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The provision and justification of a volunteer-based religious education programme

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ABSTRACT

THE PROVISION AND JUSTIFICATION OF A VOLUNTEER-BASED

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAMME

BY CRAIG L. MARSHALL

This study considers voluntary religious education for adolescents, provided by Christian Churches in England. It provides justification for such programmes through the comprehensive demonstration of an urgent need; it argues that existing provision in the churches is generally poor; finally, it shows that a solution to the challenge is possible, with a detailed analysis of one particular programme.

Since the emergence of schools as a public, rather than a church responsibility, there has been tension and controversy over religious education. Various historical developments have been important in shaping the present unsatisfactory situation. The nature of religion and education ensures that state schools will never be able to provide a complete religious education, satisfactory to everyone; however in the past they have provided a comprehensive basic grounding in Protestant Christian theology. As a result of changing educational philosophy and practice, they no longer do so. Thus the churches have inherited a large gap in the religious education of their youth, which has only recently been fully recognised. The response to this by the churches is generally inadequate, and their focus tends to be with infants and children. Some advances have been seen in curriculum and teacher training courses, but generally the provision for teenagers is poor.

The Seminary programme of the LDS Church has operated in this country since 1968, and continues to expand. It serves the fourteen to seventeen age group, and was originally devised to replace school-based religious education. Success is partly because of the commitment of the Church, for historical and doctrinal reasons, to religious education, though many other strengths and weaknesses were identified, the most encouraging of which is the high level of personal motivation shown by the teenagers involved.

THE PROVISION AND JUSTIFICATION OF A VOLUNTEER-BASED
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAMME

BY

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This study will examine the provision and justification of voluntary religious education in Christian churches, mainly in England, although Scotland and Wales are included to some degree. The study is restricted to the fourteen to seventeen age-group, and all references to 'school' imply a secondary school, unless otherwise stated.

The nature of the justification in this instance will be a demonstration of need. It will be argued that the nature of religious education is such that only within a believing community is it possible to provide a complete religious education for a believer, since such education must include exposure and conversion to the doctrines and practices of an individual faith. There are those for whom such a process cannot be defined as 'education', and this issue will be discussed briefly; however there will be no scope in the nature of this study to pursue this, and related philosophical issues fully. Such matters will be raised to describe the background and outline concerns, rather than thoroughly explore specific points.

It will be argued that the relationship between secular and religious education has historically been an intimate one. It has also been controversial and even divisive, involving bitter sectarian competition. This turbulent past has not entirely vanished, and a final solution to the uneasy partnership of secular and religious education has yet to be found. Traditionally, because of their close historical involvement with education, the Christian churches looked to the schools to provide a substantial grounding in the doctrines of Christianity. As a

result of recent educational developments, the role of the county schools in religious education has gradually changed, and no longer supports even the Established Church in a way that was once taken for granted. This, and the increasing uncertainty and constraints surrounding religious education in the county schools, and also the inherent paradox of interdenominational religious instruction, suggests that the churches should take a more prominent role in the religious education of their young people. This, because of economic necessity will involve a substantial volunteer element.

After demonstrating the need for church instruction, the existing provision of religious education programmes will be considered. It will be argued that provision for the particular age-group under study is generally very poor. Thinking in the churches is characterised by concern, but a lack of widespread success. In fact, research into church instruction for teenagers is remarkably neglected. There is much material concerned with children, particularly in connection with the Sunday School movement and related organizations. Some of this occasionally touches on the adolescent, but typically Sunday School thinking ends at about ages eleven or twelve. There has been some notable work on the general religious attitudes of teenagers, but very little on the instructional programmes provided for them in church.

There has, of course, been a massive volume of work concerned with the religious education of all age-groups, including teenagers, in schools. This is important background, and will be referred to, but this study is concerned with private, voluntary provision in the churches, and in particular, one specific church, and not directly with public institutions.

A major part of this study will be to demonstrate that despite the rather poor performance of the churches to date, and a feeling approaching hopelessness in some quarters, a successful programme of religious

education for teenagers _is_ possible. This will be done through a detailed examination of one particular model, which will show that despite a number of problems yet to be solved, the programme is working well. The background, development and operation of this system will be examined, to determine its success, and to identify weaknesses and strengths affecting success. The general viability of such a programme for other churches will be considered.

The system chosen for study is the Seminary programme, which is part of the Church Educational System, of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, commonly known as the Mormon Church. Hereafter, following common usage in this Church, Church Educational System will be abbreviated 'CES', and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints as 'LDS Church'.

The reason for selecting the Seminary programme for study is primarily the interest of the author, both as a member of the LDS Church, and as a CES employee. There are factors which make it a particularly attractive choice: (1) it specifically claims to operate as a replacement for school-based religious education; (2) it has a long history, commencing in 1912 in America, and in 1968 in this country, so at least on the basis of longevity it is successful; (3) the programme, following the pattern of the Church, has a strong central control, and a uniform pattern of organization throughout the country, fascilitating research; (4) the organisation was very willing to cooperate with this study, and sponsor the author in his investigations; and (5) the LDS Church, with a membership in Britain of over 130,000 is one of the largest of the smaller Christian denominations, and may be compared with most other churches.

In summary, the propositions of this thesis are:

1. An urgent need exists for the Christian churches in England to develop their own religious education programmes for adolescents, because

the schools no longer provide the kind of religious programme previously relied upon by the churches.

2. Little substantial progress has been made so far.

3. Success in such a venture is possible, and is demonstrated by the Seminary programme, which provides a suitable model for investigation.

The scope of this study is very broad, and the intention is to provide an overview of the many factors involved, rather than a detailed examination of a small area. The research into Seminary follows the same pattern, and provides a wide-ranging picture of the overall programme.

THE CHALLENGE: HISTORY, DEVELOPMENT AND
CURRENT THINKING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Historical Background

From the earliest times, religion and education have been

inseparably connected. Robert Ulich, in A History of Religious Education,

describes how, historically, secular and religious education were so

closely interrelated that no clear distincition was seen between them.

'All early education was religious, and all early religion was also

educational.'[1].

In this country, a popular education for all was clearly the fruit

of the work of the churches, their first attempt at widespread education

for the poor being probably the Charity Schools, from the beginning of the

eighteenth century. Even prior to this, any education available, primarily

to a privileged few, was provided only through the agency of the Church.

All education was linked closely with a training in the faith, and

religious education, including a study of the Bible and catechism was the

hub, and in many ways the justification for any other form of education.

The Schools Council Working Paper 36 says this:

> The history of religious education in Britain is inseparable from
> the history of education itself; it is not, as is sometimes suggested,
> a piratical intrusion. Universal education sprang from religious
> education, particularly from the initiative of the Church of England
> National Society, and the Non-conformist British and Foreign Schools
> Society, as well as from the wide and rapid growth of the
> interdenominational Sunday School movement.[2]

The great religious evangelism of the eighteenth and nineteenth

centuries contributed substantially to the growing demand for widespread

education. Non-conformist and Church of England rivalry fuelled the

debate; the nonconformists felt that if the state provided support for the existing schools, it would give the Established Church an advantage, since it controlled easily the great majority of such institutions. The Sunday School movement, begun by Raikes in the 1780s, was an important influence. One of the prime purposes of the Sunday Schools was to teach people to read. To be sure, the purpose of teaching them to read was to enable them to read the Bible and the catechism; nevertheless they did learn to read, which they otherwise would not have done. This further illustrates the indivisibility of early secular and religious education. Paul Sangster, principle of Balls Park College of Education, comments:

> The original purpose of the Sunday Schools was clearly secular. Raikes began his work by soliciting help for the inhabitants of the Gloucester Bridewell and so realised the ignorance of the prisoners. He taught some of them to read and saw the connection between "idleness and crime". Wesley's characteristic reaction - "who knows but some of these schools may become nurseries for Christians?" - proves that the Schools were not so far regarded in this light.
>   Indeed, there is some evidence that some evangelicals believed that the connection between ignorance and vice was the primary reason for the Sunday-school.[3]

One interesting feature of the Sunday School movement, which has a bearing on later conclusions in this study, is that initially instruction was provided by professional teachers, who were paid for their services. This led to a crisis in the development of the movement, as Paul Sangster explains:

> The economic problem was even more serious. In 1800 the Sunday-school Movement virtually died out in Gloucester, the city of its foundation, because funds could not be found with which to pay the teachers. it was Wesley's example that saved it. Since 1785 his Sunday-schools had been organised and taught by voluntary helpers. This example others followed and soon after the beginning of the nineteenth century the Sunday-school was almost entirely a voluntary organisation.[4]

This evolution of an initially professional organisation into one based on voluntary service is an interesting example of the successful application of a volunteer-based educational system.

Although education grew from religious education, as a child of the churches, it was a much abused and ill-treated child at times. The very factors which initially provided much of the motive force leading to the widespread development of education - the zeal and redemptive urge of the evangelists - were the same factors which at times caused chaos and bitterness, and slowed down considerably educational advances in this country. Referring to outraged nonconformist feelings over the proposal of rate-aid for church schools in 1870, Marjorie Cruickshank, former senior lecturer in education, Keele University, states:

> In their indignation the majority could take only a narrow view, denouncing the new capitation grants to sectarian schools as an infringement of the rights of conscience and an obstacle to the establishment of a national system of education. So deeply concerned were they for their own rights of conscience that they ignored the rights of others and showed complete indifference to the fate of the children in denominational schools.[5]

Similar comments could be made concerning the obstructionism of the Church of England and the National Society, when it appeared that they might lose some advantage. The contest was so bitterly fought that the fate of the children was often entirely forgotten, and sometimes appeared as almost a trivial side-issue, in the battle to ensure that the national programme of education would not favour one religion over another. 'It is hard to forgive the fanatical extremists on both sides who had degraded national education to a miserable quarrel between Church and Chapel.'[6].

The details of this tremendous religious debate are well documented and clearly show the significance of religion, and religious education, in the development of secular education. It is not the intention here to provide a detailed historical survey; this brief introduction is included because of the heritage which remains, and to give an appropriate perspective to current thought and concerns about religious education. Indeed, striking parallels can be drawn between the present debate and that

of past politicians such as Gladstone, Disraeli, Chamberlain and their clerical counterparts. As we shall see, in some areas opinion has not shifted a great deal. Though the fire and vitriol has largely dissipated, and educational priorities are given far more prominence in curriculum design and teacher selection, religious education is still a subject of considerable controversy, and echoes of the past can be clearly heard in present-day argument and counter-argument.

The Problem of Bias

Central to the conflict of the past two centuries is the fear of sectarian teaching in the county schools, where the doctrines and practices of a particular faith are preferred over others. Independent, and voluntary schools may be considered to have a right to teach what they please, and many have been founded precisely to permit such freedom in religious matters; it is in the area of maintained county schools where the greatest concern is expressed. This was not always so. Prior to the provision of widespread publicly-financed education, the only education available was often that provided by independent schools which were invariably church schools. Under these circumstances, it was felt with justification by many that such a privileged position should not be exploited, a point of view which, needless to say, was seldom shared by those who operated the schools. In most instances, it was the Church of England who had the monopoly.

An attempted solution was provided in the 1870 Act, by two distinctive measures, which had far-reaching consequences. First, the famous Cowper-Temple Amendment prohibited denominational teaching in rate-aided schools (board schools), but the Act went further, and gave the local school boards the power to exclude religious education altogether, if they so chose. Thus the rivalry of the religious factions had, as Burgess

points out, driven the government to a position not merely of neutrality between the religious denominations, but actually between religious and secular education[7]. The second measure affected the Church schools, in addition to the board schools, through a Conscience Clause, which permitted parents to withdraw their children from periods in the time-table when religious instruction would be given. In many ways the Church of England could be thought to have brought this upon itself, by its steadfast opposition to the voluntary implementation of such a principle, over the previous twenty years of dispute.

Certainly today, it would seem to be an essential recognition of a child's basic rights, that where sectarian religion is being taught in a school which has a monopoly in a given area, that some sort of conscience clause is required. Attitudes were different in 1870. One wonders how effective the clause was, in practice. Conformity is the creed of the young, and even secondary-age children desire above all to be part of their peer-group. In the nineteenth century, the prospect of being conspicuously withdrawn from specific lesson must have seemed a daunting prospect for the pupil and, particularly in rural areas, where the social and economic power of squire and parson was very great, it would not be easy for parents to even make the request. Today, perhaps, much less stigma would be attached, but one wonders at the desirability of a curriculum that anticipates some pupils might not participate in some lessons on grounds of conscience. Yet the conscience clause, which was preserved in the 1944 Butler Act, became if anything even more important when, as a result of the Act, religious education <u>and worship</u> (implicitly, though not explicitly Christian) became compulsory in all county schools. This measure finally overturned the other provision of the Cowper-Temple Amendment, that religious education should be an optional school subject, which had remained more or less intact through much parliamentary

legislation, since 1870.

We should remember that in 1944, as in 1870, Britain was assumed to be almost exclusively Christian. When legislation for religious education was considered, the concern of the majority was for instruction which was based on the common principles of the Christian faith accepted by the main Protestant denominations. The possibility that the teaching of Christianity itself might be inappropriate had little impact on the prevailing view. Even so, there was then, and still is today, considerable debate as to whether such neutral religious teaching was actually possible in practice and if so, whether it would be effective, no matter whether it represented a compromise between purely Christian faiths, or between Christian and non-Christian. The rapid progression of our society over the past four decades, into a multi-cultural and multi-religious community has thrown such questions in much starker relief. The principles and problems are basically the same, though the setting has changed considerably. There remains a wide and often very strong divergence of opinion.

> The result is that at present religious education is a school activity which arouses wide differences of opinion and sometimes acute dispute. Its educational credentials are not agreed, its precise contribution to the curriculum is unclear, and its support often a matter of hunch and undefined feeling, rather than of logical, publicly defensible argument. The question to be faced is whether it can be redefined and restructured in such a way as will give it both shape and justification.[8]

This lack of agreement, after some two centuries of debate is itself an important factor, and should cause pause for thought. Is it perhaps an indication that there is _no_ acceptable solution to the problem of providing religious education in county schools?

The question of whether non-denominational religious education is possible, and if it is, whether it will provide a satisfactory education in religion, is an important one for this study. It is my contention that religious education in the state system is never likely to be entirely

unbiased, and that in any case it can at best provide only a partial, incomplete education. This is not to say that religious education has no place in the school, but it will need to be supplemented by additional, voluntary agencies. The first part of the question will be considered first; the concept of 'neutral' religious education.

Teacher Impartiality

One school of thought suggests that it is not possible for the teacher to be impartial. At one time, Chamberlain (later to become prime-minister) had subjected luckless would-be teachers to a searching interrogation, investigating their pre-disposition on various points of doctrine, in order to demonstrate their inability to remain impartial[9]. One hundred years later, Edwin Cox, Senior Lecturer in Education, London University, has stated:

> There is, furthermore, the difficulty of teaching about a religion with which one is only externally acquainted. Certainly, teachers do their best to be impartial and no longer follow the former practice of setting up other religions as Aunt Sallys to be knocked down by Christian stones, but it is difficult to avoid unconsciously assessing a religion one does not hold by the criterion of its approximation to one's own and to prevent this assessment influencing one's presentation of it.[10]

Paul H. Hirst, Professor of Education, Cambridge University, expresses a similar thought:

> Although religious education in these terms may be consistent with the principles that underlie the common school, the practical provision of it might well prove extremely difficult. Many teachers are at present quite incapable of this objective teaching of religion.[11]

Of course, a disposition to prejudice is not exclusive to religious education. Hirst mentions history as another subject where it is likely to occur. Any subject involving a large measure of interpretation and opinion is open to such abuse, whether intended or not by the teacher. However,

there are special characteristics inherent in religion, which make an impartial, balanced approach difficult. Not the least of these is the nature of religious belief and commitment, which for most people is rather different from commitment to an historical perspective, or a sociological theory. It is possible to conceive of the historian or sociologist who would bring to his theories the same all-consuming fervour of a religious convert, but this is not typical. Even if he was to bring such commitment to his work, he would be considered a poor scientist or scholar if he were to rely on his feelings as evidence. Generally, for subjects in the modern school curriculum, there are (a) well-established and widely adopted procedures for testing the validity of conclusions, and (b) a wide base of accumulated knowledge having virtual universal acceptance. These two factors, objective testability and consensus do not necessarily establish absolute truth, but they make the teaching of facts as truth socially acceptable. They are precisely what is missing from religious teaching. Further, the man of religion may well argue that there is an additional, more fundamental difference. Whilst reason and experience are important in the understanding of religion, there is a further agency, often called the spirit, through which understanding comes. This spiritual awareness (revelation, inspiration etc.), he will claim is different from intellectual, emotional and physical responses, and is not subject to the processes of testing appropriate in other subjects. The non-believer will say that such experiences are simply part of the emotional and psychological condition of the individual, but he cannot refute the actuality of such an experience, no matter from whence its source. Since such communication with the Divine is regarded as a basic and important feature of most faiths, it would be fair to suppose that a full appreciation of the subject would be lacking, unless it was understood. Yet the very claim of religion is that it cannot be understood, except

through the experience. In any case, one would expect that many teachers of religion in secondary schools have entered their profession, precisely because of a deep personal religious commitment. Without this, they would surely be rather like the science teacher who has never performed an experiment, but has only studied the theory of his subject. Thus, we are asking a great deal of the teacher of religion. Edwin Cox describes the dilemma as follows:

> This puts the teacher in a difficult position. Educational theorists and the public generally are asking two things of him which it is not that easy to reconcile. On the one hand, he has to be acquainted with a religion, and know the meaning of faith, and the feeling of belonging to a religious body; on the other hand he has to teach with an openness which too firm an attachment to religion can make difficult. Because of this the religious education teacher is exposed to the possibility of tension between his religious and his educational commitments. The former lead him to think that certain things are true, certain actions are good, certain beliefs are genuine, and that other beliefs and actions are at least inferior if not misguided; the latter require that he study all beliefs objectively with the possibility that the beliefs which he agrees (and which matter to him deeply) might be false, and that those with which he disagrees might be true. He has, as far as he can, to present them all impartially and make them all equally available to the pupils for acceptance or rejection. the self-abnegation and nervous tension that result can be considerable...[12]

All this is not to say that impartiality is impossible, but that it may be extremely difficult to achieve. Some writers on the subject seem to ignore, or minimize this important gap between what is theoretically achievable, and what is practically possible. The quality of instruction which may be achieved by a handful of gifted educators may never be reached by the generality of teachers. Teachers are not machines who may be programmed in a variety of ways to dispense knowledge. The teacher/pupil relationship is complex. Referring to certain proposals for the removal of teacher bias from religious instruction, Edwin Cox states:

> The foregoing is a counsel of perfection which, if achieved, might lead to a cold and dull type of teaching. Teacher enthusiasm and crankiness give warmth and excitement to lessons. If these principles are rigidly applied it might not only rob the teaching of that warmth, but also give the impression that religion is a confused matter of argument and

counter-argument, which, by the very nature of the subject being
argued, cannot ever lead to conclusions. The sense of adventure and
commitment which is characteristic of religion could be obscured. By
being taught that way the subject might escape damnation as
indoctrination by the uncommitted, but it would instead incur the
condemnation of the religious that it misrepresents them and misses the
point.[13]

Such statements, though probably reasonable enough to most people,
are liable to induce a shiver of apprehension in those inheritors of the
sectarian suspicions and distrust of the nineteenth century (who,
ironically, appear now to be predominantly the non-believers). They would
argue that this lets indoctrination in by the back door. We need to ask,
then, is there an over-concern here which is only necessary to placate the
fears and theoretical arguments of a small number of academics and
extremists? A moment's reflection would suggest not. We are dealing with
a real and important issue, central to religious education. The problem is
obscured somewhat, particularly for the non-specialist, by the fact that
even today Christianity is still by far the predominant religion of this
country. The unconscious assumption of most parents will be that religious
instruction in school is provided by a Christian teacher; even though these
days he might belong to some obscure sect, so long as he is basically
Christian, most parents would not worry. Suppose, however, that it became
known that the local R.E. teacher was a Voodoo priest, or a Buddhist monk;
parental concern would immediately escalate. Consider the situation of
Christian families in Hindu or Muslim countries; they would certainly be
concerned about respect for Christianity in local schools.

So far, the implicit assumption has been that impartiality
necessitates the screening-out of a teacher's personal views from the
classroom. Many would not accept this as desirable or necessary. Can one
not present one's personal views impartially? Some might argue that the
teacher who attempts to hide his own opinions may succeed merely in casting
doubt in the minds of the pupils concerning the validity of religious

study, or create a sense of uncertaintly about the teacher's motives.

Besides, it is probably more difficult to detect bias when it is

undeclared, or deliberately hidden; where beliefs are freely expressed, we

at least know what colouring to look for. Of course, the authority

inherent in the position of a teacher can give his views a force and

authority he may not wish nor intend. Nevertheless, it is at least

conceivable that this course of action could be less detrimental, with good

teaching, than the other.

> Pupils are skilled at penetrating personal insincerity, but not as well
> equipped to spot academic errors. Nor can they easily detect bias.
> Bias is part of what they learn, and until they later encounter another
> bias, they are easy victims of indoctrination.[14]

M. V. C. Jeffries, in an openly partizan, but clearly and

persuasively argued case, agrees that the teacher not only may declare his

own belief, but that to fail to do so would be contrary to the nature of

the subject he is teaching. Says Mr. Jeffries:

> The fallacy of what we may call the indoctrination heresy is that it
> assumes an incompatibility between the encouragement of the pupil's
> thinking and the positive expression of the teacher's belief. But
> there is no necessary contradiction between the teacher's positive and
> reasoned presentation of what he believes to be true and his active
> concern for the mental autonomy of his pupils.[15]

The teacher's respect for his pupils is here stated to be a key

factor in protecting them from indoctrination. Jeffries continues:

> In the first place, the essential meaning of Christianity is to be
> found, not in principles or 'commandments', but in the quality of
> relations between persons. If, in education, the quality of personal
> relations is put first, it should not be impossible to combine the
> positive expression of belief with respect for the pupil's free and
> responsible choice.[16]

Jeffries is suggesting that the teacher's attitude, both to his

subject and to the pupils, is of far greater importance than what he might

say. A large proportion of communication, in education as elswehere, is

non-verbal. It was previously argued that a teacher, unless he was a most unusual individual, will find it virtually impossible to avoid colouring his teaching to some degree. This is the problem with the so-called 'procedural neutrality', since neutrality does not entirely rest in procedure. If this is so, then the personal integrity of the individual teacher is by far the best guarantee for avoiding indoctrination; but then this has always been the case, and tacitly recognised. Our problem is the seeming need to create a system to make up for lack of trust.

