is certainly true that the difficulty in merging orthodoxy and orthopraxis is not new to Catholic education (Donlevy, 2006). Cardinal Ratzinger, as he then was, has raised the issue on three occasions. Cardinal Ratzinger (Ratzinger & Messori, 1985) stated,

Many catechists no longer teach the Catholic faith in its harmonic wholeness... rather they try to make some elements of the Christian patrimony humanly “interesting” (according to the cultural orientations of the moment). Hence it is no longer a catechesis that would constitute a comprehensive, all embracing formation in the faith, but reflections and flashes of insights deriving from the partial, subjective anthropological experiences....The result...has been a disintegration of the *sensus fidei* in the new generations, who are often incapable of a comprehensive view of their religion. (pp. 72-73)

Eleven years later, Ratzinger (1996, 1997) reiterated his concern:

There has been a collapse even of simple religious information....What is our catechesis doing? What is our school system doing at a time when religious instruction is widespread? I think it was an error not to pass on more content. Our religion instructors rightly repudiated the idea that religious instruction is only information, and they rightly said that it is something else, that is more, that the point is to learn life itself, that more has to be conveyed. But that led to the attempt to make people like this style of life, while information and content were neglected. Here, I think, we ought really to be ready for a change, to say that if in this secular world we have religious instruction at all in the schools, we have to assume that we will not be able to convert many in schools to the faith. But the students should find out what Christianity is; they should receive good information in a sympathetic way so that they are stimulated to ask: Is this perhaps something for me? (1997, pp. 125-126)

Simply put, inclusion raises the issues which may already be present in some Catholic schools, the issue of “From whom does the mandate for Catholic education come?” the parents, the trustees, and or the Church? And what is that mandate in relation to inclusion? Beyond those questions it is reasonable to ask, “Is there a threshold of inclusion beyond which the ethos of the Catholic school, the faith witness of Catholic teachers, and the evangelization of Catholic students are impaired?” and “Is there a causal relationship between the phenomenon of inclusion, at some level, and religious relativism?” This paper raises but is unable to answer those questions.

The discussions with both the student and teacher participants indicated that the philosophical differences are dealt with at the school level by what Rawls (1987) calls the “method of avoidance.” According to Rawls, “we try, so far as we can, neither to assert nor to deny any religious, philosophical or moral

views, or their associated philosophical accounts of truth and the status of values” (pp. 12-13). As Hollenbach (1996) says, this method is employed “to neutralize potential conflicts and to promote democratic social harmony” (p. 93).

It seems clear that the issue of inclusion deserves close attention not only at the academic and upper administrative levels of Catholic education but also on the front line of Catholic education, the Catholic school, where it is the school principal “as faith leader [who] is the key to this growing accountability for schools to be demonstrably Catholic” (Wallace, 2000, p. 201).

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this paper has suggested that inclusion is a multi-faceted complex phenomenon with at least 10 dimensions: pedagogical, social, psychological, racial, cultural, spiritual, political, financial, legal, and philosophical. Together, the dimensions form an interactive and interdependent matrix which should be considered by Catholic school administrators when addressing the phenomenon.

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