The key factors concern <u>how</u> the teachers' expression may be given, and <u>why</u>. There is a world of difference between a hard-sell, testimony-bearing evangelistic approach, and a quiet comment or two arising as a natural part of a discussion, as part of a number of alternative points of view. To expect neutrality from all teachers is probably unrealistic, but we should expect a respect for pupils' feedom of thought, and an avoidance of overt, deliberate efforts at indoctrination. This is not to say that we should not be concerned. Vigilance and care are necessary,both on the part of teachers in examining their own teaching, and on the part of their supervisors and employers; however, an overly pessimistic and frenetic concern can easily rob religious education of much of its value. As Edward Hulmes, Director of the Farmington Institute of Christian Studies puts the matter:

> How far is it possible for a believer to <u>pretend</u> to espouse a philosophical neutrality which is alien to his deepest convictions and experience? It is easy enough to say that he <u>should</u> and that if he does not he is not earning his salary as an <u>educator</u>. But if he refuses (or cannot) separate professional obligations from personal commitment he may take heart in the knowledge that he is not alone. This is a difficulty he shares with <u>all</u> his colleagues. <u>Every</u> teacher brings a personal commitment to bear in teaching, to the selection of materials, to the time devoted to its preparation and presentation, and in the type of assignments and exercises given to children. The only sensible way forward is to accept this limitation as inescapable, and [17] not to insist on a neutrality which is unattainable.

Syllabus and Lesson Content

A teacher of the highest integrity may find difficulty respecting pupils' autonomy, if required to follow certain types of syllabus. The past fifty years has seen a huge swing in outlook concerning the religious education syllabus. In the first of the agreed syllabuses (Cambridgshire, 1934) the intention was clearly to inculcate the Christian faith. This was reinforced by the 1944 Act, which although not explicitly requiring such an approach, clearly intended support for it.

> The Act still rejected denominational worship and teaching but the provisions for syllabus preparation ensured that the substance and intention of religious education would be Christian. The state had assumed direct responsibility for moral and religious education on a Christian basis.[18]

This attitude became enshrined in our schools, through the implementation of the Act, yet even in 1944 it was perhaps already out of date. Changes not only in religious education were taking place, but also in some of the fundamental assumptions of the Christian faith itself. The changing view of the curriculum is reflected in the wording and content of the various agreed syllabuses of the past few decades. The openly confessional approach dating from before and immediately after 1944 changed. Initially, the change was in form and approach rather than intent, and often the net result was the same as before. This 'neo-confessional' approach, as it has been called, lingered well into the late 1960s, in some areas.

Officialdom was slower than individual initiative, and already, while these new syllabuses were being written, important new approaches were emerging. The implicit religion approach was promoted particularly by Harold Loukes. For Loukes, religious education was an experience in self-discovery and an exploration of the meaning of life as a totality. Teaching should consist of a dialogue about the human situation, rather

than an exposition of Bible stories and Christian doctrine. This approach became fashionable for a time, but was not without its difficulties. It tended to overlap other subject areas in the kind of discussion which took place. Also, as Cox suggests, there is perhaps a tendency to simply examine experience in a general way, rather than reaching the religious basis for experience.[19]

More enduring in popularity, and still prominent in present-day thinking is the phenomenological, or explicit religion approach. This was supported particularly by J. W. D. Smith, Ninian Smart, and Edwin Cox. Briefly, and perhaps in caricature, it involves a study of the explicit characteristics of religious belief, including an attempt to understand the significance of a faith for a believer, yet attempting to avoid any value-judgement concerning such faiths. This is asking a lot from the teacher. Edwin Cox comments:

> The phenomenological approach is the one that has been chiefly written about and attempted in the recent past and it has provided the underlying philosophy of most of the latest Agreed Syllabuses. At its best, it can be the sensitive induction into thinking about religion that Smart envisaged; often, however, it has been an uninspiring and uncritical imparting of the more obvious facts of the practices of the major world religions.[20]

Cox goes on to make this criticism of the phenomenological approach: '. . . one may question whether young children are sophisticated enough to study religion in this way, without asking "is it true?"'[21]. Surely this is the question we would expect the student to begin to ask, and the point of religious educaton is to provide him with the means of answering such questions in a considered, rational fashion, for himself. An approach which seeks to discourage this question is avoiding one of the central issues of religion. We might ask, incidentally, what is there that is unsophisticated about asking of a religion 'is it true'? The point raises again the considerable challenges of teaching religion; how should the

teacher answer, if, and when, this question is directed at him in the classroom? Difficulties can arise out of the best-intentioned syllabuses, and reminds us of Jeffries' claim that the integrity of the teacher is the most important factor.

Although ideas have changed dramatically over the past twenty or thirty years, there is still no widespread agreement. Trends can be seen, however, and perhaps there is a central core of at least theoretical agreement amongst the most prominent thinkers in the field, but in the classroom, individual teacher approaches vary greatly.

> Naturally, the fashions in religious education, the confessional, the neo-confessional, the implicit religion approach and the phenomenological study, were not followed by all teachers. Some changed with the times, but others persevered in their old ways, with the result that all these types of teaching can still be seen in schools and a variety of aims can be found in different teachers. A general trend, however, can be observed in the attempts to make religious education responsive to the changing social system and the prevailing forms of thought.[22]

Parental Concerns and Involvement

In the quotation above, Edwin Cox suggested that there is a trend to make religious education responsive to 'prevailing forms of thought'. This warrants further consideration; we should ask whose thinking constitutes the prevailing view. Thirty or forty years ago, the prevailing view may have been held by both a majority of the general public, and also expert opinion. Since then it seems that a gap has been steadily widening between the two. This is further complicated by a greater fragmentation of public opinion, as the culture of our country has become more diverse. It is probably no longer true that experts and thinkers on the subject represent the views of most parents. In fact, it is clear that the views of many ecclesiastical leaders are not shared by many of their flock, as demonstrated by the public outcry generated from time to time by controversial statements from various liberal theologians.

During Summer 1978, an extensive public opinion poll was conducted
for the LDS Church by Richard M. Eyre, a professional polster from America.
It investigated current attitudes to Jesus Christ, for which 6,320 people
in South-East England were interviewed. Part of the summary is as follows:

> Clear majorities . . . say they consider themselves to be Christian,
> that Christ performed miracles and that He is alive today. Majorities
> also say that Christ's teachings are as relevant as 2,000 years ago,
> that their personal lives have been influenced by Him and that they
> pray either to Christ or God. Yet a large majority attends church only
> occasionally or not at all, and a significant proportion credits
> television with giving them a greater insight and understanding of
> Christ than their churches. . . .
>   . . . While the basic Christian traditions and leanings of England
> (as reflected in the poll) are still strongly felt, confusion, a trend
> away from belief and a low level of personal conviction are readily
> apparent.[23]

Although the poll found 'a low level of personal conviction', the
'Christian traditions of England are still strongly felt'. In fact, 81 per
cent of the poll claimed to be Christian, and most of them see themselves
as Christian in a traditional sense. It would be reasonable to suppose
that such parents would wish to have a Christian education for their
children, and probably, given the traditional nature of their beliefs,
their views would not be reflected very well by predominant opinion amongst
religious educators today. The conclusions are borne out by earlier
studies. After quoting the results of surveys conducted in 1963 and 1966,
J. W. D. Smith (former Principal of Jordonhill Training College), states:

> On the basis of such evidence it could be claimed quite fairly that
> opposition to compulsory religious education in English schools -
> religious education with a Christian objective - would be confined to a
> minority of the population. The size of the minority would vary with
> the precise form of the question and with the circumstances in which it
> was put but it seems doubtful whether it would approach 50% in normal
> circumstances.[24]

Nevertheless, it would be wrong to take no account of the poor
quality and shallow nature of parental feeling on these issues. Smith goes
on to say:

> It would be foolish to allow the feelings of such parents to influence
> the substance of religious education in the schools. Their views do
> not provide justification for evangelistic aims and authoritarian
> methods. It would be equally foolish to ignore the strength of their
> human concern. They know that their children need moral support and
> personal guidance which they have been unable to provide.[25]

So here is a dilemma: we cannot justify following the majority opinion, since it represents a largely irrational and un-educational approach; yet the need is sufficiently clear that it cannot be ignored - after all, we are talking about the opinion of the majority. Such a situation provides the administrator with considerable power. A largely uninformed, inexpert population, who sense a need for something which they can only vaguely define, are liable to be very accepting of what is profferred to them, if it comes from what they perceive to be an authoritative source. Only if the syllabus was grossly unacceptable would they be likely to object. The further danger is that the expert could begin to feel that his views actually do represent public opinion, rather than that of a small minority of concerned individuals. This is not to say that such expert opinion is necessarily wrong, but given the special nature of religious education, the point made is an important one. Much of the debate concerning religious education arises precisely because of a concern that we should adequately regard the religious conscience and rights to freedom of thought, of children, and also their parents.

The attitudes of parents, while showing some signs of diminishing religious commitment, do not seem to have changed very drastically in the last forty or fifty years. Marjorie Cruickshank speaks of their attitudes in the years leading up to the 1944 Act.

> It was true that the majority of the English people, who were not
> teachers, administrators, or definite members of any denomination, had
> little interest in the religious conflict. Their attitude towards
> religion generally has perhaps best been described as 'a combination of
> vague uncertainties, real sympathy and good feeling mingled with a

large measure of indifference and ignorance'. Religion rarely impinged
on their everyday lives and although their unconscious assumptions were
Christian, the conscious profession of the Christian faith was
completely alien to them. On the whole they probably preferred their
children to receive some knowledge of the scriptures at school, though
they would have been hard put to it to give their reasons.[26]

Although there are probably fewer 'definite members' of a
denomination now, the above description could well apply to the situation
today. This same public opinion was prepared to accept, and even approve
of, the strongly Protestant Christian education of the day. We should be
aware that the great changes of approach since then have not been
occasioned primarily by a groundswell of popular opinion, but by the
changing views of influential theologians and religious educators. I
repeat: this does not imply that such changes are mistaken (nor does it
endorse them), but it highlights the underlying mechanism for such change.
Essentially, this is a leader-inspired movement, based on advances in
theological research and study, concern for an increasingly poly-cultural
society (though as we have seen, a substantial majority still claim a
traditional Christian faith), and the application of educational criteria
to the subject.

If an educational elite is shaping opinion and developing a
curriculum for a largely uninformed, apathetic majority, what provision
should be made for concerned, well-informed minorities? It would appear
that it is partly through a concern for them that the drift to the
non-partizan teaching of religion has taken place. Yet for some of these
minorities, non-religious as well as religious, this is inadequate. They
request not just a neutral approach, but an opportunity for their own
belief to be taught. It is precisely because they are concerned that they
feel this way. Whether or not we agree with the logic of their argument,
their views, often very deeply held, must be taken into account.

The problem is a familiar one, and takes us back, full circle, to

the divisions and disagreements of the nineteenth century. The new, non-Christian communities in Britain today add a further dimension to this old problem. Religious education for many of them consists precisely of that inculcation of faith which modern religious education in our schools seeks to avoid. Some of these groups are therefore contemplating building their own schools. Despite the potential divisiveness of this, the faith of individual groups must be respected. It is perhaps fortunate in some ways that the majority of parents care so little about religion. Were they to care more, it is conceivable that the present reasonably equable situation could not be maintained. All shades of opinion cannot be satisfied. The best that can be done is probably that which is being presently attempted: the curriculum should be educationally sound, and should avoid judgement of individual faiths, whilst perhaps emphasising a study of Christianity, so long as Christianity is represented by such a large majority of parents. However, since ethnic minorities are unevenly distributed, and in some schools form a substantial majority, it is surely necessary for national policy to permit a large degree of regional flexibility. If this approach does not safisfy some groups, it will be necessary for them to supplement the religious education of the schools through provision from within their own organisation. It will be argued that this is necessary for all religious faiths, not just the vocal minority. How such additional teaching may be provided is the main investigation in this study.

The Catholic Solution

For some groups, pre-eminently the Roman Catholics, education and religion are so inextricably linked that the compromise offered in the county schools was never acceptable. The Catholic position is quite uncompromising, as stated by Father McCluskey, a Jesuit priest, and

Visiting Professor of Education at the University of Notre Dame:

> We repeat: the coexistence within a society of faith groups holding
> different religious philosophies makes it impossible for one common
> public school itself to give religious education and formation.
> Indeed, this can be done only in a society in which there exists a
> unity of religious faith.[27]

The reasons for this approach are rooted in Catholic theology. For
the Catholic Church, education is just one manifestation of a total
spiritual development, supervised by Church and family. The following
extract from an encyclical of Pope Pius XII substantially represents
Catholic thought even today:

> . . . it is necessary that all the teaching and the organisation of the
> school, and its teachers, syllabus, and textbooks in every branch, be
> regulated by the Christian spirit, under the direction and maternal
> supervision of the Church; so that religion may be in very truth the
> foundation and crown of the youth's entire training . . .[28]

A tradition of social, moral and religious values such as the
Catholics try to maintain has come under increasing criticism. J. W. D.
Smith comments on the views of Erik Erikson, as expressed in his book
Childhood and Society, in which it is suggested that many social and
psychological ills today are because 'social tradition has broken down and
traditional answers have ceased to be relevant'[29]. Many Roman Catholics
and clerics from other churches would strongly challenge the idea that
'traditional answers have ceased to be relevant'. They would say that
traditional answers lose their power only when those who traditionally
affirmed such answers cease to do so, through a loss of faith, or a loss of
nerve and confidence, or, as in the case of Church teachers, because of
educational theory. The answers themselves, they would say, are still
valid. In the television series 'Credo', in March 1985, Father Michael
Clifton, chairman of the Vox group of Priests, supported this view. At the
conclusion of the discussion, presenter John Stapleton summarised their

views as follows:

> In their view the strength of Catholicism lay precisely in its ability to offer believers certainty about doctrine, a firm moral code, and a clearly defined structure of authority on which they could rely. The changes since the Second Vatican Council, they say, have deprived believers of the sense of certainty they need.[30]

There is a strong and widespread body of opinion which holds that the maintenance of traditional values and beliefs is essential for the long-term survival of the churches. This may seem to be self-evident, but some recent statements from churchmen seem to suggest that their theology is in such a state of flux that almost anything goes. In their anxiety to avoid the appearance of their church as a closed system, some seem to be rushing headlong through an open door. This study will not examine further the evolution of the doctrines and liturgy of the churches. It will be assumed that any organised faith, to maintain its identity as a unique belief-system must have at least a central core of received doctrine, regarded as true, for which a programme must be devised for teaching the believer and initiating the non-believer. It was suggested that the teaching of such beliefs need not be inimicable to mental freedom and autonomy. Personal development can continue within the framework provided, until maturity is reached. According to Erikson, there is evidence that when a strong framework of values, life-meanings and traditions is not provided, the result can be a _loss_ of freedom resulting from a lack of reference-points.

Religious Education From a Church Perspective

The concept of individual freedom, and the educational implications of traditional approaches to the teaching of religion in the churches are interesting philosophical issues. That which would be regarded as indoctrination in the school could be regarded as education in the church,

when viewed from within the church. Smart adds to this view:

> After all, faith is said to be God-given; and as was remarked earlier,
> theological and religious systems sometimes provide their own, internal
> criteria of truth. The way of coming to the truth would here depend on
> acceptance in the first instance of the truth of the system. The
> system thus becomes a closed system.[31]

Smart goes on to suggest that revelation is the central pier for many religions, for determining the truth. If he is right, and it would seem he is for at least the traditional, mainstream Christian faiths, the fact raises a problem for communication between believer and non-believer. It further illustrates the limitations of religious education in school, as far as the churches are concerned; since what is for them a basic foundation, an experience which their members should have, and be taught to recognize, cannot be treated in the same way in school.

The believer might say: 'Christ has revealed himself to me, I have received his Spirit, and heard a voice, and therefore I believe'. This leaves the non-believer with very few rationally legitimate responses. He may say: 'I don't believe you, you are lying'. Or he may say: 'I accept that you think you have received a revelation, but you are deluded, you have misinterpreted your experience'. These are really the only two types of response possible, and it should be noted that both represent belief, not evidence, on the part of the non-believer. Disbelief, in fact, is just as much an act of faith, as belief. The believer says: 'there are evidences and means of knowing, other than through reason and the physical senses; I have had personal experience of such, and therefore I believe'. The non-believer says: 'I do not accept any means of knowing, other than through reason and the physical senses, therefore what you say cannot be true, and I will not believe'. The non-believer cannot prove his point, any more than the believer can.

An extension of the non-believer's argument is the concept of

replication, a familiar requisite for the acceptance of theory in the physical sciences. The non-believer may say that although conclusive proof cannot be found to discount the claims of the believer, then at least the improbability of it can be demonstrated, on the basis that he, and others of like mind, cannot replicate the experience. However, the believer can point to many others who claim that they have replicated the experience called revelation, and continue to do so. They would emphasise the extraordinarily delicate and unusual conditions of the experiment (humility, complete openness of mind, etc.), and suggest that the non-believer has simply not reproduced the conditions exactly.

This debate is not necessarily limited to religious knowledge. In the present context, the following quotation of Karl Popper, from his book The Logic of Scientific Discovery, is pertinent:

> The old scientific ideal of episteme, absolute certainty, demonstrable knowledge, has proved to be an idol. It may indeed be corroborated, but every corroboration is relative to other statements which again are tentative. Only in our subjective experience of conviction, in our subjective faith, can we be absolutely certain.[32]

Dr. Michael Polanyi, in his book Personal Knowledge and the Study of Man, as reported by Jeffries, extends this view:

> but tacit knowing is not only the primary, it is the dominant principle of all knowledge. . . . Tacit knowledge is essential in understanding; words and symbols cannot communicate an understanding of themselves. 'Since tacit knowledge involves personal participation, all meaning involves the operation of a person. The participation of the knower in shaping his knowledge, which had hitherto been tolerated only as a flaw . . . is now recognised as the true guide and master of our cognitive powers. We must learn to accept as our ideal a knowledge that is manifestly personal'.[33]

Many church teachers will say: 'I am dealing in truths, the certainty of which I have verified existentially. I am teaching such truths in an open fashion, for although I see no reason to teach the beliefs of other faiths to my students, neither do I seek to by-pass their

intellectual agency by asking them to accept my beliefs simply because I, or my church, say so. I will present to them what I believe to be true, I will certainly endorse it with my own testimony, but I will instruct them clearly that they need to reach such conclusions for themselves. Indeed, I will point out to them that this personal, freely-arrived-at conviction is the very basis of our faith. I will also suggest the course that they might follow, through prayer etc., to reach such a position of belief'.

'A rational approach to irrational belief', the skeptic might say. Is this indoctrination, or education? From within the 'closed system' it can be regarded as education. From outside, we might have to conclude 'case not proven', although Snook (Lecturer in Education, University of Canterbury, New Zealand), in his book Indoctrination and Education, stated:

> Indoctrination would be avoided if the teacher, regardless of his own commitment, taught with the intention that the pupils form their own conclusions on the basis of the evidence.[34]

With this definition, the activities of the teacher could well be regarded as education, even outside his church. One problem with the definition, however, is what happens if the pupils' conclusions are hopelessly mistaken? Also, what is meant by their own conclusion; the evidence may point to only one conclusion - if so, how could I say it was mine? Finally, what is admissible as evidence? Hirst comments on this contentious question:

> . . . there is disagreement as to how one would ever know which beliefs are to be accepted. People differ in the evidence they think it appropriate to consider and how it should be understood. The area is thus a radically controversial one, in which people come to very different conclusions.[35]

Snook argues that by its nature, the teaching of a specific faith cannot be education, and must be indoctrination. He maintains that this is so, even when viewed from within the faith, since although the church

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teacher lays claim to evidences accepted by his community, his devotion to his faith must ensure that his _primary_ intention is that the beliefs be held. Any evidence which he gives is secondary, according to Snook. This may sometimes be true, but surely such a sweeping statement is unjustified for all church teaching. We have not yet considered whether, in any case, indoctrination is wrong, which has been implicitly assumed by much of the preceeding discussion. In school, for most subjects, whilst evidences and explanations may be given, the primary intention is often that the proposition be believed, in fact this is often the only sensible objective. What does one do when the intellectual ability of the students is inadequate to grasp the evidence cited? Should an education in science, for example, be indefinitely delayed because a student cannot, and is never likely to, grasp the justification of a particular basic theory? In the practical, classroom situation, a teacher may often be faced with the need to simply ensure that what he believes to be true is accepted. The difference between such examples and religion, in a school setting, is that they are generally non-controversial.

Within a community of believers, the above approach is also non-controversial for religion. In other words, indoctrination, in some circumstances, may be inevitable, but not necessarily wrong. At all events, for the purpose of this study, it will be assumed that church instruction can be called education, and will be referred to as such.

What seems certain is that, for many believers, the religious education provided in a modern public education will be incomplete. For example, induction into personal revelation, a cornerstone in many faiths, will not be admissible in school. Concerning the limitation of public education vis-a-vis religion, Paul Hirst has stated:

> Precisely because the area of public values is not in general the total
> area of values for any individual, and because questions about the
> justification of values are frequently outside its competence, there

are aspects of education it cannot appropriately undertake. That
public schools necessarily have a limited scope is a simple point that
needs much greater recognition than it normally gets. If the common
school is to remain neutral vis-a-vis private beliefs and among
different religions, its education must be partial education.[36]

This concept, that the school has only a partial role to play in
educating the child is indeed often ignored, as Hirst states, or else
education is defined to only include what happens in schools. It is an
important point to make in the present discussion.

However, it would be facile to think of religious ideas as existing
just in people's heads, or on paper. They can only be properly
understood in their living milieu. Thus Christian theology has to be
seen in its institutional and sacramental environment. It has to do
with faith, with people, with worship. It is not just a piece of
metaphysics, and not a free-floating ideology.[37]

Challenge to the Churches

If Christian Churches are to survive, it is essential that there be
some organised form of instruction in the traditions and doctrines of their
faith. If this is no longer possible through the schools, some other
method must be found. The mainstream Protestant Churches of this country
at one time shared the Catholic view that school should be suffused with a
Christian spirit, and specifically that form of the Christian spirit
expressed in their own faith. Even after the sectarian passions of the
nineteenth century had subsided, this view was still strongly held, and was
largely satisfied by the form and extent of the religious education
provided in the maintained schools, and by the religious commitment of
large numbers of the teachers. However, their position has been eroded
dramatically over the last half-century, until now the religious element in
an average county school education is a shadow of what it once was.
According to a 1980 report of the Religious Education Council, 25 per cent
of comprehensive schools provide no religious education at all, and many of

those who do, omit it after the third year[38]. Even where religious

education forms a substantial part of the curriculum, the content, as we

have already noted, is often of a non-demoninational, even non-Christian

kind.

The situation has become a fait accompli in such a gradual way that

barely a ripple of protest has been voiced by the churches. It is an

undoubted fact that the Protestant Churches have lost a massive chunk of

their religious education through these changes. It is appropriate to ask

what they have done within their organisations to make up the ground that

has been lost. The general response seems to be rather poor. In 1946 the

Bishop of Sheffield appointed a committee, to investigate the religious

education of children in the eleven to sixteen age group. Their report

shows that even in 1946 there were serious problems. In his forward, the

Bishop states:

> In this diocese, as I expect in many others, the senior departments of
> Sunday Schools leave much to be desired.
>   The admirable work for Sunday Schools which owes much of its
> inspiration to those who founded and have maintained St. Christopher's
> College, has produced a great change for the better in the infant
> schools, and to some degree in the junior schools, but it has not yet
> been so successful with the 11 - 16 age group, which has problems of
> its own.[39]

Forty years later, the situation is probably worse. The report of

the committee appointed by the Bishop of Sheffield is one of the few

attempts to analyse the problem and recommend solutions. There has been

much concerned talk, but little organised analysis and planning. Some

reasons are not difficult to surmise, and one is suggested by Barker:

> Practitioners in religious education work close to the daily 'blood,
> sweat, and tears' of the church's continual regeneration of itself.
> They are often so preoccupied with fulfilling immediate pastoral
> demands that they rarely have leisure time for reflection upon their
> practice. Consequently the foundation principles underlying their
> programmes go unquestioned.[40]

The churches have a major problem which the schools do not have. The youngsters have to be physically present before they can be taught. Unlike school, attendance at church is not compulsory, or even socially expected, and at the moment does not seem to be very attractive for the majority of our teenagers. This was a problem even in 1946:

> Moreover, interviewing young people during the war revealed the fact that, for many of them the school-leaving age was also the Church-leaving age. It has been represented to us that in many ways the situation is now worse, and the age of leaving the Primary School for the Secondary, whether Grammar or Modern School, has become the age when the connection with Church or Sunday School has ceased.[41]

Religion is larger than religious education, and although religious education may have an important part to play in strengthening and perpetuating the church, the church must be reasonably vigorous and strong to sustain a successful religious education programme. J. W. D. Smith says:

> Its educational influence in its parochial and congregational activities, as well as in the schools under its control, depends on the creative power of its thought and life. Genuine Christian education awaits the emergence of Christian community renewed and unified in thought and life.[42]

It is beyond the scope of this study to investigate ways in which the Christian faiths of this country should 'renew and unify' themselves in 'thought and life'. Neverthless, it is a crucial issue affecting their capacity to implement and sustain a successful religious educational programme. This study is restricted to a consideration of what has, or may be done, assuming a reasonably vigorous church community. At present, it seems that with some local exceptions, the majority of mainstream Protestant Churches in this country have not yet come to terms with the gap that has been opened between church and school. As Smith says:

> The fiction still persists among Christians on both sides of the border [Scotland/England] that church and school are partners in a common enterprise of Christian education. That fiction is now wearing very thin.[43]

The intention of this chapter has been to explore issues and outline concerns, rather than to thoroughly argue specific cases. To do the latter, for the wide range of subjects considered, would require more space than is permitted for this study. I have attempted to show that there is confusion, uncertainty and disagreement concerning religious education in state schools, and that historically this has always been so. Even if a generally acceptable approach is eventually established it is likely to be inadequate for the needs of the churches, and committed believers. The churches therefore have a major responsibility to devise some independent means of providing religious education for their young, of whom, in this study, we are considering the adolescent age-group. So far it appears, especially for those in these teenage years, that little progress has been made, but this suggestion will be examined in more detail in the next chapter.

In arriving at the above conclusion, I have attempted to establish the folloiwng points:

1. Traditionally, education and religion were intimately related, and in fact secular education owes its existence to the churches. Thus religious education was inevitably, from the beginning, a major element in the school curriculum.

2. As publicly-financed education developed, and became compulsory, so conflict grew between competing religious factions, to secure favourable conditions for the promotion of their particular faith in the schools. This struggle was so bitter it has had far-reaching consequences for religious education.

3. Although the invective and abuse had largely died down by the middle decades of the twentieth century, confusion and disagreement

remained. This confusion and uncertainty have grown in recent years, as the prodominantly Christian society assumed by the 1944 Act has become more fragmented and multi-cultural. However, the extent of this fragmentation may have been exaggerated, and substantial majorities in various surveys claim to hold traditional Christian beliefs.

4. An unbiased religious education in the maintained schools is perhaps theoretically possible, but probably unattainable in practical terms. This need not be of undue concern, and is not a good reason for excluding R.E. from schools, if reasonable controls are maintained. The personal integrity of the teacher is, in the final analysis, the best guarantee for avoiding indoctrination, in this or any other subject.

5. Syllabus developments have gone through various phases, starting with overtly evangelistic aims in the 1930's, leading to the currently fashionable 'explicit religion' approach. Recent developments seek to give students insight into the religious thought and motivation of many faiths, without making value-judgements. Despite these trends, all forms and shades of opinion are still reflected in current classroom teaching.

6. Parental wishes clearly favour some form of Christian religious education in school, but are confused and largely irrational. There is a dilemma between the need to take account of these expressed wishes, and the need to follow educational criteria and expert opinion. Changes in religious education are largely the result of direction from a minority, rather than pressure from the majority.

7. Many religious groups believe that the only satisfactory religious education is one provided within the structure of their own faith. To this end some, such as the Catholics, have built their own schools. Those who do not have their own schools must find another solution. It has been argued that a state school can only ever provide a partial education in many subject areas, including, and especially,

religion.

8.   The kind of religious education provided within the structure of a particular church is open to the charge of indoctrination (if it <u>is</u> a charge, of which there is some doubt). This concern was discussed sufficiently to demonstrate that instruction in the doctrines of a particular faith need not necessarily be guilty of this charge. It is assumed for the remainder of this study that such instruction may be termed education.

9.   All churches need a system of religious education for their membership, or they will have difficulty surviving. Many churches have traditionally relied on the schools to provide instruction for them, and now can no longer do so. So far, little progress seems to have been made in providing large-scale substitute programmes.

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CHAPTER 3

THE RESPONSE OF THE CHURCHES

Introduction

At the end of the last section I suggested that there have been few
reports on, and a generally inadequate response from the Christian churches
to, the provision of voluntary religious education for adolescents.
This is an oversimplification, since there has been varying response, in
different areas. The need for a serious examination of the provision of
religious education within the Christian churches has been recognised by
many denominations. The report of the commission appointed by the Bishop
of Sheffield in 1946 has been mentioned.[1] It is interesting but
discouraging to note that although this report is more stridently
confessional in tone than its more recent successors, many of its
observations, conclusions and recommendations are substantially the same as
reports from the last ten to fifteen years. The inadequacy of Sunday
School for this older age group; the need for Its inclusion and
fellowship by the whole church community; a recognition (even in 1946) of
the inadequacy of RE in day schools; the requirement for suitable materials
and equipment; lack of parental involvement; the need for better teaching
and adequate training - these are a selection from the range of problems
identified in 1946-48, with which the churches are still grappling today.
In one aspect at least there has been progress, and that is a wider
recognition of the problems, and a desire to do something about them. The
following quotation from a 1981 BCC report is indicative of such
recognition:

> For too long the churches have believed that young people will
> become Christians by attending church and by receiving religious
> instruction at state schools, supplemented by some Sunday School
> Teaching and a crash course on 'The Faith' a few months or weeks prior
> to adult membership or Confirmation. So, increasingly, the blame for
> the lack of faith in our young people is laid at the door of our
> schools. At many a church meeting someone is heard to moan, "R.E.
> isn't taught properly in schools these days". . . .
>
> We believe that it is unrealistic for the church to expect the
> secular system of education to do this work for them.[2]

A different BCC report from the same year was called <u>Understanding</u>
<u>Christian Nurture</u>, and was widely read and influential; it echoes the same
thought:

> County schools were as much agents of the Church as of society, and
> their task of promoting Christian belief and nurturing Christian life
> was not seriously challenged. . . . we can no longer assume that it is
> the schools' task to nurture Christian life. . . . Even after 1870 . . .
> and for most of the century which followed, the church, the church
> school and county school were in partnership offering Christian
> nurture. Today all that is changed.[3]

<u>Current Church Thinking</u>

The problems originally anticipated in 1946 seem to have been

finally accepted and recognized by most sections of the Christian community

in 1986. What, then, is being done? It is significant that reports aim

primarily at voluntary religious education for the adolescent. In fact,

the forty year old report for the Bishop of Sheffield seems to be the <u>only</u>

substantial report dealing specifically with this topic. There have been

some excellent and far reaching works dealing with adolescents and

religion, ranging from Harold Louke's <u>Teenage Religion</u> (1961) which served

as something of a catalyst in generating interest in this area, to the

report <u>Teenagers and the Church</u> (1984), by Leslie Francis. However, they

tend to focus on wider theological and social issues, or be concerned

mainly with the provision of the schools. Often, references to adolescents

or volunteer RE are part of a larger work dealing with religious education

generally, and voluntary church education, especially for this age group

often receives rather scant treatment. For example, in the 1970 Methodist report <u>Christian Commitment in Education</u>, the following statement is given:

> There are also repercussions for the Church's policy in its educational programme in Church worship and Junior Church and Sunday School departments. . . . Indeed, if the religious education in the State school becomes more open and varied, a more distinctively Christian education must be offered by the Church.[4]

The significance here is that this is the <u>only</u> reference to the subject of voluntary religious education in the ninety-three page report, and note that even this brief reference is to do with Sunday School and Junior Church. Even considering that the working party brief was the relationship between the Church and secular education, this is poor, but rather typical. Incidentally, the last sentence indicates that as recently as 1970 the gap between church and school, by then well established, was not fully appreciated.

Where the subject of voluntary religious education within the churches receives more detailed investigation, invariably the greater emphasis is with children in the pre-adolescent and infant years. Much of the discussion and comment revolves around Sunday Schools and Junior Church. The Sunday School Movement, though not as vigorous as in earlier decades, is still strong. According to Robert Martineau (formerly Bishop of Blackburn), 85 per cent of Church of England parishes have a Sunday School, involving a total of about half a million children.[5] The main target for the Sunday School in most churches is children up to the age of about eleven or twelve. Concerning the older teenagers, Martineau laments:

> In contrast with the widespread existence of Sunday Schools, there is a clear dropping off at secondary level and the Young People's Bible Class is almost a thing of the past. ... The proportion of those confirmed who are regular communicants even three years later is small.[6]

This statement, though referring to the Church of England, is

representative of the situation in many other Christian churches. There has been much talk, but little concrete progress based on sound analysis and research. As one reads through the rather scant literature available, and speaks with clergy and interested lay people, one senses an underlying frustration: 'what on earth shall we do with them?' There is much earnest and enthusiastic description of the existing situation, probable causes, and a general pointer in the direction things should go, but little specific recommendations or suggested models. In making this statement, I remind the reader that we are considering specifically adolescents; much more has been done for children, yet even with children success is problematical.

> The churches have enough difficulty in making contact with those in the pre-teenage years, and yet their work among younger children looks like a story of success when compared with their work among teenagers. . . .
>
> . . . consider the lack of resources which the churches in your own neighbourhood have for making an adequate attempt to communicate with the teenager. Review what these churches have available in terms of buildings, activities and trained personnel to meet the special needs of the teenage years. Is it surprising that such a large gap exists between teenagers and the church today?[7]

The pastoral aspect of the Church's mission to young people has received considerable prominence. Yet even here in the youth clubs there is a drift away. The Young People and the Church report, referring to a government-sponsored survey of 1972, says:

> It demonstrated that many young people are interested to place themselves within institutions of influence, but that their developing needs are not met and they tend to leave youth groups in their mid-teens if not earlier. Insofar as many of them belonged to Church youth groups, the Church, with others, must face the question as to why they were (and are) unable to meet the needs of young people as they grow older, particularly as they become young adults.[8]

The finding of this report that young people are 'interested to place themselves within institutions of influence' is important. Recognising this, some churches have attempted to link some kind of

discussion group or church study course with their youth club. The idea of shifting religious study from Sunday to a weekday is not new, but is becoming more popular, in an attempt not only to adapt to the lifestyle of members, but also to give the church a new image other than an exclusively Sunday-based organisation.

A confusion over definitions and objectives characterises much of the discussion on this subject. Several recent reports seem concerned about possible charges of indoctrination, and make efforts to ensure that the work of the churches is seen to be respectable on this count. In Understanding Christian Nurture, we find this comment, referring to findings in the earlier report The Child in the Church:

> We found Christian nurture to be compatible with secular education but incompatible with indoctrination . . . However this position poses a number of questions. Believing Christian nurture is about nurture in children into a received tradition (a Christian past) how can this be effected while avoiding the dangers of indoctrination? Is it possible to nurture into a tradition with a dogmatic basis and be open?[9]

The report goes on to examine this interesting question which is a central feature in the study, but does so very much from the assumptions and positions of secular education. For example, indoctrination is assumed, a priori, to be undesirable, an assumption which is by no means self-evident. In fact, a good case could be made that it is both inevitable and desirable for churches to indoctrinate. Responses such as this seem at times to be more of a defensive reaction to secular educational positions, rather than an original philosophical and theological examination of the concepts from the particular standpoint of the Church. The Carlisle report recognised that the two are not necessarily the same:

> We make this suggestion conscious of the problem which, so far as we can discover, has not been thoroughly investigated as it ought to be, i.e. what educationally is the difference between religious education in the "Sunday School" and religious education in the day school.[10]

·And Sutcliffe says:

> No major research has been undertaken since then [1968] into
> Christian education as such. In the meantime a marked distinction has
> developed between Religious and Christian education. Thus, today, when
> the church sponsors and funds research into school Religious Education,
> that research is less likely to be applicable to the church's task.
> There is now an urgent need for resources to finance research into
> Christian education.[11]

Since The Child in the Church and Understanding Christian Nurture

are precisely such investigations into the distinctive nature of religious

education in a church setting, at least an attempt is being made to address

the issue. Their arguments at times become rather strained, in an attempt

to demonstrate how it is possible to initiate into a faith without

indoctrinating in any way. There is scope for much more thought and

analysis on the relationship of free agency, indoctrination and church

religious education.

Present Attitudes Towards Adolescent Needs

When Sunday School teaching ceases, typically at around the ages of

eleven or twelve, there is often very little to take its place. As far as

many churches are concerned the young adolescent is regarded, for practical

purposes, as having completed his religious education. The Sunday worship

service may be supplemented by some form of Bible class or discussion

group, but generally not. Confirmation training may provide an intensive

period of study for a few weeks or months at around this age, but following

Confirmation there is often, simply, nothing. The 1981 survey conducted by

Dr. Leslie Francis for the Young People and the Church report found that:

> There have been constant complaints about the lack of post
> confirmation/membership training for young people. Many young people
> themselves complain that after being encouraged and supported prior to
> the confirmation or membership ceremony they then seem to be ignored
> and provided with no opportunities of developing either their knowledge
> or ability to play a full part in the life of the church.[12]

It seems that often the young teenager is regarded as an instant adult, with no further requirement for religious education, other than the weekly worship service. The assumption in many churches has long been that adults in their wisdom and maturity, need no religious education. This assumption is being increasingly challenged. Bishop David Konstant, reporting for Roman Catholicism says:

> After reception into the Church little further was done in any formal way to continue the education in faith of the new member. It was assumed that adequate instruction was given to adult members of the church through the weekly sermon, and through their taking part in the day-to-day activities of the local parish. Recently, however, there has been a considerable change of attitude, with regard to both the education in faith of enquirers and the continuing Christian education of adult members of the church.[13]

This is becoming more widespread. The idea of a Sunday School for all age groups, not just children, has been practiced in some churches for many years, particularly by the Free Churches. This, of course has an advantage in the effort to reach the teenagers: if there are Sunday School classes for adults, as well as children, the childish image of Sunday School disappears. Teenagers show a desire to be thought grown-up, and despite an outward show of rebellion, have a need to be approved, trusted and accepted by adults. However, they also have a strong sense of peer-group identity, and are at a stage in their development when a new awareness of life poses special challenges. In fact, adolescents need both the security and sense of fellowship of the adult church community, and the opportunity for separate instruction. It is perhaps a failure to recognise these, and other special needs which has contributed to the mass exodus of this age group from church. An examination of religious principles, rather than a recitation of traditions and commandments, is important for this age group. The nine year old asks 'what is the rule?' The sixteen year old asks 'why do we have the rule?' Unfortunately many volunteer teachers simply cannot cope with the latter question, and their teaching approach

often takes no account of age or maturity. There are implications for training needs here.

> Although we do not yet have sufficient research results to offer us
> certain guidance, the work of the last ten or fifteen years has shown
> that there are characteristic levels of childhood religious
> understanding, and that teaching is unlikely to be effective unless
> these are reckoned with.[14]

Traditionally, and still today, adolescents are involved by the church as Sunday School helpers and teachers. This may be successful, but there are potential dangers. Perhaps the most obvious is the fact that if this is the only instructional involvement the teenager has, it may be that his own religious education will merely revolve around basic concepts, at a child-level. The advantage sometimes is that the effort of preparation will cause deeper reflection and insight. One important concern is the temptation to suppose that young children are easy to teach and manage. Although they may be easy to divert, the skills needed to effectively teach religion to children are as great as for any other group, and of course discipline problems with five or six lively seven year olds can be considerable.

> There will be a place for adolescents, as for older people, as helpers
> in childrens groups. But they must not be the responsible leaders.
> Children should not be entrusted to people who are at an age at which
> parents would never contemplate entrusting their children in day
> schools.[15]

Much activity directed at adolescents is expended in weekend retreats, and other residential courses. These can be very successful, but they are not a substitute for an on-going, regular programme of religious education. Despite great effort in some churches, the overall picture of the provisions for adolescents is not good. Although there is far more discussion than ever before, it has yet to be translated widely into practical solutions which reach the teenagers at the level of their need.

We should be aware also that there are two separate aspects to the subject.
One, with which this study is primarily concerned, is the provision of
instruction for those young people who are already coming to church. The
second is to make the image of the church attractive enough to reach out to
those not involved, as well as retain those already present. At present,
the churches considered in total, are not succeeding particularly well with
either challenge. Quoting once more from Young People and the Church:

> The overall picture obtained from the survey is one of young people
> whose involvement with the church mirrors largely the often held image
> of the church as a place where one goes on Sunday to attend services
> and with which there is otherwise relatively little contact. There is
> certainly considerable scope for the church to help widen the
> involvement of young people within it, and to stimulate them to discuss
> a wider range of issues of concern to the church and the world.[16]

Curriculum

The curriculum used in church teaching has changed markedly over the
past forty years, and probably shows more progress than institutional
changes. This is partly due to various national organisations, often
ecumenical groups, who whilst powerless to do anything more than recommend
organisational change, can actually create curriculum materials, for which
there is clearly a demand. Developments have been influenced by changes in
educational theory, and work by such men as H.A. Hamilton, Dr. Ronald
Goldman, and Douglas Hubery. The movement has been towards more student
involvement and participative teaching. Research conducted by Westhill
College in the mid 1960s supported this 'experiential' approach as it was
called, and in 1968 Partners in Learning appeared for the first time. This
is one of the most widely used courses today, and is published jointly by
the National Christian Education Council and the Methodist Division of
Education and Youth. It is an all-age programme for Christian education,
with adaptations for appropriate age groups. However, since its first
publication there have been few other major developments in the curriculum.

The commonest curriculum item of all, the Bible, is also one of the most contentious. There are widely differing views concerning the extent and nature of its use in Christian education. The research of Dr. Goldman in particular was influential in casting doubt on the ability of children at certain ages to grasp certain types of religious concepts as presented in the Bible.

Staffing and Training

Traditionally, the priest was the sole purveyer of Christian doctrine, with the notable exception of the Sunday School movement. Even with the influence and tradition of the Sunday Schools, there has often been a reluctance to use lay people, especially in areas of worship and membership preparation. This attitude may be misguided, especially when dealing with adolescents.

> . . . in many places only priests and ministers have been seen to have the right theological experience and intellectual training to pass on the faith to young people. The fact that they may find it difficult to relate to young people or to present the faith in an attractive manner has often been ignored.
> In fact, any adult who is able to meet the needs of young people can help to share the faith with them. To work with young people an adult needs the ability to listen, to have a lively faith to share, to be willing to learn, to make mistakes and yet have the confidence to have a go.[18]

The need for lay volunteers is surely obvious if several classes are to be taught. Clergy and lay people from the Catholic, Baptist, Anglican and Methodist Churches were interviewed, concerning this, and other areas of this report (see appendix 4 for the interview schedule). One Baptist minister I interviewed runs eleven separate classes and uses a staff of twenty-two volunteer teachers. Although on a larger scale than many congregations, this is typical of the increasing use of lay volunteers in all aspects of church instruction. This trend has progressed even further in some areas of the Catholic Church, where 'religious education is almost

exclusively given over to lay people', I was informed by Father Tony

Skillen, a Catholic priest responsible for training lay teachers in the

Middlesbrough diocese.

The ability of adults to relate well to teenagers seems to be rather

scarce, and in fact there are signs that it is becoming more difficult to

find volunteers willing to take on this work. Those who are willing need

support and training. Quoting once more from Young People and the Church:

> But all those who work with young people share certain needs: training,
> about which we will say more; support from others in the congregation
> and from those doing similar work in other churches; clear aims which
> reflect the expectations of the church as a whole; and the assurance
> that there are other resources available in the congregation when
> needed.[19]

The provision of such training varies widely, but much good quality

training is available. Curriculum materials and guidance are available

from the same sources who provide lesson materials. The NCEC journal Link

carries details of courses and materials, and prints frequent reviews, for

example. Training Together is a six-week course for group training,

distributed by the NCEC. Video tapes and filmstrips are also available.

Many denominations run nationally coordinated training courses, some

leading to internal qualifications. The Baptist Union and the United

Reformed Church jointly publish a home-study course, Equipped to Teach.

The Methodist Church runs a programme called Preparation for Service for

all new church workers and teachers. Usually these training courses are

run by priests, but increasingly lay people are being utilised in this

role.

The training available is really quite excellent; the challenge

seems to be in getting the horse to drink, now that the water is available.

The following quotation from a Link article by Valerie Ogden, one of the

training officers for NCEC, illustrates the problem:

Unfortunately, the mention of training sets off alarm bells in many minds. Leaders are wary of what will be involved in a training session, and what will be expected of them. Theory, especially, becomes a dirty word, so that any attempt to share the work of theologians and educationalists with those who work in Christian education Sunday by Sunday is thought of as time wasted.[20]

A further challenge is the provision of on-going inservice training and supervision, following any initial training. For many volunteers, the prospect of teaching at all is daunting enough, without having someone checking up, and pointing out areas for improvement. Sometimes such inservice training degenerates into (or was never other than) the traditional Sunday School preparation meeting, where the lesson materials for the following week are reviewed, with no reference to teaching skills at all.

Commitment to training varies greatly. The Baptist minister previously mentioned, with twenty-two teachers, has managed to establish the discipline that unless the teacher attends the appropriate preparation meeting, he is not permitted to teach. Yet, in the Methodist church just down the road, the Reverend Mr. Temple confessed to me that although his teachers were supposed to receive training - the system required at least a weekly preparation meeting - it was difficult to get them to attend regularly.

Good quality training would seem to be a key issue if a staff of non-skilled but willing volunteers are to adequately fill a role previously carried out largely by professional teachers in schools. Referring to the practice of refusing the services of those who will not accept training, Sutcliffe comments:

In spite of all the difficulties churches have in finding leaders and helpers, this kind of rule shows the seriousness of the Church towards its work among children - or more properly, towards its ministry of education towards children and adults - and is to be commended. The pastoral problems caused by such a rule are worth facing in view of the improvements such a standard of commitment can contribute to the Church's ministry in education.

> Church statistics are a far from adequate guide to Church life, but
> they support the impression gained in conversation in many parts of the
> country that inadequately prepared leaders - and poor church
> communities - not only lose children from the Church, they lose adults
> too.[21]

We have not so far mentioned parents. They of course have a
contribution to make, and are often used as teachers. In fact, some
churches in America insist that if the parents want religious education for
their children, they must be prepared to take a turn teaching. One of the
challenges to the Church is that religious teaching has virtually ceased in
the home. Not only do they have to take up the slack left by the schools,
they must make up ground left by the home. There is good reason to examine
ways to encourage parents to re-appropriate their role in the field of
Christian education in the home.

Organisation and Structure

One of the most prominent features of the church education scene in
England is the amazing variety. As one Church of England priest I
interviewed put it: 'it's done in as many different ways as there are
people'. This is doubtless a result of the traditional autonomy of the
parish priest, and the local community in ecclesiastical history.
Referring to the role of the National Society, the Carlisle Commission
points out:

> There was no question, however, of "central" control and no tendency
> towards the growth of bureaucracy. Management of schools was a local
> affair; the "centre" was there to encourage and to help in various
> ways.[22]

The flexibility to tailor a programme to suit specific local needs
is good, but if taken too far it can lead to a lack of unity and weakness.
The freedom not to adopt ideas is an important recognition of agency, but
the total lack of central leadership can lead to confusion and aimlessness

in the overall response. It is difficult to measure success, but if one

takes numbers and a cohesive, vigorous programme as an indicator, then

those denominations with a high degree of central control, such as the

Catholics, and the small evangelistic sects, seem to be doing well.

Even at diocesan level, some churches seem to have a confused policy

and aims.This is true in many Church of England diocese even though the

Carlisle Commission made clear, and widely accepted recommendations, in

1971. In an interview with the Reverend Michael Ranyard, Diocesan

Religious Education Advisor for Durham, I was told that their approach was

very fragmented, that there was a need to pull together and achieve more

coordination within the diocese. The lead at national level is perhaps

even less strong, with much discussion and investigation, but little firm

leadership direction. Many other churches have similar problems. In

answer to whether the Church organisation was prepared and capable of

taking over the role of the schools, Rev. Michael Ranyard said: 'We haven't

got the material resources in terms of adequate buildings. We haven't got

sufficiently capable teachers. We haven't got the kids - they are simply

not attracted to church. We lack sufficient money, curriculum and course

materials.' A concluding thought from The Child in the Church underlines

the seriousness of the problem:

> Nevertheless, the situation of the Christian faith in modern Britain is
> so precarious, the pace of change is so much greater than before, and
> the resources of the Church are so depleted, that our conviction is
> that without more radical thinking and action in the field of nurture
> the future of Christian life and faith in Britain is seriously at
> risk.[23]

It may be thought that the above survey of present-day provisions in the churches is unduly negative and critical. However, we are considering the total, overall picture: there is much to be commended in individual parishes and congregations, but the general situation is not good. Although there are some encouraging signs, the churches on the whole are not rising to the challenge of providing an effective religious education programme for their teenagers. Since we are considering provisions for those who are already involved in church, rather than those who need to be enticed out in the first place, it is a worrying situation.

In arriving at the above conclusion, the following main points were made:

1. There is now a widespread realisation of the challenge posed for the churches by changing patterns of religious education in schools.

2. There have been few reports or commissions specifically on the subject of voluntary religious education for adolescents. What evidence there is suggests we have made little progress in the last forty years.

3. The emphasis of the churches in religious education tends to be with young children. The impression is that adolescents are ignored, possible because traditionally they have been lumped in with the adults, or perhaps because it is more difficult to meet their needs.

4. Many adolescents feel a need for church involvement, but drift away because their needs are not met; for most, church has a very poor image.

5. Traditional patterns of meetings and organisation are changing, in an attempt to meet the challenge. Most of these changes are not aimed at teenagers specifically, but they may help.

6. There is some confusion over aims and definitions, and sometimes it seems that church research is swayed too much by secular

academic influence. There is a need for clarification concerning the nature of religious education in church, together with related philosophical and theological concerns.

7. The adolescent stage of development is characterized by realisations, perceptions and needs which should be taken account of by teachers, but often are not.

8. Adolescents need to be involved in church leadership roles, but care should be taken that the responsibility is not beyond their ability.

9. There have been some promising developments in curriculum over the past twenty or thirty years, but none recently. Most of these developments have been aimed at children, rather than adolescents. There is a need for more research, especially for adolescents.

10. Training provision is critical for voluntary teachers. Although there are many excellent programmes and materials, it is often difficult to involve the teachers.

11. Some churches lack sufficient central direction and leadership, and a consequence of this is a fragmentation of programmes and effort bordering on confusion. A better balance is needed between local autonomy and flexibility, and central organisation and direction.

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3. British Council of Churches, Report, Understanding Christian Nurture (British Council of Churches, 1981), p. 1

4. Methodist Conference Commission on Education, Report, ChristianCommitment in Education (London: Epworth Press, 1970), p. 87

5. Robert Martineau, 'Church of England: Policy in Education', in A Dictionary of Religious Education, ed. John M. Sutcliffe (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1984), p. 80

6. Ibid., p. 80

7. Leslie J. Francis, Teenagers and the Church (London: Collins, 1984), pp. 10,11

8. BCC, Young People and the Church, pp. 64,65

9. BCC, Understanding Christian Nurture, pp. 2,3

10. Carlisle Commission Report, Partners in Education, The Role of the Diocese (London: National Society SPCK, 1971), pp.113,114

11. John M. Sutcliffe, Learning & Teaching Together (London: Chester House, 1980), p.9

12. BCC, Young People & the Church, p. 83

13. David Konstant 'Roman Catholic Church', in A Dictionary of Religious Education, ed. John M. Sutcliffe, (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1984), p. 300

14. British Council of Churches, Report, The Child in the Church (London: British Council of Churches, 2nd. Ed., 1984), p. 8

15. Sutcliffe, Learning & Teaching, p. 97

16. BCC, Young People & the Church, p. 22

17. BCC, Understanding Christian Nurture, p. 102

18. BCC, Young People & the Church, p. 47

19. Ibid., p. 72

20. Valerie Ogden, 'The Importance of Training', Link, 40 (Summer 1983), p.1

21.   Sutcliffe, Learning & Teaching, p. 95

22.   Carlisle Report, Partners in Education, p.92

23.   BCC, The Child in the Church, p.3

21.   Sutcliffe, Learning & Teaching, p. 95

CHAPTER 4
THE LDS CHURCH AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF SEMINARY

Introduction

The remainder of this study will be an examination of one system of religious education. The background, development and operation of this system will be examined, to assess its value, and to identify weaknesses and strengths. The more general viability of such a programme for other churches will also be considered. The system chosen for study is the Seminary programme, of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

The LDS Church

The development of the Seminary programme has been affected strongly by some of the distinctive characteristics of the LDS Church. It is necessary to examine some of these characteristics, in order to fully understand the nature and background of the programme. The Church was founded in 1830, in America, by Joseph Smith. The early decades of the nineteenth century were a period of great religious revivalism in America. The crusade started in the New England states and spread throughout the nation. Ministers of different Christian faiths united in their efforts to 'convert the unconverted'. The area of New York state where the Smith family lived became known as the 'burned over district', because of the intensity and frequency of the conversion programmes there. In the religious excitement and confusion the young Joseph could not decide which of the sects he should join, and in 1820 the fourteen year old boy sought guidance through prayer. The result of his prayer was a vision of the Father and Son, through which he was instructed to join none of the

churches. As he grew older, he experienced more visitations, and finally he claimed to have received a bestowal of priesthood authority, and a divine commission to restore to earth the pure gospel of Jesus Christ, which had become corrupted and fragmented over the centuries.

This rejection of traditional Christianity alienated the young church, and incited considerable bitterness and persecution. The opposition escalated to extreme mob violence, fuelled by various political and social factors, leading to the murder of Joseph Smith. The Mormon people, under the leadership of Brigham Young, fled to the remote security of the Rocky Mountains. Here they settled the Great Salt Lake Valley and surrounding territory virtually isolated from the rest of the world for a time, though always looking outward with a strong missionary programme. This resulted in considerable growth, despite other difficulties, and the total membership of the Church at the time of this study is approximately six million.

The depth of hatred and antagonism toward the Church in its early days was considerable. Out of this grew many myths, half-truths and untruths about the Church, some of which have wide acceptance even today. One misconception is that the Church is not Christian. This may have arisen because the Church departs in several areas from traditional Christian doctrine, despite a somewhat fundamentalist approach to the New Testament. For example, the Church accepts other books, in addition to the Bible, as scripture, such as the Book of Mormon. The LDS Church regards this as a volume of sacred writings of the ancient inhabitants of the Americas, abridged by one of their last prophets, Mormon, and translated with divine help by Joseph Smith. The record describes a people of Jewish origins, living with the expectation of a Messiah, and to whom the resurrected Christ appeared, establishing a Christian church parallel with that in the Old World. Such unorthodox beliefs set the LDS Church beyond

the pale, for many Christian leaders, who considered such doctrines so untenable as to place the Church outside the Christian fold altogether. This ostracism by other Christian churches, together with the initial period of physical isolation in the Salt Lake valleys, has encouraged a strong sense of independence in the LDS people which permeates all aspects of their culture, extending to education, and particularly religious education. Education is one of several LDS doctrines and concepts which have a strong bearing on the development and success of the Seminary programme. The most important of these will now be considered.

Church Leadership and a Lay Clergy

The Church claims to be a restoration of the ancient order of things as established by Christ, rather than a development from the Protestant or Catholic traditions. The leadership structure of the Church reflects this allegiance to the New Testament Church. For example, the leader, or President of the Church has the title (and for members, the attributes) of 'Prophet'; he is assisted by two counsellors, and a Council of Twelve Apostles. These leaders, in common with all leaders in the Church come from all walks of life - doctors, farmers, teachers, etc. The Church believes strongly in a lay clergy. All members of the LDS Church are expected to participate in its administration, and the holding of part-time leadership and teaching offices is regarded as a normal expectation of membership. All ecclesiastical offices, even as senior as those equivalent to a Catholic or Anglican bishop, are voluntary, part-time positions, carried out in addition to a normal profession or trade. Other senior posts for which full-time involvement is essential may be held for a limited period of three to five years, at the end of which the individual will return to 'civilian' life. Only a very small number of ecclesiastical leaders are in permanent full-time positions.

Thus, in a typical LDS ward (equivalent to a parish), there may be as many as sixty or seventy adult leaders, male and female, with varying degrees of responsibility. All these leaders, including the presiding minister (confusingly called a bishop, though equivalent to a parish priest or vicar), are part-time helpers, acting in a voluntary capacity. Under this system, all male members of the church are ordained to the priesthood at age twelve, and thereafter take on increasingly responsible functions according to age. Girls and women, though not ordained as priests, have commensurate responsibilities.

Despite the egalitarian leadership structure, there is strong central control, and deference is emphasised towards those in leadership positions. Official Church policy and doctrine are the only ones admissible; personal, unorthodox opinions such as are voiced by senior leaders in many churches from time to time would be very rare in the LDS Church.

The bishop has unquestioned authority in his ward during his term of office of typically five to seven years, yet clearly he must delegate much of the work. Although a small number of functions, such as marriage, are retained as his exclusive prerogative, under the bishop's direction any worthy priesthood holder may perform almost any of the ordinances of the Church, including communion, baptism and confirmation. Such responsibilities begin at an early age; for example, a sixteen year old boy is authorized to bless the sacrament (celebrate communion), and baptize. All members, male and female, young and old, take turns in preaching the sermons and saying the prayers in the worship services. This substantial and meaningful involvement of adolescents in the Church is in contrast to the normal expectation in other churches, as described by Dr. Leslie Francis in his recently published survey[1]. It probably serves to create greater commitment and more likelihood of involvement in a programme such

as *Seminary.*

A further important aspect of a church run entirely by laity, is
that the concept of voluntary work is so much a part of the community, that
usually little difficulty will be found in finding teachers for a programme
such as Seminary. Furthermore, in a church where success depends on a
largely inexpert staff, the need for 'on the job' training and supervision
has led to the development of training programmes and manuals of a high
standard. One disadvantage is that the more talented people are often
weighed down with too many responsibilities. Not only that, but there is a
tendency for the institution to become an end in itself; for meetings to
proliferate to the detriment rather than the benefit of people.

The Purpose of Life and the Family

The family has always been a *distinctive and strongly formative*
doctrine in the LDS Church. The family is seen as the basic unit of
society, the Church, and in fact, of Heaven also. In LDS doctrine,
families continue in the life after this. Parenthood is regarded as the
highest and noblest of life's opportunities. Presidents of the Church have
consistently affirmed this position. A statement by the ninth president,
David O. McKay, has become a well-known catchphrase, almost a motto for the
Church; 'No other success can compensate for failure in the home.[2] A
similar statement, from the eleventh president, has received similar
prominence:

> The most important work you will ever do will be the work you do
> within the walls of your own home. Home Teaching, bishopric's work and
> other church duties are all important, but the most important work is
> within the walls of your home.[3]

That this philosophical stance is difficult to live up to is
attested by the more-or-less constant exhortation given by Church leaders.
Scarcely a month goes by without articles on family relationships, raising

children and related topics in Church periodicals. The reason is rooted in the unique LDS doctrine concerning the nature of God and the purpose of life. The Fatherhood of God is understood in a literal sense; LDS doctrine teaches that mankind existed in a pre-earth life as the literal spirit children of God. Life itself is conceived to be eternal in nature: we have always existed, and always will exist as an individual, sentient entity. The Church teaches that we are in a process of eternal progression, and that the object of our progression in this world is to become like God just as a child matures to become like its father or mother. A famous Mormon couplet, attributed to Wilford Woodruff, the fourth president, is: 'As man is, God once was; and as God is, man may become.'

It can be seen why in the early days of the Church, the cry of 'blasphemy' was heard, which together with other factors created so much opposition from the Christian world. The LDS definition of God is unlike that of any other Christian faith. It can also be seen why there is such a strong emphasis on families: the whole concept of salvation, for the Mormons, is intimately connected with family ties and responsibilities. Hence a strong encouragement for religious teaching in the home. LDS families will generally be actively involved in daily family worship, grace at meals, Bible reading etc. All worship services are family affairs, and Sunday School provides for all age-groups.

In a faith where the whole Church is seen, in some ways, as an adjunct to the family, Seminary is no exception. When the Seminary programme was created in 1912, the president of the Church stated that its purpose was to 'assist the home to combat the effects of a Godless education'.[4] This tie between Seminary and the home is regarded as important, and the programme is intended to complement, not replace, instruction in the home. Also, of course, the home will tend to support

Seminary and prepare young people for involvement.

Free Agency

With such a strong emphasis on the duty of parents to teach their

children, it may be thought inevitable that in the homes of LDS families,

and in organisations such as Seminary, religious education would degenerate

into a crass indoctrination of the worst kind. However, in LDS doctrine,

the idea of individual freedom has at least as much prominence as the

concept of the family. In fact, the contest between good and evil is seen

to centre around the free agency of the individual. The following

quotations from the Book of Mormon gives scriptural authority to this

importance:

> And because that they are redeemed from the fall they have become
> free forever, knowing good from evil; to act for themselves and not to
> be acted upon . . . Wherefore men are free according to the flesh; and
> all things are given unto them which are expedient unto man. And they
> are free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great Mediator
> of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the
> captivity and power of the devil[5]

> Therefore, O my son, whosoever will come may come and partake of
> the waters of life freely; and whosoever will not come the same is not
> compelled to come[6]

These are but two of dozens of similar statements; good is

associated with freedom, and evil is associated with coercion. Coercion in

any form is abhorrent in LDS philosophy. In evangelistic work in the

Church, there is considerable emphasis on the individual enquirer deciding

for himself through study and prayer. Missionaries are instructed

repeatedly to avoid extensive argument and debate, since the Church does

not want to convert people through possible superior mental agility or

dialectic power.

> The prerogative to persuade or convince rightfully belongs to the Holy
> Ghost, and those appointed to teach must not presume for themselves the
> role of convincing or ratifying.[7]

Although this is the theory, it would be foolish to pretend that the practice is so simple. Highly committed members in their anxiety to save souls may with the best intentions override all considerations of free agency. Furthermore in a lay church where the opportunity for considerable leadership power is granted to so many, there may be some for whom the intoxication of authority itself is a corrupting factor. These dangers have been recognised by Church leaders. Joseph Smith, in 1839, while incarcerated without trial in extremely unpleasant conditions after some four months, and no doubt reflecting on his own position, wrote the following in a letter to the Church:

> . . . the rights of the priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven . . . but when we undertake . . . to exercise control or dominion or compulsion upon the souls of the children of men, in any degree of unrighteousness, behold the heavens withdraw themselves; the spirit of the Lord is grieved; and when it is withdrawn, Amen to the priesthood or authority of that man. . . .
>   . . . We have learned by sad experience that it is the nature and disposition of almost all men, as soon as they get a little authority, as they suppose, they will immediately begin to exercise unrighteous dominion. . . .
>   . . . No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood, only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned.[8]

Brigham Young, successor to Joseph Smith, continued the same strong emphasis on individual freedom, and emphasised the need for tolerance in matters of religion[9]. More recent comments illustrate contemporary concern in the Church for this principle. Dean Larsen, a prominent Church leader said this:

> Such freedom to exercise moral agency is essential in an environment where people have the highest prospects for progress and development. . . .
>   . . . The existence of laws, regulations and procedures has never been sufficient to compel men to obedience. Productive obedience comes through the exercise of free will. . . .
>   . . . Programmed behaviour cannot produce the level of spiritual development required to qualify one for eternal life. A necessary range of freedom and self-determination is essential to one's spiritual development.[10]

These principles can create considerable tensions in teachers and parents whose own perception of their faith is such that they see their greatest responsibility as the conversion of their young people. Neil J. Flinders, a prominent LDS educationalist, suggested the following view of this challenge:

> As detailed elsewhere in this report, families are designed to test individuals as to their qualification as potential eternal parents. The judgement will probably be grounded on how diligently and effectively parents work at assisting their particular children to fulfill their purposes on earth more than it will on how the children actually turn out as individuals. Agency is such an individual factor. We will probably be evaluated less in terms of 'ends' - how the child turned out - as this might be viewed in mortality, than on the means - how we used the eternal processes made available to us as parents and teachers in carrying out our stewardships.[11]

This emphasis on process as well as product is rather typical of LDS philosophy. The idea that for a Christian, doing the right thing is not enough, it must be done for the right reasons, is firmly rooted in the Church's teaching. One familiar Church saying is 'better that a man should remain in ignorance, than be _forced_ into the light'. This has implications for the nature of religious instruction in Seminary, which will be examined in the next chapter.

Education

The acquisition of knowledge and the development of the mind are principle features of LDS doctrine, and have influenced Church practice considerably.

> . . . learning has been a way of life for the faithful Latter-day Saint, who deems it his duty and obligation to learn as much as he can in this life first of all as pertaining to the principles of the gospel and secondly to secular education. 'The Latter-day Saint student conceives his schoolwork to be part of his purposeful preparation for eternal life and joy.' This philosophy of determined learning is derived from statements given in the Doctrine and Covenants in the early years of the Church . . .[12]

The Doctrine and Covenants (a collection of the revelations and writings of Joseph Smith) is peppered with statements such as: '. . . study and learn, and become acquainted with all good books, and with languages, tongues, and people.'[13]; 'It is impossible for a man to be saved in ignorance.'[14]

Joseph Smith himself led the way. Like many living in rural America at that time, he had received very little formal schooling, and desired to overcome this shortcoming. He established various institutions of learning, some for adults, notably the 'School of the Prophets', in which he himself enrolled.

> The Prophet's enthusiasm for learning became contagious. John Corrill said it inspired the whole Church with an extravagant thirst for knowledge.[15]

All of the presidents of the Church have shown this same commitment. their attitude is effectively summarized in the following statement by John Taylor, the third president.

> Would you seek for knowledge? Yes, as I would for a hidden treasure. Would you like the people to be acquainted with the arts and sciences etc.? Yes. We want to so educate our children, and if necessary make sacrifices ourselves for that purpose, in order that they may be men and women capable of coping intellectually with any persons that live upon the earth.[16]

There is nothing ascetical about this commitment to learning, since the Church thinks of education in a broad sense. In fact, the Church's attitude to recreation and enjoyment was one of the many causes of friction with other churches, in an age when the stage, dancing, novels etc., were considered inventions of the devil by many churchmen. Said Brigham Young (himself a keen amateur actor and singer):

> There is no music in hell, for all good music belongs to heaven. . . .
> . . . If you want to dance, run a foot race, pitch quoits or play at ball, do it, and exercise your bodies, and let your minds rest. . . .

> If you wish to dance, dance; and you are just as much prepared for a
> prayer meeting after dancing as ever you were, if you are Saints. . . .
> I built that theatre to attract the young of our community and to
> provide amusement for the boys and girls, rather than having them run
> all over creation for recreation. Long before that was built I said to
> the Bishops, 'Get up your parties and pleasure grounds to amuse the
> people.'[17]

History remembers Brigham Young as a practical, down-to-earth,
rather grim colonizer. Yet his vision ensured that for his people the
vicissitudes of frontier life were tempered by a vigorous seeking for
culture and learning. Education for him was not merely a means to an end,
but something to be valued for its own sake.

> For Brigham Young knowledge was what Aristotle calls a good of first
> intent, a thing of good and desirable in itself needing no argument or
> excuse for its existence.[18]

This clear doctrinal position emphasised by the leaders was neither
easy to implement nor was it necessarily accepted wholeheartedly by all
members. The early years in the Salt Lake Valley were grim: a precarious
struggle to avoid starvation, attacks by Indians, and many other trials
incident to colonizing the American West. Nevertheless, the first party of
Mormons arrived in the Valley in June of 1847, and a few months later the
first school was opened. Of this, William Berrett, Mormon historian,
comments:

> . . . in the latter part of October, 1847, Mary Dilworth opened the
> first school. One of the newly contructed buildings, comprising the
> wall of the fort and containing loopholes in case of Indian attack, was
> the first schoolroom.[19]

He goes on to describe subsequent developments, which were not
auspicious:

> . . . the school system throughout the territory was in a disorganized
> condition for many years, and the majority of the rising generation
> spent very little time under formal schoolroom instruction.[20]

However, these incomplete and disorganized efforts had some impact.

> . . . when the seventh census of the United States was taken in 1850,
> it showed the average illiteracy in the country to be 4.9%; whereas in
> Utah it was only 0.25%, the lowest of the states and territories
> cited.[21]

The emphasis on education has continued unabated in the Church from
Joseph Smith to the present day.

Religious Education

All education is important in the LDS Church, but Religious
Education takes first place; Brigham Young comments:

> There are a great many branches of education: some go to college
> to learn languages, some to study law, some to study physics, and some
> to study astronomy, and various other branches of science. We want
> every branch of science taught in this place that is taught in the
> world. But our favorite study is that branch which particularly
> belongs to Elders of Israel - namely, theology. Every Elder should
> become a profound theologian - should understand this branch better
> than all the world.[22]

More recently, the concept has been restated, this time in an
address specifically directed at Seminary students, by Spencer W. Kimball,
a former Church president.

> One need not choose between the two but only as to the sequence,
> for there is opportunity for one to get both simultaneously; but can
> you see that the seminary courses should be given even preferential
> attention over the high school subjects; the institute over the college
> course; the study of the scriptures ahead of the study of man-written
> texts?[23]

It can be seen from this that there is considerable encouragement
from the Church for its young people to enrol in Seminary. The extent to
which this influences them will be considered in the next chapter. There
is also a concern for moderation and balance. The feeling is, that though
religious education is pre-eminent in fields of learning, it must not lead
to fanaticism or intemperance; it is considered to give structure and

meaning to all other aspects of life and learning. This concern over an excess of religious zeal is tied in with the LDS emphasis on the primacy of knowledge. Hugh Nibley, a noted Mormon scholar, in an essay entitled 'Zeal Without Knowledge', says this:

> True knowledge never shuts the door on more knowledge, but zeal often does.[24]

> 'Many, having a zeal not according to knowledge', said the prophet, '. . . have no doubt, in the heat of enthusiasm, taught and said many things which are derogatory to the genuine character and principles of the Church.[25]

From the foregoing comments, it might be inferred that the Church has a highly intellectual approach to religious belief. In fact, a great emphasis is placed in the LDS Church on spiritual understanding. That is, there is the potential in man to receive knowledge through other than the five senses, and that prayer, fasting and meditation are important - in fact the most important avenues to follow in order to receive a knowledge of God. This is not equated, however, with the glassy-eyed ecstasy of the zealot. This emphasis on the instruction of the spirit can lead people to seek an excuse for avoiding the hard mental exertion and time required for conventional study. Hugh Nibley criticizes the tendency to see knowledge as a pre-packaged supermarket commodity, distributed by the Spirit as a reward for conformity to the 'outward ordinances':

> Can't the spirit hurry things up? No - there is no place for the cram course or quickie, or above all the superficial survey course or quick trips to the Holy Land, where the gospel is concerned.[26]

Then, after describing the overweaning efforts in some cultures to press-gang an intellectual elite through highly competitive educational programmes, he says:

> Yet Joseph Smith commends their intellectual efforts as a corrective to the Latter-Day Saints, who lean too far in the other direction, giving their young people and old awards for zeal alone,

zeal without knowledge - for sitting in endless meetings, for dedicated conformity, and unlimited capacity for suffering boredom. We think it more commendable to get up at 5.00 A.M. to write a bad book than to get up at nine o'clock to write a good one - that is pure zeal that tends to breed a race of insufferable, self-righteous prigs and barren minds.[27]

A most graphic portrait of what the LDS Church is seeking to achieve in Seminary is provided in this following comment from William E. Berrett:

The prophet made one great truth pretty clear to us: 'There is no revelation without a student' - unless you are a seeker after truth, you will never have a revelation, nor will the president of the Church or anyone else. . . .
. . . I get a glimpse of a real student when I read in the New Testament the story of a boy of twelve by the name of Jesus, who goes from Nazareth with his folks down to Jerusalem. There I see a student, who became so immersed in the process of learning at the feet of the great rabbis that he forgot to go home. He forgot he had any folks; he forgot the appointed time to leave Jerusalem. Until you have reached the point in your search for knowledge where you forget to go home, forget your dinner, forget everything except your eagerness to know the answer to a problem, you are not a student. That is why we have so few prophets of the Lord, so few men have diligently sought for the truth in spiritual areas.[28]

Helping and encouraging the students to want to learn - to want to discover the truth for themselves is as important as the actual learning, in Seminary. The above description sounds a little high-flown, perhaps, when considering a typical teenager of 1986. In practice, achievement in Seminary falls rather short of this; yet it is important to have an ideal. The vision clouds a little as we imagine the earnest, well-meaning volunteer trying to interest and control a group of boisterous, uncooperative teenagers who have been coerced into the class. Yet this, perhaps surprisingly, is not typical, as the results of the survey show, and the reality comes closer to the ideal than might have been supposed. Perhaps one reason for this is the unquestioned priority given to religious education by the Church, in terms of cash, material and human resources.

Origins of Seminary

Initially, all schools in the territory settled by the Mormons were church schools. As the nineteenth century progressed, and the territory, later state of Utah came under regular governmental control, such schools presented an economic problem. The LDS people were paying taxes for state schools, and tithing for church schools. Eventually the economic squeeze became such that the Church, like many counterparts in Europe, decided to reduce its input into secular education.

Shortly before the Church began to move out of general schooling, events occurred which exacerbated the loss of weekday religious education which had been given in church schools. 1909 marked the centennial of Darwin's birth, and the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of his The Origin of Species. This event caused renewed interest in his theories, which were promoted with vigour and enthusiasm. The challenge of this theory and its successors, and indeed the entire explosion of scientific knowledge at this time was seen by many as a considerable threat to religious faith. President Smith's comment about a 'Godless education'[7], previously mentioned, undoubtedly referred to this problem; the Seminary programme was the result. It was designed to provide religious education at the same level of expertise as the science teaching of the schools - to balance the scales, as it were. It anticipated the Church's withdrawal from secondary education by a year - the first Seminary being organised in 1912.

The first Seminaries were housed in premises built adjacent to the high schools, and students were generally released from school for one period a day, to receive LDS religious teaching in the Seminary. Gradually, as more church schools were closed, more Seminaries were opened. In 1926 a similar scheme began for college and university students, called 'Institute'. The Church policy on education has changed little since those

days, in broad terms. The Church will provide secular education only in underdeveloped countries where the state cannot provide it, but is committed to provide Seminary and Insitute to Church members everywhere.

In order to extend Seminary to a larger number, early-morning Seminary was devised. In this, instead of attending classes on a school release basis, students meet in the morning, prior to attending school. The lesson is often taught in churches or homes to a small group, seldom larger than fifteen students. The teachers for early morning Seminary are generally non-professional volunteers who receive a small stipend to cover incidental expenses, unlike teachers at the released time Seminaries who teach full time, on a professional basis. However, the youth are encouraged to view whatever form of Seminary they attend as an extension of their schooling. Thus Seminary only convenes when school is in session, and follows school terms and holidays.

There are doctrinal and historical reasons for this emphasis. The concept of a lay clergy is one; this is not just an economic convenience to reduce costs, but an article of faith that a preacher should not be paid for preaching. Therefore, any programme such as Seminary, which involves professional workers must be clearly separate from the ecclesiastical arm - although as will be seen in the next chapter, this sometimes causes confusion. Seminary, although largely volunteer-based outside Utah, is seen very much as one with professional roots - as a direct replacement for the religious education that students once received in Church schools.

Modern Development and Organisation

Even early-morning Seminary was unable to reach the more thinly scattered membership of the Church. Distance between students, lack of transport and lack of suitable teachers make it impractical. In this country, only eighteen percent of Seminary students are in the

early-morning programme. In 1967 a third system was developed, called home-study Seminary. This incorporates three distinct elements: (1) home-study work; (2) a weekly lesson; (3) a monthly meeting.

Each of these elements is designed to fulfill a different purpose, which together is intended to provide as experience approximating that of released-time students. For their home-study work students are issued with work-books which guide them through a sequence of exercises based on a scriptural curriculum. The curriculum is a four year cycle, covering for one year each the Old Testament, New Testament, Doctrine and Covenants, and the Book of Mormon. Home-study is the most demanding feature of the course since it is largely done in isolation, and requires a high degree of self discipline and motivation. As we shall see from the survey, teachers find keeping students up-to-date with their homework one of the hardest tasks in Seminary.

The weekly lesson usually lasts about an hour, and takes place in the evening, mid-week. This lesson is intended to serve as something of a seminar; work books are collected for marking, marked books are returned, and a discussion is led by the teacher, expanding and clarifying concepts studied at home. Emphasis is placed on students' contributions and the sharing of ideas. Weekly classes are usually ward-based groups and therefore small in number. The average class size for this country is five.

The third element of the programme, the monthly meeting, is designed to give a greater sense of community and overcome the feeling of isolation which individual study and small classes might produce. This meeting draws together groups of seven to ten classes from an ecclesiastical unit known as a stake (smaller, but similar in function to a diocese). These meetings are taught by a full-time professional teacher, called a CES coordinator. His region comprises three or four stakes, or about thirty to forty

classes. Social activities are organised in conjunction with the lesson, which itself is intended to be activity-oriented. The whole event has something of the quality of an extravaganza about it, generally filling most of a Saturday afternoon and evening. Usually, the coordinator takes this opportunity to conduct a separate training meeting for the teachers, called a faculty meeting.

Students are enrolled in the wards of the Church, by local leaders, and pay a fee for the cost of the materials. At present, the fee for the basic materials is just over five pounds.

Organisation and Development in the British Isles

After a pilot scheme in America in 1967, home-study Seminary was introduced to Britain in 1968. American staff supervised it initially, increasing from one to five in number in three years. They were the only full-time employees, and between them, by 1971, they supervised just over 1,000 students and 180 teachers. The first British employee was appointed in 1971, and gradually the Americans went home. No replacements for them were made, since it was felt that it might be possible for just one full-time man to control the programme, assisted by volunteer supervisors to help him train and organize the teachers. By 1974 only the one Englishman remained in full-time employment, supervising some 4,500 students (including Institute, a twin programme for young adults). By the end of the year it was clear that that this could not work, because the workload was too great for one man, so a full-time staff was once again built up, this time with British employees. At the time of this study, there are twelve men running the programme in Britain, and experience has developed a formula for workload. Generally, one full-time man supervises approximately 30 or 40 teachers, who teach about 150 to 200 Seminary students. Each man also supervises an Institute programme in his region.

Home-study Institute is similar to Seminary, for 18 to 30 year olds. This study will not be considering Institute, but when looking at the operation of the full-time coordinators, one needs to be aware of this additional responsibility.

The management structure is quite simple. The programme worldwide is supervised from a headquarters in Salt Lake City. Field officers called zone administrators work from this central office. Each of their zones is divided into areas, which are generally consistent with a country, or closely associated group of countries. Each area is presided over by an area director. The British Isles forms one such area. The area director is assisted by a team of CES coordinators, each responsible for a geographic region within the area. These are the men who directly supervise the work of the teachers, and teach students personally in the monthly meetings. The only full-time employees in an area are the area director, his coordinators, and a small secretarial staff.

The work of the coordinators has changed in emphasis over the years. Initially, when curriculum materials and teacher aids were dominant, their role was naturally concerned with the use of such materials. Training consisted largely of discussions, adaptations, and demonstrations in the use of the materials. As the emphasis has shifted away from materials, and more to teacher competence, so the role of the coordinators has changed. Their most important role now is seen as training and visiting teachers. Training now involves much more instruction in basic teaching skills than the preparation of materials.

This chapter has been a broad description only. More detailed comments will be included in chapter 6, in conjunction with research findings. The following points were made:

1. The Seminary programme specifically attempts to replace school-based religious education, and has operated in this country since 1968.

2. Seminary is for the 14 to 18 year age group.

3. The LDS Church has an unusual history, unorthodox doctrines and practices which significantly influence Seminary. The most important of these are:

a) A very strong sense of independence; a desire to be self-sufficient.

b) Strong central control and leadership, complete loyalty to their prophet and local clergy.

c) An almost entirely lay clergy and leadership in which most active members, including adolescents, are given significant responsibilities. This has many advantages; it particularly conditions the community to the concept of voluntary service and the need for adequate training and supervision. One disadvantage is that it is easy for the Church to be become preoccupied with administrative procedures.

d) There is very strong emphasis on the primacy of the family, and strong encouragement for parents to take an active role in teaching their children.

e) The LDS philosophy of life conceives a form of eternal progress, closely tied with the family, and involving the continuous acquisition of knowledge. The goal is not only to reach God, but to

become like him.

f) The concept of individual free agency is very important, though coming to terms with this in a church so agressively evangelistic is not easy.

g) There is a very strong commitment to education. The LDS concept of education includes conventional academic learning but stresses a well rounded experience of life including adequate enjoyment and recreation in sports and the arts.

h) Religious education is considered most valuable of all, and should receive greatest priority. However, leaders are concerned that over-zealousness in religious matters can, without common sense and balanced wisdom, lead to fanaticism. Conventional study is regarded as an essential complement to prayer and meditation, in seeking to learn of God.

4. Seminary emerged originally in 1912, following a combination of circumstances. Two of these were the 'Godless education' in state schooling as a result of a resurgence of scientific thought, particularly Darwin's theories; and the economic necessity of closing LDS schools. These early Seminaries ran released-time programmes taught by full-time professional teachers.

5. Seminary was extended to a wider membership through early-morning Seminary, and later to virtually all Church youth worldwide through the development of home-study Seminary. Both of these programmes are taught by volunteer teachers, yet there is a strong attempt to see the programme as an extension of the professional, secular education of the young people. For doctrinal reasons, it is not to be confused with the predominantly Sunday-based ecclesiastical programmes.

6. Home-study Seminary is composed of three distinct elements: individual daily study, a weekly lesson, and a monthly meeting. The

combination is designed to give an approximation to the released-time programme.

7. The organisational structure is very simple. An area director supervises the country, and under him a team of coordinators supervise the teachers in a given region. The area director is responsible to Church headquarters through zone administrators.

1.   Leslie J. Francis, Teenagers and the Church (London: Collins, 1984), pp. 45-47

2.   David O. McKay, in Conference Report, April 1964 (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 1964), p.5

3.   Harold B. Lee Strengthening The Home (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 1973), p.7

4.   Joseph F. Smith, statement ascribed in filmstrip Our Charge (Salt Lake City: Church Educational System, 1974)

5.   The Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ, Sacred scripture of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 1981 ed., p. 58

6.   ibid., p. 313

7.   Gerald Lund; Moritsen and Brickey, Foundations For Gospel Teaching (unpublished discussion paper, Church Educational System 1976), p. 12

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CHAPTER 5
RESEARCH DESIGN

Aims and Objectives

In Seminary there are three key groups: the volunteer teachers, the students, and the full-time administrators. Two other groups are important, but not an integral part of the organisation; these are parents, and Church leaders. The research for this study was primarily with the first three groups, since they are actually part of the Seminary; however, the influence of parents and Church leaders was considered. Of the three groups, the main emphasis was on the teachers, since the performance of the voluntary element in any volunteer organisation is clearly a crucial factor determining quality and success. The teachers will influence student support and reflect management competence.

Communication and training are particularly important in a volunteer organisation, where professional skills may be lacking, and availability of the workers may be restricted. It is particularly important to develop an understanding of the goals and objectives, and basic features of the organisation. Accordingly, one important objective of the research was to test the extent of agreement between the three groups about different features of Seminary.

The general aim of the research was to investigate the characteristics, success and effectiveness of the Seminary organisation as a religious education programme, and to identify strengths and weaknesses in its administration. This general aim was narrowed to more specific areas of investigation, which were investigated through three questionnaire studies, supplemented by the reports and statistics of the organisation,

and interviews with many teachers and administrators.

The range of topics was formulated by considering four broad categories which together comprehend most activities in the organisation. These are: administration, teaching, curriculum, and objectives. In considering the detailed variables for each of these, it was recognised that there are 'hard' and 'soft' factors. The 'hard' factors are those open to objective assessment; for example staff turnover, or attendance figures. 'Soft' factors require a more subjective evaluation, for example, the status of the teacher in the organisation, or motivations and incentives. Emphasis was given to these 'soft' factors, since attitudes and relationships are particularly important in the kind of organisation being studied.

Specific topics of study were as follows:

1. Teacher characteristics

2. Selection and appointment of teachers

3. Training of teachers

4. Supervision of teachers

5. Teaching

6. Student characteristics

7. Student enrolment

8. Student activity and response

Research Methods

Size limitations for this study made an initial choice inevitable. This was whether to concentrate on an in-depth study of a small number of individuals and a small area of the programme, or on a broad, more descriptive and less detailed study. The latter choice was made, and this study is broad, both in terms of the sample, and the number and types of individuals studied, also the number of instruments used. The reason for

this is that in order to fulfil the objectives of the study, it was felt

necessary to consider the total programme, from as many points of view as

possible.

A variety of methods were employed. As previously stated, emphasis

was given to the teachers, and the core of all the research was a postal

questionnaire (see appendix 1), sent to a sample of Seminary teachers.

This was supplemented by two further questionnaires, one to students, and

one to administrators (appendices 2 and 3). In addition to the

questionnaires, a number of interviews were conducted. First, a

semi-structured interview was conducted with four senior administrators in

the Central Office in Salt Lake City. The interview schedule was based on the

questionnaires. Unfortunately time constraints prevented a full response

from these men, and their comments provide mainly background information

for this report. In addition, many informal conversations and interviews

were conducted with students, teachers and administrators. Finally, the

handbooks, records, reports and curriculum materials of Seminary were

studied carefully.

Questionnaire Sampling

A questionnaire was chosen as the main instrument, since it was the

only practical way of dealing with the wide geographical distribution and

size of the sample chosen. The survey addressed a subject well known to

the respondents, and one to which they were expected to have some

commitment; it was thought that the quality and size of response was likely

to be high.

Through the excellent cooperation afforded by CES, a large sample

was possible for each survey. Sampling was slightly complicated by the

chance fact of a separate research project into Seminary being conducted at

the same time as this one. This other project also involved a

questionnaire for teachers and students. It was desirable to avoid the situation of individuals receiving two questionnaires, and this problem was discussed with the other researcher. A random sample of the whole population was not possible without a significant danger of overlap, unless the two samples were quite small. We therefore decided to each survey approximately fifty percent of the students and teachers, selected by geographical area. Since the coordinators are each responsible for a specific area, sharing their areas between us, to give as representative a geographic spread as possible seemed to be a good solution. There was also an important administrative reason for doing this. I received permission to use CES organisational channels for the distribution of the questionnaires. The cooperation of the coordinators was very important, to assist with the distribution, and possible follow-up work, so it was desirable to ensure that a coordinator had to deal with only one researcher, and one set of questionnaires. One penalty which had to be accepted with this sampling method was that out of the twelve coordinators, the five or six in one sample might be unrepresentatively strong or weak. They would likely influence the programme in their area accordingly.

The areas surveyed were: South East Scotland, Glasgow, North East England, Yorkshire and Humberside, Staffordshire and the Midlands, Cheshire and North Wales, Central Southern England, and East Anglia. This provided 1,040 (out of 2,062) students, or 50 per cent of the enrolment, and 203 teachers, which was 54 per cent of the teaching staff. All twelve of the coordinators were approached with their questionnaire. The individual questionnaires will now be considered in turn.

Teacher   Questionnaire

The broad aim was to examine the attitudes, understanding and experience of volunteer Seminary teachers. This was expected to: (a)

provide a description of operations and conditions from the teacher's viewpoint, which can be compared with management expectations and standards; (b) identify factors leading to success; (c) identify the needs of volunteer teachers, and the extent to which such needs are being met in practice.

The areas of investigation have already been outlined. Specific questions were formulated after the significant variables of each broad area had been identified. For example, 'supervision' was considered to have the following variables: accountability, relevancy, objectives, initiation (imposed or requested?), feedback procedures, and type. Questions were designed to examine each variable.

The questionnaire was a combination of closed response (multiple choice, and Yes/No) questions, and open questions. Although an entirely closed response form would have been easier to analyse, it was felt that the high degree of commitment anticipated in respondents required an opportunity for the free voicing of opinions in certain areas. The nature of the subject, involving strong religious loyalties, increased the likelihood of respondents providing the 'right' answers, in order to please. I attempted to overcome this by: (a) providing an opportunity for teachers to remain anonymous; (b) emphasising the need for actual feelings and experiences in the covering instructions; (c) approaching certain key areas through several different questions, to check consistency.

The questionnaire was tested in a pilot, sent to eleven teachers selected from several different areas. All eleven responded. Five new questions were added and one changed, as a result of the pilot. The finished questionnaire was distributed on 18th. March 1985, together with a covering letter of instructions and stamped addressed envelopes for the return. Distribution was through the coordinators, largely by hand at their normal meetings. Follow-up with non-respondents was initially

through verbal requests by the coordinators, with a final postal request, enclosing a second blank questionnaire form, in June. The initial response was 64 per cent, rising to 79 per cent after the final reminder. An effort was made to contact by telephone the forty-three non-respondents. Only twelve could be contacted, and all but three claimed to have simply forgotten. One objected, and two said they were too busy. On the basis of the comments of these twelve, there appears to be no particular bias in the size of the response.

Student Questionnaire

This attempted to discover the background and attitudes of students, particularly their reasons for enrolling in Seminary and their continued involvement. It was hoped to identify those elements in the programme which the students find attractive, and those which they do not. I also wanted to compare student response and attitude with what the teachers perceived it to be, and so several questions in the two questionnaires are the same or similar. The development of this questionnaire followed the same lines as the teacher questionnaire. The main areas covered are, in summary:

1. church & family background;

2. enrolment and continued involvement ;

3. teachers and teaching;

4. parental involvement.

The student questionnaire was much shorter than the teacher questionnaire. One reason for this was an assessment of the competence and ability of the students, gained from visiting many classes and talking to numerous students. A second factor has already been stated - that emphasis in this study is with the teachers. A third reason lies in the method of administration chosen for the questionnaire. I decided that the highest

response could be achieved if the students completed the questionnaire at the time of one of their regular classes, under the supervision of the teachers. This restricted the length to one which could be completed in about twenty to thirty minutes.

The student questionnaire was piloted, distributed and collected in the same way, and at the same time as the teacher questionnaire. As with the teacher questionnaire, no major problems were discovered in the pilot study, which involved the eighty-two students of the eleven teachers of the teacher pilot. Sixty replies were received, giving a 73 per cent response for the pilot.

The finished student questionnaire was distributed together with the teacher questionnaire, with instructions for the teachers, which they were required to read out to the students. The fear of disclosure when completing the questionnaire in a small group setting, together with a general tendency to conform to church loyalties were factors to consider. I attempted to overcome them by using the same precautions as with the teachers, and in addition requesting that the completed forms were sealed in an envelope, prior to posting, in the presence of the students. It is interesting that only 2 per cent of teachers, but 19 per cent of students chose to be anonymous, indicating the higher concern of disclosure among students. This is encouraging, since it implies an honest response from many students. The student return, which at 57 per cent was much lower than that of the teachers, or the student pilot, was disappointing. As with the teachers, telephone enquiries were made to determine reasons for non-responses. Fifteen teachers were contacted, representing forty-five non-responding students. Fourteen had stopped attending Seminary, ten were absent on the day of the survey, two refused, fifteen were in classes which had finished the course, and four were not followed-through by the teacher. There is no clear pattern. It was thought that non-respondents might

primarily be those who were disaffected with Seminary, but only the fourteen who had stopped attending could be definitely considered as such, though the two refusals and some of the absentees might be included. Generally, however, these findings do not establish a definite bias in the response rate.

Coordinator Questionnaire

Like the student questionnaire, the coordinator questionnaire was primarily intended to provide a comparison with the teacher questionnaire, though areas specific to the coordinators were also examined. It was expected that in a volunteer-based programme, with a large turnover of staff, problems of training and communication would cause large differences in the responses of the teachers and administrators to the same questions. The main sections were as follows:

1. Selection of Teachers;
2. Training and Supervision;
3. Teaching ;
4. Students & Parents;
5. Personal Background.

Since there are only twelve full-time coordinators in the country, each of them was asked to complete the questionnaire, and all twelve responded. The first two questions of the questionnaire were completed in a group setting, with opportunity for questions and limited discussion. The remainder were completed individually, and the whole returned by post.

SUMMARY: CHAPTER 5

1. The investigation focussed on three groups: teachers, students and coordinators; however parents and Church leaders were also considered.

2. Communication and training are important, and one objective was to discover the extent of agreement between the three groups, in certain areas.

3. The general aim was to investigate the characteristics, good and bad, affecting the success of Seminary, through the four broad catagories of administration, teaching, curriculum and objectives.

4. The study is deliberately broad in scope. However, an emphasis was given to the volunteer teachers.

5. Research was through three questionnaire surveys of teachers, students and coordinators, supplemented by interviews and an examination of Seminary reports, statistics and manuals. The teachers' questionnaire was the hub of the research, on which much of the remainder was based.

6. Sample size was approximtely 50 per cent for teachers and students, and 100 per cent for coordinators. Geographical areas were selected according to the coordinators' assigned areas.

7. Questions for the surveys were chosen according to the variables associated with each topic.

8. The teacher and student questionnaires were piloted, but only small adjustments were necessary.

9. The response rate was good for the teachers, at 79 per cent, but poor for the students at 57 per cent. Follow-up of some non-respondants by telephone revealed no clear bias in the teacher return rates. No conclusive pattern was revealed for the students, but there was a sufficient indication that poorer students tend not to reply, to suggest caution in interpreting the results.

CHAPTER 6
RESEARCH FINDINGS: DESCRIPTION AND EVALUATION OF
CONTEMPORARY PRACTICES AND CONDITIONS IN SEMINARY

Characteristics of Seminary Teachers

The first ten questions of the teacher questionnaire were concerned with the characteristics of the teachers in relation to their Church background; a detailed sociological profile was not attempted. In the kind of lay-run church described in chapter 4, there is inevitably competition for personnel between the various organisations and departments. It is therefore possible to ascertain to some degree, the emphasis and commitment given by the Church to Seminary, according to the experience and Church standing of the teachers made available for such service. It should be remembered that the LDS Church is vigorously evangelistic, and that a large proportion of an average congregation will be relative novices of only a few years membership.

Seminary teachers are generally of substantial experience and standing in the Church. For example, the average years of church membership is seventeen, 51 per cent of teachers having more than fifteen years of membership (see figure 1). Eighty-six per cent of teachers are Temple endowed, and 87 per cent have been married in the Temple. (Temple ordinances are open only to established members of proven commitment). Of those who are married, most (91 per cent) are married to a spouse of the same faith. Most teachers, in fact, are married (81 per cent), and their average age is thirty-seven (figure 2 shows the full distribution of ages). The general image is of a mature adult, who is a well established,

FIGURE 1

YEARS OF MEMBERSHIP OF SEMINARY TEACHERS

No.
Teachers

mean = 17.4 years of membership

Years of Membership
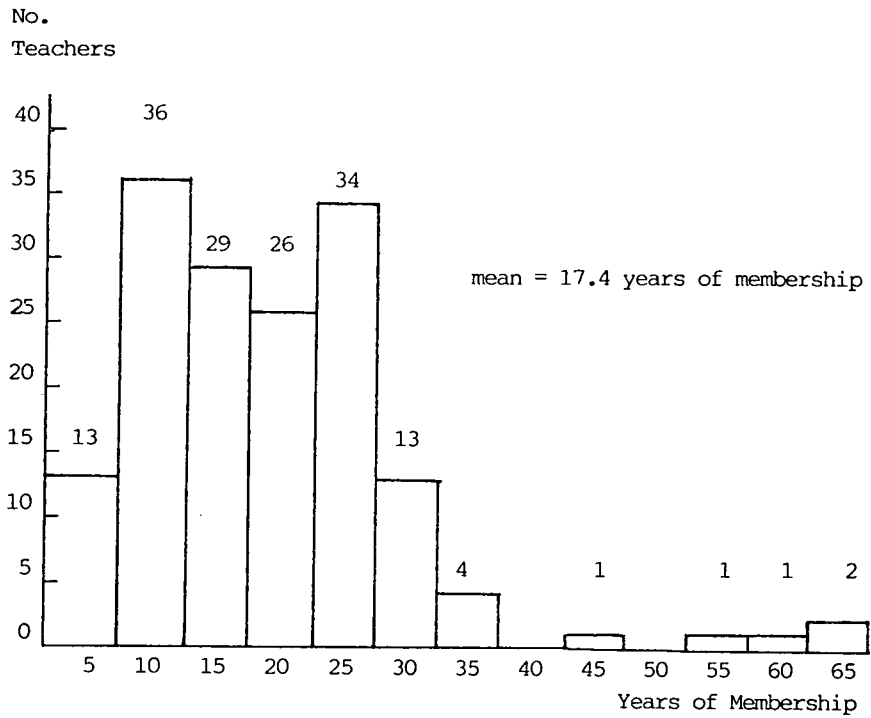
FIGURE 2

AGE OF SEMINARY TEACHERS

No.
Teachers

mean = 37 years of age

Age of Teachers
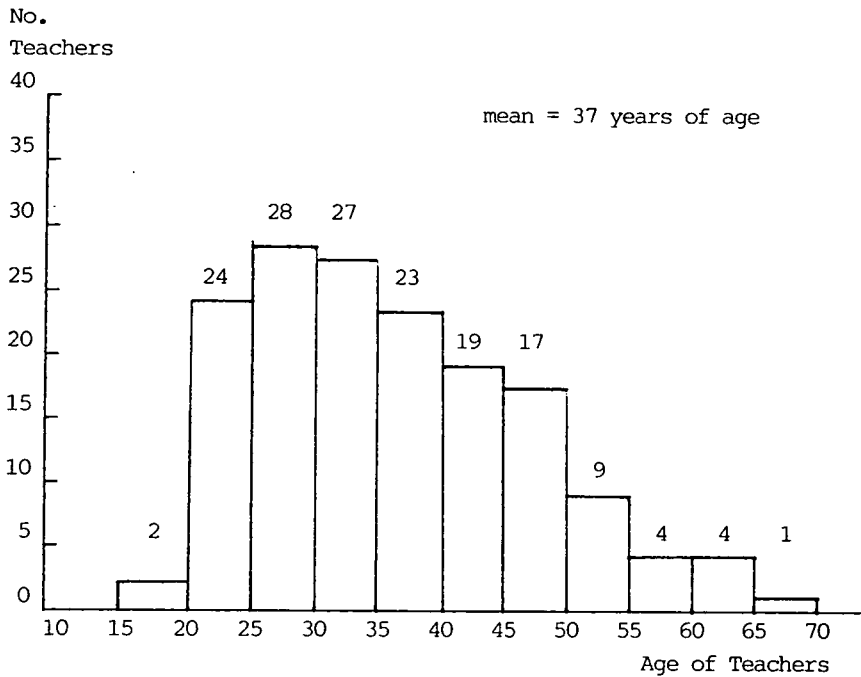
faithful Church member.

Further information suggests that this trend is increasing. A survey which I conducted in 1982 provides a source for comparison of characteristics of Seminary teachers, given in table 1. Of 367 teachers surveyed, 87 per cent had been married in the Temple, giving a 6 per cent increase to 1985; there was an even larger increase of 21 per cent, of teachers who had been members for more than fifteen years.

TABLE 1

CHARACTERISTICS OF SEMINARY TEACHERS

Characteristics	% of teachers	
	1982	1985
males	34	24
females	66	76
married	83	81
married to Church member	....	74
temple sealing	67	69
temple endowed	....	86
full-time job	61	39
part-time job	....	23
Professional teaching qualification	11	10
working in another Church position	....	84
having 2 or more additional positions	....	34

Although these positive findings suggest support from the Church in the matter of personnel, other statistics are less complementary. The proportion of female to male teachers has moved from 2:1 in 1982, to 3:1 in 1985. This shows an increasingly female-dominated programme. It is generally acknowlegded in CES that boys are more difficult to involve than

girls. It is interesting that the proportion of boys (42 per cent) and girls (58 per cent) enrolled in Seminary is very close to the proportion of boys (41 per cent) and girls (59 per cent) who attended church in Francis' survey of teenagers in Lancashire, discussed in chapter 3. The full-time Seminary staff in the country have been trying to encourage the appointment of male teachers, in an attempt to attract the boys, but the above trend indicates a complete failure.

A further source of concern is the number of teachers holding other positions of major responsibility in the Church; 84 per cent of teachers have at least one other voluntary calling in the Church, and many (34 per cent of this group) have two or more additional positions. Since a teacher may need to spend five to seven hours per week for home-study Seminary, and fifteen to twenty hours per week for early-morning, this finding is worrying. Almost one-third of teachers are not in full-time employment (at 31 per cent, a huge decrease from 69 per cent in 1982), and may be expected to have more time available. Even so, this still indicates a lack of appreciation for the workload of a Seminary teacher on the part of local Church leaders.

The item of greatest concern is the turnover of staff. In any volunteer organisation, a high turnover of workers can cause considerable strain. Table 2 gives the statistics for Seminary. The trend is in the right direction, with 34 per cent of teachers having served for three or more years, compared with 22 per cent in 1982. However, 41 per cent of teachers were in their first year of teaching Seminary (1982, 46 per cent) indicating a turnover of well over one-third annually. This must weaken the organisation considerably, especially since only 10 per cent of teachers have a professional teaching qualification, thus increasing the problem of training new teachers. Reasons for this high turnover will be considered shortly.

TABLE 2

LENGTH OF SERVICE OF SEMINARY TEACHERS

length of service	% of teachers	
	1982	1985
1 year	46	41
2 years	32	24
(mean = 2.3 years)		
3 years	....	14
4 years	19	9
5 years	....	6
6 years	....	3
7 years	....	1
8 years	3	< 1
9 years	....	....
10 years	....	< 1

The overall profile of Seminary teachers is therefore mixed. In some ways the Church gives considerable support to this programme, inasmuch as teachers tend to be well-established, experienced members, in a Church where such people are in high demand. However, there is a tendency to rely more and more on women teachers, when more men are needed, and many teachers of either sex are given so much else to do in the Church that their contribution to Seminary will be diluted to some extent. More alarmingly, the turnover is so high that training programmes must be hard-pressed to cope.

Teacher Selection And Appointment

Part of the difficulties just mentioned may be attributable to the system for appointing a Seminary teacher. The actual appointment must be

made by a CES respresentative, usually the coordinator, since, as was explained in chapter 4, Seminary is regarded as a professional, and not an ecclesiastical programme. However, this is quite different from the usual procedure of the Church, where almost every other position in a ward is made by the bishop, and is regarded by members as a divinely inspired calling. This causes confusion, as the questionnaire revealed. Only 38 per cent regarded their appointment as a volunteer professional placement, the remainder considering it a Church calling. Several teachers found this question difficult to answer, and added marginal notes like 'I think it should be a professional appointment, but it feels more like a Church calling'. This confusion was further emphasised when the teachers were asked to whom they were primarily responsible, in the day-to-day running of Seminary. 54 per cent said to their coordinator, and 44 per cent felt responsible to their bishop.

According to CES policy, both Church leaders and CES personnel have responsibility for teacher appointments, though CES coordinators have the major responsibility for subsequent supervision. The procedure for appointments is that the CES coordinator and the Bishop should discuss the matter together, and reach a mutual agreement. Then, the coordinator contacts the selected individual, and after a successful interview, makes the official appointment which is confirmed in writing. The bishop's involvement is essential, since first of all the individual must be cleared by him as a member in good standing, and secondly, the prospective candidate should ideally be relatively free of other current or prospective Church commitments. The coordinator would generally have no means of knowing these things. In any case, the deference and loyalty given to ecclesiastical leaders in the LDS Church has already been stressed, and the bishop would be consulted as a matter of courtesy, if one of his flock was considered for a Church position outside his jurisdiction.

The unusual nature of this arrangement causes confusion amongst Church leaders, as well as teachers. Bishops quite commonly go ahead with appointment interviews, and present the teacher, as a fait accompli, to the coordinator afterwards. Even if he does not go as far as an appointment, the bishop is likely to 'sound out' the candidate, and the interview with the coordinator may be seen as an unimportant formality, or part of the training process rather than an appointment. 54 per cent of teachers reported that their bishop made the initial approach, and only 20 per cent were approached first by their coordinator. These and other factors associated with selection and appointment procedures are given in table 3.

TABLE 3

FACTORS IN SELECTION & APPOINTMENT OF TEACHERS

Factors	% of Teachers
Initial approach by: self	24
church leader	55
coordinator	20
Those who had an appointment interview	59
Of those who had an interview, those who considered it helpful	18
Letter of appointment received	68
Those who consider Seminary a professional appointment	38

Even where the process works as it should, the coordinator must rely on the local Church leader, and has very little effective influence over who is chosen. Eleven out of the twelve coordinators felt that the bishop has the greatest influence in the selection of a teacher. Interestingly, in a supplementary question, 7 coordinators felt that the bishop should

have the greatest influence. He is certainly better placed to know the people in his ward; the coordinator is too remote to know a local congregation well enough to decide who would make a good teacher. However, unless the bishop is willing to discuss his recommendation with the coordinator, and make changes where necessary, the coordinator must rely on the bishop's understanding of the requirements of Seminary for a successful appointment. Unfortunately, according to comments from the coordinators, bishops seem to show a lack of understanding.

These difficulties are not helped by a seemingly casual attitude to the appointment of teachers by the coordinators. Only 59 per cent of teachers could recall having an appointment interview, and of these, eighteen, or 12 per cent stated it was by the bishop. Even of the remaining 47 per cent, the nature of the responses suggested that many of them might have been a bishop interview. Thus many teachers do not seem to have had an interview at all, and of those who have, it may not have been the kind of professional introduction envisaged in CES. Although ten out of twelve coordinators in their questionnaire claim to conduct such interviews with all new teachers (which should account for approximately 83 per cent of teachers), clearly their efforts are remarkably unmemorable. Many teachers do not even get a letter of appointment. The results of both coordinator and teacher surveys agreed closely on this; only two-thirds of teachers remember receiving such a letter, and only two-thirds of coordinators bother to send one.

The confusion among Church leaders and teachers, and the ambivalence amongst the coordinators was reflected in the interviews with the central office staff in Salt Lake City. Two of the four senior staff interviewed believed that the appointment should be by the bishop. One specifically stated that the teacher should be 'set apart' - the procedure followed for normal Church positions. The other actually reversed the correct process,

and suggested that the coordinator would make the initial selection, recommend it to the bishop, who would conduct the interview. This despite the fact that the CES Policies and Procedures Manual clearly states that the coordinator should make the appointment.

Seminary is considered by many to be a desirable position, and Church members frequently make enquiries about vacancies. In fact, 24 per cent of teachers reported that they themselves made the initial enquiries which led to their eventual appointment. Therefore, a quarter of the Seminary teachers are volunteers in the usual sense of the term. The extent to which the remaining 76 per cent were willing appointees is difficult to determine, though a partial insight is provided by answers to the question 'why did you accept the appointment?' The results are given in table 4.

TABLE 4

WHY TEACHERS ACCEPTED THEIR APPOINTMENT

Reasons	1st. Choice	2nd. Choice	3rd. Choice	Total Choices
Personal benefits for me	15	30	33	26
It was a Divine calling	43	12	8	22
I enjoy teaching	13	20	24	19
I enjoy working with teenagers	8	26	19	18
Sense of duty to Church	13	9	10	11
Personal desire/ambition	2	2	3	2

The teachers were asked to select three choices, in order of importance, from a list of alternatives. The clear favourite for first choice was 'it was a divine calling' (46 per cent), indicating yet again

the link in teachers' minds with conventional Church organisations. However, if all three choices are added together, the most frequently selected was 'personal benefits for me' (26 per cent), with 'it was a divine calling' second (22 per cent). 'I enjoy teaching' (19 per cent), and 'I enjoy working with teenagers' (18 per cent) came next. A total of 63 per cent of all responses were for personal, rather than Church reasons.

The overall pattern indicates a willing response. Although for the teachers their loyalty to the Church and their Church leaders is an important factor, there are strong personal reasons also. If this is added to the 24 per cent who actually volunteered, we can conclude that a large number of the teachers are willing participants, rather than having been persuaded through a sense of duty. Teacher perceptions of why they were approached for the position show clearly that they consider their appointment to be an inspired calling. They consider religious reasons, such as their Church standing to be more important than any teaching ability or experience they may have. In section 2, question 1 of the teacher questionnaire (see appendix 1), 68 per cent of first choices were for reasons of this kind. Other responses are shown in table 5, and show the same pattern, 36 per cent of responses ascribing religious reasons for the appointment, and 29 per cent some kind of ability, aptitude or knowledge. This contrasts markedly with the coordinator responses to the same question in their questionnaire, given in table 6. Here, ability, aptitude and knowledge are considered more important when looking for a suitable candidate; half the total choices were for factors of this kind. However four out of twelve gave church standing or inspiration as first choice, and such factors are significant, though not dominant for the coordinators. In discussion with the coordinators as a group, it was evident that inspiration or divine guidance is considered important.

TABLE 5

WHY TEACHERS THINK THEY WERE INVITED TO TEACH IN SEMINARY

Reason	% of Teachers			
	1st. Choice	2nd. Choice	3rd. Choice	Total Choices
Inspired calling from the Lord	52	2	5	20
Dependability	7	24	20	17
Experienced, worthy member	16	20	12	16
Get on well with teenagers	3	20	18	14
Good knowledge of doctrine and scripture	7	16	17	13
Teaching skills/ability	4	13	19	12
Only one willing/available	9	5	9	8
I volunteered	2	1	1	1

TABLE 6

WHY COORDINATORS SELECT TEACHERS FOR SEMINARY

Reason	Number of Coordinators			
	1st. Choice	2nd. Choice	3rd. Choice	Total of Choices
Teaching skills/ability	3	4	1	8
Get on well with teenagers	1	3	3	7
Experienced, worthy member	2	2	2	6
Only one willing/available	2	0	3	5
Dependability	1	2	...	3
Good knowledge of doctrine and scripture	1	...	2	3
Inspired calling from the Lord	2	...	...	2
Only one who can control class	...	...	1	1
Other: divine calling plus CES confirmation	...	1	...	1

The overall impression of the appointment of teachers in Seminary is rather negative. There is confusion, poor coordination and misunderstanding at every level. The divine inspiration versus professional qualifications issue need not be of concern: they are not mutually exclusive factors. It is reasonable to expect the former to be sought for in a Church, even in a professional arm of that Church. However, for an organisation that aspires to professional standards, one has to say that the appointment of teachers is distinctly unprofessional.

Teacher Training

There is considerable stress in the LDS Church on training courses

of all kinds. This would be expected in a Church relying on the laity for almost all functions. For all Church teachers, there is the Teacher Development Programme. This programme is run by Church leaders, not CES, though Seminary teachers would normally be expected to have completed the Basic Course, prior to being appointed. However, the survey revealed that only 63 per cent have done so. The training programme provided by Seminary is generally thought in the Church to be more intensive, demanding, and better organised than these general provisions - in keeping with the professional aspirations of the programme.

Seminary pre-service training has no specific course or format, and it is largely up to individual coordinators to develop their own approach. Responses from the teachers suggest that the preservice and induction training provided is inadequate. Only 14 per cent claim to have received any at all. This contrasts with the coordinators' claims. Ten out of twelve claim to provide special training for new teachers. However, since their description of this included such things as extra correspondence and phone calls, it may (understandably) not be recognised as special by the teachers. Only one coordinator holds training meetings specifically for new teachers. It seems that pre-service training is a rather weak aspect of Seminary, and when this is considered in combination with the negative report on appointment procedures, it is a serious cause for concern for CES administrators. Remember that one third of teachers have not completed the Basic Course. It is therefore probable that a large number find themselves in a classroom, without any substantial training in teaching skills generally, or Seminary in particular. That many do not flee in panic, or resign after a few weeks is probably due to the fact, highlighted earlier, that most Seminary teachers are mature, experienced Church members. They will have acquired some confidence and ability in a variety of other voluntary positions of leadership and teaching, and indeed have been

selected because of this. This background of general experience perhaps accounts for, but does not excuse, the rather disorganised attitude to the training of new teachers by the coordinators.

One possible consequence of this poor initial grounding for teachers was found when teachers were asked to describe the distinctive features of Seminary, which make it different from other Church programmes. The two main distinctions are first, it is a professional programme, and second, it takes place on a weekday, as opposed to the weekend, when most other Church programmes are held. In addition, Seminary stresses a daily study, and emphasises the scriptures. Response to this question was the most surprising of the questionnaire. Forty-three distinct features of the programme were mentioned, most of which were not unique to Seminary. This huge spread gives a picture of confusion over the nature and purpose of Seminary. Table 7 is a record of the ten most common responses.

TABLE 7
TEN MOST COMMON TEACHER RESPONSES OF DISTINCTIVE SEMINARY FEATURES

Feature	% of Teachers
scripture emphasis	43
develops conformity to Church expections	34
daily involvement required	22
weekday, not Sunday programme	17
greater contact/involvement between teacher and students	16
greater commitment & application required	16
home-study work required	13
reward & incentives, graduation	11
professional organisation	9
strong practical application, relevant to life	9

It can be seen that only fifteen teachers mentioned the professional

nature of the programme. At least the scripture emphasis of Seminary was recognised by 53 per cent of teachers, but generally there is a lack of unity or shared values.

The coordinators were asked this same question, and again there was a surprisingly wide response. Perhaps discussion of their responses might have teased out qualifications which would reduce the spread, but even so, only six mentioned an emphasis on scripture, and only five mentioned the professional standing of the programme. The lack of recognition of basic features of Seminary by half the full-time administrators argues a lack of unity and understanding which explains much of the teacher response.

Inservice training seems to be better organised and more consistent than pre-service training, and consists of a one-and-a-half hour training meeting each month, called the 'faculty meeting'. However, almost one-third of teachers will attend less than six of the eight meetings held during term time. Another question asked what kind of difficulties people had in attending faculty meeting. A wide range of responses were given, the most common being travelling difficulty. Since teachers receive travel reimbursement the difficulty must mean lack of suitable transport.

Teacher response concerning the quality of their training was very positive. Their choice from a five point scale was as follows: Excellent 37 per cent; Good 46 per cent; Fair 16 per cent; Poor 1 per cent; Very Poor 1 per cent. This contrasts with the coordinators' assessment of their performance in providing the training, which was rather moderate - perhaps from a sense of modesty? The twelve coordinators responded as follows: Excellent 1; Good 2; Good/Fair 2; Fair 6; Poor 1; Very Poor 0.

One-third of teachers recorded unmet needs in training, but in light of the general positive attitude, these needs may not be very strongly felt. Their requests were combined into broad categories, and these appear in table 8. The most common request, for more instruction in teaching

skills, is significant. In discussion with the coordinators, it was revealed that often administrative items and general discussion take up the time in faculty meetings, leaving little or no time for actual training.

TABLE 8

UNMET NEEDS IN INSERVICE TRAINING

Need	No. Responses
Teaching skills training	18
Curriculum: lesson preparation; teacher's personal study	7
Pastoral: counselling & motivation	6
Personal support & contact	5
Need to share & discuss concerns	4
Basic instruction for new teachers	3
Inadequate teaching facilities	1
Help for handicapped students	1
Faculty meetings are geared toward home-study; need to cater for early-morning	1
Help to obtain parental support	1

The general picture of training in Seminary is very mixed. The pre-service and initial training of new teachers is very poor indeed. However, there is a very positive response to the inservice training programme in general, though approximately one-third of teachers will attend less than two-thirds of the meetings, which must lessen the impact somewhat. The third element of training, individual teacher supervision, will now be considered.

Supervision

Supervision of volunteers is a demanding challenge. Curiously,

there has been very little research into the management of volunteers in any field. Dr. David Billis, a senior research fellow at Brunel University is director of Brunel's PORTVAC organisation (Programme of Research and Training into Voluntary Action), one of the few agencies in the country to be studying this area. He comments:

> Whilst our main concern is with the voluntary sector we shall also draw on more than a decade of research in Social Services Departments and other governmental agencies. . . .
>
> It is not an exaggeration to claim that the debate on the role of the voluntary sector is taking place amidst an almost total ignorance of the management dimension of voluntary agencies.[1]

As we consider management practices in Seminary, therefore, there is very little research to serve for comparison. Also, the strong religious commitment is an important factor not found in many other forms of volunteer work.

A lot of emphasis is given to supervision in Seminary, and the coordinators regard supervision as the most important element in their training programme. Supervision includes the whole umbrella of teacher support, such as correspondence, telephone calls, and progress interviews. However, in Seminary the word is more particularly associated with lesson observation to observe a teacher in action, and afterwards to discuss the performance, and recommend improvements. Such a process may be threatening for a teacher, and class observation is supposed to take place only at the invitation of the teacher, and should not be imposed by the coordinator.

In light of this, it is interesting that three-quarters of all class visits are made at the initiative of the coordinators. Discussion with the coordinators revealed that most feel that unless they take the initiative, few visits will be made. They believe that most teachers are reasonably willing to be supervised, but that through forgetfulness, lack of concern, or inertia they are unlikely to make a request, if left to themselves. Other data, given in table 9, seems to support this view. Although almost

one-third do not actually enjoy having a class visit, only 11 per cent state that they do not wish to receive such supervision. Most teachers seem to enjoy general contact of the latter kind with their supervisor, and would like more contact and support. Table 10 shows responses to the question 'what changes would you like to see in the supervision you receive?'. Well over half the responses were for more individual attention from the coordinator. Twenty-five teachers specifically requested more personal interviews.

TABLE 9

TEACHER RESPONSES TO SUPERVISION

attitudes	% of teachers
teachers not wishing to have class visits	11
teachers who enjoy an evaluation interview	69
those who feel they have enough contact & support from their coordinator	74
teachers whose needs are met by present supervision	87
those who feel their views & comments are taken seriously	94
those who feel administrators are in touch with 'grass roots'	69*
those who feel responsible to their coordinator in the day-to-day running of Seminary	54
those who feel responsible to their bishop in the day-to-day running of Seminary	44

*In retrospect, this question was badly worded, and there was confusion over whether 'administrator' referred to local coordinators or officials in America.

TABLE 10

CHANGES TEACHERS WOULD LIKE TO SEE IN SUPERVISION

changes requested	% teachers
more individual attention from coordinator	58
better help with teaching skills	13
improved faculty meeting programme	10
help with personal preparation and study	9
more ecclesiastical support	1
less circulars, admin. materials	1

A further reason for the desire for contact and support lies in the nature of the teacher's role. We have already discussed the distinction between the ecclesiastical programmes of the Church, and the professional programmes, such as Seminary. Since most programmes in a ward are supervised by priesthood leaders, this causes confusion in the case of Seminary, as the last two responses in table 9 emphasise. There is a dual responsibility between ecclesiastical and CES officers, but some confusion over who does what. This can isolate the teacher from support and communication within a local Church unit. There is no well-defined organisational channel for teachers to receive the support accorded to workers in other Church programmes such as Sunday schools and youth clubs, which are supervised exclusively by local Church leaders. Furthermore local Church leaders tend to be very hard-pressed individuals. A programme like Seminary, with a professional, full-time administration, seemingly operating smoothly, is likely to be relegated as 'successful', to a position of low priority. Coordinators describe Seminary teaching as often a lonely experience for teachers, who live in a closely-knit community

involving mutual help and encouragement, but are required to stand aside somewhat from the main thoroughfare of cooperative effort.

In this situation the frequency and nature of coordinator visits and contacts with teachers becomes very important. Table 11 shows the frequency of coordinator interviews and class visits, according to the teachers. A majority of teachers claim not to have received any interviews at all, in the academic year of the survey; more interviews were the most popular request when teachers were asked what changes they would like in their supervision. The numbers of visits and interviews with individual teachers seem on the whole rather sparce, and certainly falls short of what teachers would like. The combined data for both tables shows that almost 33 per cent of teachers received neither an interview nor a class visit. Furthermore, an evaluation interview often immediately follows a class observation, therefore many teachers claiming to have had a visit and an interview (37 per cent) may be describing what is essentially the same event, or one contact. Therefore the frequency of personal supervision is likely to be even less.

TABLE 11

TEACHER RECORD OF COORDINATOR INTERVIEWS AND CLASS VISITS

number of visits or interviews with teachers, Sept. 1984 to March 1985	% teachers receiving	
	personal interview	class visit
0	56	40
1	31	53
2	8	7
3	1	...
4	1	1
5	1	...
6	1	...
7	...	...
8	3	...

The coordinators felt they were performing better than this. Six coordinators claimed that every teacher would be visited at least once, and only one coordinator thought that more than 20 per cent of his teachers would receive no visits at all from him. These, and their estimates of how many teachers would be visited, can be seen in table 12. This data, however, was compiled from _estimates_ of what would be achieved during the year. The teachers' responses were for what had _actually happened_ during the preceding academic year. Seemingly the coordinators have overestimated their actual performance by quite a wide margin.

TABLE 12

COORDINATOR ESTIMATES OF TEACHER VISITS THEY WILL MAKE ANNUALLY

% teachers receiving visits	No. coordinators visiting with the following annual frequencies:			
	0 visits	1 visit	2 visits	2+ visits
0-20	10	3	6	9
21-40	1	2	3	1
41-60	...	3	...	...
61-80	...	3	1	...
81-100	...	...	1	1

The teachers were also asked how much personal contact they received from the coordinators by every means - telephone, letters, as well as personal visits. Their responses are given in table 13. The great majority are contacted at least once or twice per month, but in combination with the preceding statistics concerning visits, 19 per cent must be considered a relatively high proportion for those contacted less than once per month. Coordinators' reasons for not making more visits are given in table 14.

TABLE 13

FREQUENCY OF PERSONAL CONTACTS OF ANY KIND RECEIVED BY TEACHERS

frequency of contacts	% teachers
2 or more per week	1
1 per week	3
1 or more per month	77
less than 1 per month	19

TABLE 14

COORDINATORS' REASONS FOR NOT MAKING MORE VISITS

Reason	No. Coordinators
clash with other CES commitments	6
other CES work more pressing: too much to do	4
too many local classes use same night	3
other Church duties conflict	3
poor planning & organisation by coordinator	1
family duties conflict	1

The coordinators recognise there is a problem. Nine out of twelve said that they did not visit as often as they would like to. Most of the problems arise from other CES responsibilities. The coordinators express frustration at the quantity of work they are required to do. In response to a further question, only four out of the twelve felt that their contractual working week of forty-four hours was adequate to fulfil to their satisfaction the requirements of their job. There seems to be a willingness to provide the level of supervision requested by the teachers, but logistical problems prevent this in many cases. Seven coordinators make at least one visit per week, and three of these seven make more than two weekly visits. Only one coordinator makes less than two teacher visits per month.

The stated objectives of the coordinators, in visiting teachers, are given in table 15. It appears from this that they are aware of the teachers' need for general encouragement and support, since this area is mentioned more than the others. This concern is further supported in responses to questions B6a and B6b of the coordinators' questionaire (see appendix 2). Ten out of the twelve coordinators feel there is a difference in the training of volunteer teachers, compared with professional, full-time teachers in schools. Table 16 lists a summary of the differences given by the coordinators. It can be seen that easily the largest proportion of comments are to do with the need to tread more carefully and warily with volunteers, although one coordinator wrote 'I can't expect so much of volunteers - but I think I'm wrong'.

TABLE 15

COORDINATORS' OBJECTIVES IN VISITING TEACHERS

objectives	number of coordinators
provide support, encouragement, build relationships, response to requests for help etc.	10
provide training in teaching skills, improve teaching	4
provide general training	3
become acquainted with what's happening at classroom level	1

TABLE 16

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN VOLUNTEERS AND PROFESSIONALS ACCORDING TO COORDINATORS

coordinator responses	number of coordinators
accountability: expectations less for volunteers; must be kinder to volunteers; can demand greater accountability with professionals; person more important than programme with volunteers	9
training: volunteers have less knowledge & skills; more training & patience needed	3
attitudes & motivation: commitment & teamwork better with volunteers	2
motivation different, financial v. personal	2
volunteers can stop anytime, no contract to prevent	2
different pressures, unspecified	1
availability: professionals easier to contact & train; volunteers less time for work or training	3

The uncertainties and ambiguities involved in supervising volunteers add an extra dimension to conventional management challenges, and one

which is familiar to those who work in the voluntary sector. The following extract is from an article in the MDU (Management Development Unit) Bulletin:

> As a second illustration, it is worth mentioning the experience of the person who joins a voluntary organisation (on a voluntary or paid basis) and encounters a badly managed situation. The aims of the organisation may be unclear. There may be suspicion, conflict of values or just plain inertia between management committee and staff. Teams may be at war with one another (or within themselves). There may be no clear way of assessing whether the agency is working with any degree of success. The 'style' of management currently in use may conflict with the aims and even the type of organisation. The litany of possible woes is long enough, but the consequences are likely to be the same: irritation, disappointment on the part of the person concerned and thus yet another contribution to the downward spiral.[2]

It is encouraging for Seminary, that although a number of deficiencies have been discovered in this report, the 'downward spiral' described above is notably absent. The general tone of teacher responses is very positive. As was shown in table 10, 87 per cent of respondents claim that they receive the kind of help they need to improve, and 75 per cent feel they have enough support from their coordinator. Although some unmet needs were expressed, the large majority are satisfied. Of course, in a Church organisation, loyalty and commitment to a common faith will be a strong unifying factor which may help to overcome some of the stresses which might cause greater disaffection in a purely secular programme. Furthermore, we noted that most coordinators see their most important management role to be the moral support and encouragement of the volunteers, and a maintenance of good relationships. This emphasis seems to contribute toward solidarity and commitment.

However, the same religious commitments which maintain solidarity in the organisation may also serve to distort responses to questions in a survey, and this must be remembered when assessing results. A further question concerning supervision was included in the section on teaching. After selecting from a list of common problems experienced in teaching

Seminary (to be discussed shortly), the teachers were asked if the supervision and training they received helped with the problems they noted. Only 55 per cent said that it did, compared with the 87 per cent who claim that they receive the help they need, in responses to the previous more general question, recorded in table 10.

Early-Morning and Home-Study Seminary

When considering teaching, differences between the two types of Seminary programme may become important. Early-morning Seminary meets five mornings per week for a lesson, and does not require home-study work, or attendance at monthly meetings (although in practice most students attend the monthly meetings). Home-study Seminary meets once per week for a lesson, in addition to which students have home-study assignments, and are required to attend the monthly meeting. Early-morning Seminary is thus much more teacher-centred, and demands a greater commitment from teachers. It is the minority programme. From the survey, twenty-seven classes, or 17 per cent, were early-morning, and 131 classes, or 82 per cent were home-study. Two classes claimed to run both programmes.

Class sizes vary considerably, and are shown in figures 3, 4 and 5. The smaller class sizes of early-morning Seminary is interesting, since official policy suggests that early-morning Seminary would normally be arranged only for relatively large groups. The following quotation is from the Policies and Procedures Manual, the official CES handbook:

> Early-morning seminaries are established . . . if the requirements can be met. The number of . . . LDS students able to meet daily must be large enough to justify a part-time CES teacher. . . .
> Home-study seminaries are established when the number of students is very small or when distances between students are too great for students to meet daily.[3] [italics mine]

FIGURE 3
SEMINARY CLASS SIZES - COMBINED HOME STUDY & EARLY MORNING

no.
classes

mean class size = 5.16

```
26 ┤
24 ┤        25
22 ┤
20 ┤  21  20
18 ┤            18
16 ┤          17    15
14 ┤      15
12 ┤
10 ┤10
 8 ┤                8
 6 ┤                  6
 4 ┤
 2 ┤                    2   2   1
 0 ┤
    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9  10  11  12  13
```

no. students enrolled in class
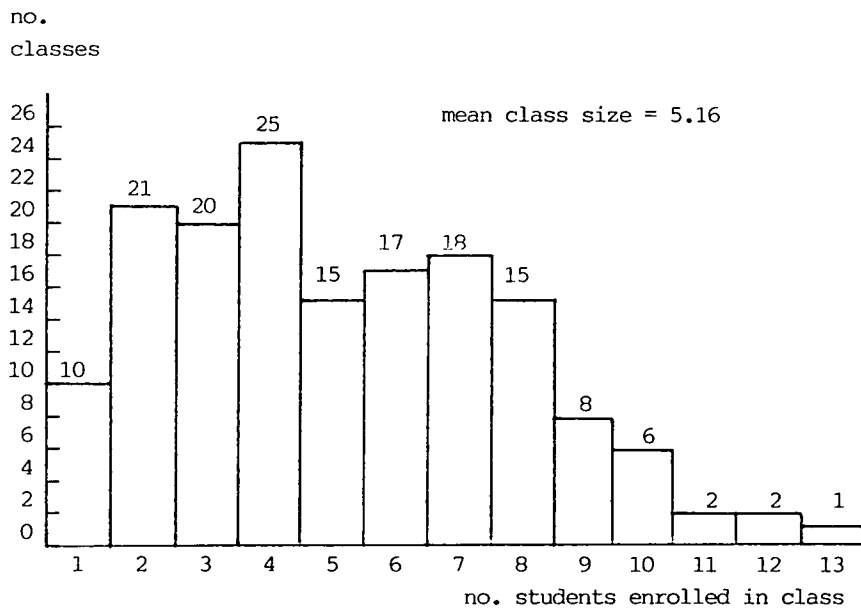
FIGURE 4
HOME STUDY SEMINARY CLASS SIZES

no.
classes

```
20 ┤        20    mean class size = 5.33
18 ┤  17
16 ┤      15
14 ┤          14  15
12 ┤                12
11 ┤        11
10 ┤
 8 ┤ 8              8
 6 ┤                  6
 4 ┤
 2 ┤                    2   2   1
 0 ┤
    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9  10  11  12  13
```

no. students enrolled in class
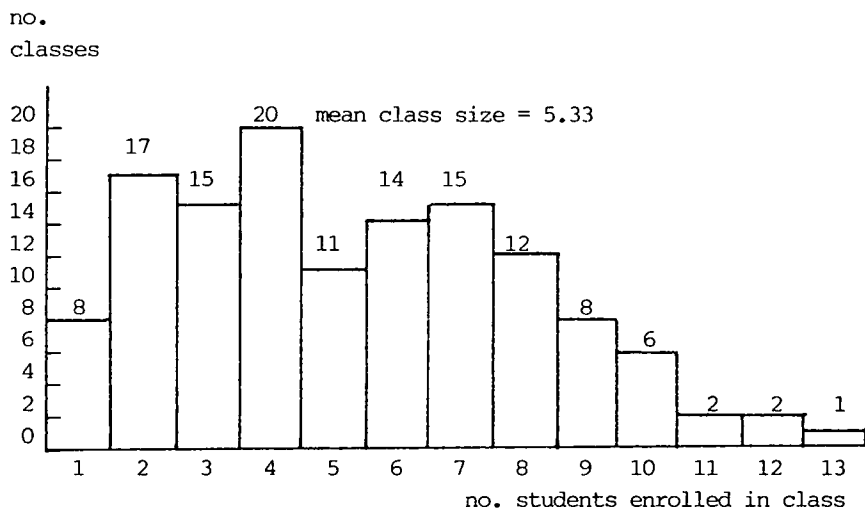
FIGURE 5
EARLY MORNING SEMINARY CLASS SIZE

no.
classes

mean class size = 4.2

```
 6 ┤
   ┤      5   5
 4 ┤  4          4
   ┤              3   3
 2 ┤ 2                  1
 0 ┤
    1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8
```

no. students enrolled in class
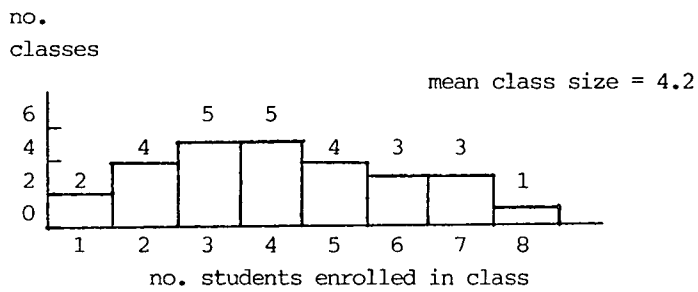
The total budget allowable for the teachers' stipend is based on an average early-morning class size of fifteen. Presumably therefore, a 'large enough' number of students for the establishment of early-morning Seminary is officially thought to be about fifteen. One zone administrator suggested that as the numbers in a class become smaller, the social and educational advantages of early-morning Seminary diminish to a point where they are outweighed by the disadvantages of meeting at such an inconvenient time each day.

Even so, there is great stress in Seminary in the excellence of the early-morning programme over the home-study. It seems easier for students to attend class once a day than to study in isolation at home. The annual reports consistently show 13 per cent or so more students completing early-morning Seminary than home-study. (Although it could be that more committed students and teachers comprise the early-morning classes). Early-morning students seem to be happier with their programme. When students were asked how many would prefer to change to the alternative programme, 26 per cent of home-study students wanted to change to early-morning, but only 17 per cent of early-morning students wanted to change.

Encouragement is given to move from the home-study to early-morning as expeditiously as possible. It seems that this has resulted in Britain, in a reversal of the original concept; home-study Seminary now has the larger class sizes. Indeed, some units have deliberately split a large home-study class into two or three, in order to make it possible for students to travel to meet in early-morning settings. Little awareness seems to be shown by the administrators to this trend, and it would seem prudent that some study should be given as to whether it is desirable or not, especially since it apparently runs counter to official policy.

This trend is important, not only for the educational, social, and

financial reasons mentioned, but also for full-time staffing. Coordinators are expected to supervise six early-morning stakes, but only four home-study stakes. The reason is that no monthly meeting programme is held for early-morning students. It will be remembered from chapter 4 that the reason monthly meetings are organised for home-study students is to overcome the sense of isolation that small classes may create, and provide a much-needed sense of community and peer-group support. However, an early-morning programme with the small classes found in this country may require a monthly meeting element as much as home-study. It would seem that ground rules originally established for the larger density of students in America may not apply fully elsewhere.

Teachers' Curriculum Materials

The development of the weekly lesson is an interesting insight into the problems associated with using largely untrained teachers.

At first the teacher manual was no more than suggestions of how to expand the student work-books in a class discussion. As time went on, the teachers' materials became more sophisticated. New filmstrip sets were produced, with other audio-visual aids. The teacher outline itself was enlarged until it became a bulky manual, two inches thick for one year of thirty-two lessons. In retrospect, it seems that CES was trying to produce a package of goods which could be taken anywhere in the world and enable any diligent volunteer, no matter how unskillful, to successfully operate the programme. About eight years ago it was decided that this was a mistake; not only was it extremely costly, but it could never really work. The philosophy developed instead that CES should 'prepare teachers to use materials, not materials for teachers'. Gradually the teacher outline became smaller, until now there are complaints that there is insufficient help for the teacher - the programme has turned full circle.

The balance does not yet seem to have been found, if indeed it is possible to reach a universal solution for a programme covering so many cultures, and such a wide age-group. There seems to have been very little field research by the Church into what a volunteer teacher actually needs, and what specific problems are encountered by an untrained individual when taking on such a responsibility. This is in-line with volunteer organisations generally.

Teachers seem quite satisfied with their lesson materials, despite the above comments. When asked to say how helpful the materials are, given a five-point rating scale, 51 per cent described them as 'exellent', 43 per cent as 'good', 5 per cent as 'fair', only 1 per cent as 'poor', and none as 'very poor'. A similar positive attitude was expressed when the same question was put to the twelve coordinators. Four chose 'excellent' and four chose 'good'; however one man selected 'very poor', one 'poor', and one 'fair'. This wide spread in such a small group of close colleagues was surprising.

Teachers were asked what improvement they would like to see in their materials. The requests received from two or more teachers are given in table 17. The most popular demand is for anglicized materials. The materials are produced centrally in America for worldwide distribution, and whereas non-English speaking countries have the advantage of cultural adaptations through translation, English speaking countries receive a product designed and printed for an American teenager.

Another popular request is for more and better visual aids. The filmstrips and video tapes which are produced are popular with students, and it will be natural for an insecure teacher to reach for them like a lifeline. A dozen teachers requested better lesson plans. The comments regarding too much material refers to the recent practice of providing the same teacher outline to home-study and early-morning teachers, to save

money.   This results in the home-study teachers receiving four times as many lesson plans as they need.   Partly as a result of feedback from the field, CES have now decided to revert back to separate manuals, starting with the 1986/87 course.

TABLE 17

IMPROVEMENTS IN LESSON MATERIALS REQUESTED BY TEACHERS

requested improvement	no. teachers
anglicise materials: stories, names, phrases, spelling etc.	26
more and better visual aids	21
better, more complete lesson plans	12
too much material; provide separate HS manual	10
unrealistic, idealised stories; make them more down-to-earth	7
better layout and presentation	4
teaching suggestions for small class of two or three	3
more variety in content & approach	3
teaching equipment needed	3
deliver materials on time	3
simplify lesson manual; too complicated for untrained teachers	2
better scripture mastery materials & exercises	2
replace outdated filmstrips	2

It should be remembered that 94 per cent of teachers rated the materials either 'excellent' or 'good'.   The requested improvements may therefore not be strongly felt.   Comments were received from only eighty-six, or 54 per cent of teachers.

The coordinator response to the same question was surprisingly

sparse, and does not add much, only ten suggestions for improvements being given. Three comments referred to the need to anglicise the materials, and to the need for better lesson plans and ideas for presentations. All the coordinators and 96 per cent of teachers felt that the curriculum was relevant for teenagers in a modern world.

Teaching

Teachers were given a list of eight problems likely to be encountered by a teacher in Seminary. The list was compiled after discussion with the coordinators, and observation of many teachers. They were requested to give a rank order for each item, according to its importance in their own teaching. The same list was put to the coordinators, who were asked to estimate what the rank order would be for the average teacher. Table 18 gives the response of the teachers, and table 19 that of the coordinators. A comparison of the two tables shows a reasonably close agreement. The coordinators underestimate the importance of time pressures for teachers, however. Also, the teachers' assessment of their own general teaching skills is rather higher than their coordinators would rate them.

The most interesting thing is the dominance of the first selection. Keeping the students up-to-date with the work is clearly the biggest problem. This applies primarilly to the home-study students, since the phrase 'up-to-date' is usually associated with the home-study work assignments. More students continue attending the classes than actually complete their assignments, and thus fail to gain credit for the year's course. This could account for the difference in success rates between the home-study and early-morning programmes.

TABLE 18

TEACHER SELECTION OF THE THREE MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED WHEN TEACHING SEMINARY

Teaching Problem	No. Teachers Responding			
	1st. Choice	2nd. Choice	3rd. Choice	Total Choices
keeping students up-to-date	62	31	20	113
obtain participation from students	21	27	19	67
lack time for preparation	21	20	18	59
making lessons relevant for students	8	21	25	54
lack suitable teaching area	15	9	8	32
classroom control & discipline	8	11	12	31
lack sufficient knowledge of the subject	6	8	6	20
poor general teaching skills	1	4	4	9
Other*	13	13	21	47
No Response	5	16	27	48

*An additional twenty-five problems, were listed under the 'other' selection. No clear pattern was shown, and most appear to be localised problems in particular classes.

TABLE 19

COORDINATOR SELECTION OF THREE PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED BY TEACHERS
WHEN TEACHING SEMINARY

Teaching Problem	No. Coordinator Responses			
	1st. Choice	2nd. Choice	3rd. Choice	Total Choices
keeping students up-to-date	7	3	1	11
obtaining participation from students	3	3	2	8
making lessons relevant for students	...	4	3	7
poor ability in general teaching skills	1	...	2	3
classroom control & discipline	...	1	2	3
lack time for lesson preparation	...	1	1	2
lack suitable teaching area	...	...	1	1
lack sufficient knowledge of subject	...	...	...	...
Other: scripture application and use by students	1	...	...	1

The most interesting thing is the dominance of the first selection. Keeping the students up-to-date with the work is clearly the biggest problem. This applies primarily to the home-study students, since the phrase 'up-to-date' is usually associated with the home-study work assignments. More students continue attending the classes than actually complete their assignments, and thus fail to gain credit for the year's course. This could account for the difference in success rates between the home-study and the early-morning programmes.

The second most popular selection, obtaining the participation of students in class, is similar to the first, insofar as both have to do with the relationship between the teacher and the students. Both involve communication skills, and a capacity to motivate and develop enthusiasm.

The third most common problem amongst teachers is lack of time. This is emphasised strongly in a separate question in the teacher questionnaire, in which 53 per cent of teachers say they have insufficient free time to devote to Seminary. Surprisingly, only twelve (44 per cent) of the early-morning teachers are included in this figure. Since their task is much more demanding, one would have expected a higher proportion. Possibly, since their involvement takes place very early in the morning, it does not interfere with other commitments.

The time factor becomes an issue in yet one more question. Teachers were asked if they were prepared to continue teaching Seminary for a further year. Thirty-seven said they were not. At 23 per cent this represents almost a quarter of the teaching force. Their reasons are given in table 20. The first four reasons all imply some form of pressure on available free time, and together account for 60 per cent of the reasons given. Since twenty out of the thirty-seven teachers have a major executive position in the Church, in addition to teaching Seminary, this is hardly surprising, and underlines the problems outlined earlier, of the

failure of local bishops to appreciate the time demands involved in Seminary.

TABLE 20

REASONS GIVEN BY TEACHERS FOR NOT WISHING
TO CONTINUE TEACHING SEMINARY

Reasons	No. Teachers
other Church callings too demanding	8
insufficient time, generally	7
family demands; babies etc.	5
own employment commitments	5
tired, need a rest	4
leaving the area	4
spouse's Church calling conflicts	2
discipline problems with students	1
class closing down	1
insufficient support from Church leaders	1
lack confidence; discouraged	1
no reason given	1

Twenty-three of the thirty-seven teachers who wish to quit are in their first or second year. It seems that those who make it past the first couple of years are more likely to be willing to continue for further years of service. This perhaps underlines the poor introduction many teachers have, or the inadequacy of the selection process, or both. However, this is belied by the response to the question 'do you enjoy your work as a Seminary teacher?'. Only one teacher claimed not to enjoy the work. It seems from this that there is no reason why much greater stability in the

teaching force could not be achieved, with greater cooperation and understanding between CES personnel and local priesthood leaders.

Teaching: Judging Success

Determining success in any educational programme is not easy. There are so many variables to be taken into account: relationships and atmosphere in the classroom; nature and background of students; actual knowledge remembered and understood; attitudes to learning etc. One thing needful for such an assessment is an understanding of the objectives of the programme, and as we have seen, there seems to be some confusion about this among Seminary teachers. This may be partly explained by a general absence of objectives in CES literature. The following statement is typical of the rather vague generalities provided for guidance:

> The purpose of the Church Educational System is to assist the home in the moral and spiritual education of Church youth through a programme of weekday religious instruction.[4]

More specific objectives, especially statements about Seminary rather than general CES programmes are hard to find. They tend to be scattered through the numerous manuals, texts and booklets, and presumably teachers are expected to become familiar wth them through a process of gradual assimilation. A typical quotation is the following one from the 'Purpose of the Course' section of the Introduction to the most recent teacher manual:

> The purpose of this course of study is to bring each student closer to our Heavenly Father and our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, through a greater understanding of the Book of Mormon. All of the students should come to understand that the Book of Mormon is essentially a second witness for Jesus Christ, that they can strengthen their personal witness of the Saviour by sincerely studying it, and that their lives can be changed for good as they liken the scriptures unto themselves. . . .
> For this reason the basic philosophy of this course outline is centred around the scriptures.[5]

This indicates the formative intention of the programme in teaching the faith. It is far from a complete statement of objectives, however. Ironically, in light of what has been said about the confusion among Church leaders about Seminary, the clearest list of objectives I could find was in a short leaflet directed at ecclesiastical leaders:

In coordination with other Church efforts, the Church Education System has been specifically designed to assist students to -

1. Strengthen their understanding and testimonies of the divinity of Jesus Christ and the restored gospel.
2. Develop the capacity to serve effectively in living gospel principles and sharing these truths with others.
3. Seek an eternal marriage and make their homes more effective and stable.
4. Develop their leadership skills for effective Church service.
5. Assume their civic responsibilities.
6. Improve their vocational competence, work habits, and industriousness.
7. Develop self-respect, creativity and the ability to solve problems.[6]

This clearly anticipates the development of attitudes as much as the acquisition of knowledge.

There are objective requirements to be met, as in most school programmes. In order to satisfactorily complete a one year course, students are expected to: (1) attend 80 per cent of all classes held; (2) complete all scripture reading assignments and home-study work exercises; (3) demonstrate an understanding of a selected list of scripture passages. This entitles the student to credit for that year. Four years' credits are required for a graduation certificate, which is a highly prized goal for many students. Within this basic pass standard, teachers are encouraged to grade students, in a traditional ABCD scheme, for quality of work and effort. This is not universally done, since many teachers are reluctant to assign grades. Their reasons, expressed in informal discussions, seem to underline the confusion over the nature of the programme; grading Seminary is perceived by many as would be the grading of a prayer or an act of

worship.

There are many incentive schemes to encourage students, with awards and certificates for intermediate achievements. There are also extra awards for outstanding students. However, a justifiable concern that less able students should not feel incapable or inadequate sometimes has a tendency to devalue such awards. Some teachers start by giving awards to a deserving few, but compassion may lower standards to enable most students to qualify. Reasons are similar to those given for not grading.

Requirements for credit, or course completion, and other awards give some objective measure of success. Reports indicate an overall completion figure, for early-morning and home-study combined, of 67 per cent.[7] This would seem a creditable figure for a demanding voluntary scheme. However, many other students remain involved, who do not qualify for credit. No statistics are available for this number, but my estimate, based on observation and discussion, is that over 80 per cent remain involved at some level of activity, at the end of one academic year, lasting eight months.

The teachers were asked 'How do you know if you are being successful?'. Table 21 records their responses. Many teachers mentioned several items, so that the table measures frequency rather than priority. The most often mentioned concerns the general well-being and positive attitude of students. The second most common response reflects the basic objective of Seminary to perpetuate and maintain the faith, and teachers clearly see this as an important role. The acquisition of knowledge comes well down the table, surprisingly, only fourteen teachers mentioning this as an indicator of success, although the standard and quality of written work, third most common response, might have been thought to include this. The concept of an approach to learning, the development of a seeking, searching mind so prized by the founders of the Church, and by successive

leaders since, is notably absent - a serious indictment.

TABLE 21

WAYS IN WHICH TEACHERS JUDGE SUCCESS

Ways of Judging Success	No. Teachers
through response & attitude of students	78
behavioural change - conformity to Church teachings; expressions of belief & testimony	63
standard & regularity of written work	37
attendance record	34
relationship between students & teacher	27
knowledge acquired - facility with the scriptures etc.	14
through the Holy Spirit, by inspiration	14
reports from a third party - parent, coordinator etc.	9
consecutive reading programme response	1
by the effort I put in	1
don't know	15

Coordinators were asked how they evaluate success in Seminary teachers. There was a wide response, which was grouped into broad categories, given in table 22. The most general agreement concerned the ability of the teacher to relate easily to young people in the class. The pastoral nature of Seminary teaching is considered important. One surprising result was that only two coordinators mentioned the spiritual element of religious teaching. Great emphasis is placed on 'teaching with the spirit' in Seminary, but apparently this was not at the forefront of the coordinators' minds as an indicator of successful teaching. As with teachers, there was no mention of training how to study, and the

development of a creative, questioning mind; the attention was centred on the product, and the contentment and enjoyment of students.

TABLE 22

WAYS IN WHICH COORDINATORS ASSESS THE SUCCESS OF TEACHERS

Ways of Judging Success	No. Responses
personal relationships of teacher to students	11
multiple data; intuitive response to overall performance and 'feel' of class	5
attitude & commitment of teacher	5
response & attitude of students	4
teaching skills of teacher	4
objective statistics, attendance etc.	3
spiritual qualities in the class	2
administrative competence of teacher	2
feedback from involved adults	1
are CES objectives being achieved?	1
assessment depends on context and background of class; no fixed formula possible	1

The students themselves were asked to assess how enjoyable their Seminary class was, on a five-point scale. Their response, in table 23, is much more positive than I would have predicted, with only 4 per cent expressing a positive dislike, but perhaps more significantly, only 31 per cent selecting the neutral option 'not too bad'. Early-morning students show a more positive response than home-study students, confirming the general trend.

TABLE 23

STUDENT ASSESSMENT OF HOW ENJOYABLE THEIR SEMINARY CLASS IS

	Enjoy a Lot	Enjoy	Not Too Bad	Dislike	Dislike a Lot
EM Students %	35	40	24	1	...
HS Students %	24	39	32	2	2
Combined EM+HS %	26	39	31	2	2

An associated question for the students was 'how good is your teacher?', again on a five-point scale. The response was even more positive than for the previous question, perhaps because the students distinguished between their teacher as a teacher, and as an adult concerned for their welfare. Table 24 shows how positive they were. The early-morning response is again slightly more positive than the home-study.

TABLE 24

STUDENT ASSESSMENTS OF THEIR TEACHER

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor
EM Students %	63	28	8	...	...
HS Students %	54	36	7	1	< 1
Combined EM+HS %	56	34	7	1	< 1

Two further questions touched on student attitudes to their classroom experience. They were asked what they disliked in the Seminary programme. This generated a wide range of answers, to be discussed shortly, but only eighteen students, or 3 per cent, mentioned local class lessons. When asked what should be included in the programme, forty students, or 7 per

cent gave responses amounting to a request for more creative teaching. Both responses are relatively low, and support the general trend indicating satisfaction.

Indoctrination or Education?

A question was included in the questionnaires concerning the nature of teaching in Seminary. Teachers and coordinators were asked if teaching in Seminary could be justifiably described as education, or whether it was more propoganda or indoctrination. Indoctrination was defined as the process of transferring doctrines and values whilst suppressing individual agency and freedom of thought.

It was clear from responses that most teachers did not understand the question fully, and many perceived it as an implied criticism to be countered. Many provided extensive comment, running to several paragraphs, and some responses were well reasoned and thoughtful. It is worth noting that although this was a difficult question, there were only seven nil responses. The general tenor of each response was assessed, and the largest opinion, from 60 per cent of teachers, was that Seminary is entirely educational. The next most popular view, from 18 per cent, was that Seminary is mostly education, with some indoctrination thrown in. Only 7 per cent felt that it was mainly indoctrination, and 5 per cent felt it was a fifty-fifty mixture. No clear opinion was given from most of the remainder.

Comments that teachers used in justification were interesting, and most tended to fall into two distinctive groups. The first was of the following line of thought: 'questioning and discussion is encouraged, the students are taught the importance of free agency and learning for themselves, therefore it is education'. The second went something like: 'the gospel truth is declared, but students are left to make up their own

minds, therefore it can't be indoctrination'. Together these two types of argument accounted for about 80 per cent of the comments received. A few teachers thought that indoctrination in itself need not be harmful, and was acceptable if used to promote the truth, or protect immature youth from the world. Another small group suggested that the students were typically too strong minded and independant to be indoctrinated. One thoughtful answer suggested that since the Holy Spirit testifies and convinces people of religious truth, not the teacher, the question is irrelevant. These answers tell us more about teachers' understanding of the question, rather than the actual conditions in Seminary. It was clear that for most teachers this was probably the first time they had seriously addressed such concepts, and their answers were often naive. Education of the teachers is needed here, in an area which previous chapters have demonstrated to be of great doctrinal importance to the Church. Through ignorance, it is possible that in some classes, Seminary may be providing programmed learning at a rather superficial level, and rather than developing in young people a personal spiritual awareness is creating merely outward conformity.

The coordinator responses to this question followed the general pattern of the teachers, with a majority of seven men claiming Seminary to be definitely educational. However, two others suggested that whilst it might be educational in principle, it sometimes becomes indoctrination in practice. One response was that although education was attempted, students rarely take the opportunity offered to question and think freely: they tend to follow the 'party line', and act in a way they think is expected, rather than from any personal conviction. Another coordinator felt that just the opposite condition prevailed, and stated 'If the programme was ever meant to be indoctrination - just look at the students - they are all non-conformists'. This same characteristic was noted in another response,

but this time it was suggested that opposing, non-standard views from students often pose a threat for an untrained teacher who, instead of exploring the issues, retreats to propoganda and suppresses any non-conformist thought. Another man suggested that while the class lessons are mostly education, the home-study work is indoctrination; he felt the work-books take a strong propoganda approach.

It was evident that, like the teachers, most coordinators had not given extensive prior thought to these issues. Though the responses were generally clearer and better reasoned than the teachers, several were arguing from different sets of assumptions and difinitions. One coordinator wrote in the margin 'the question depends on your understanding of the word "indoctrination" '. (Even though, as stated, a partial definition was provided in the question.)

Teaching: A Summary

In summary, it seems clear that judged on the basis of student response, not only in the questionnaire, but through reported completion rates, Seminary teaching is highly successful - the customer is satisfied. Nevertheless there are some areas of weakness which would strengthen the organisation, such as greater concern for time pressures on teachers, clearer and better presented goals and objectives, and more research and understanding of the learning process occurring in Seminary.

Coordinators' assessment of teacher competance reflects reasonably well the findings of this report so far. On a five-point scale, five chose 'fair', four 'good', and one 'excellent'; one did not respond, and one chose 'fair/good'. None selected 'poor' or 'very poor'. The same kind of assessment was suggested by the administrators in Salt Lake City.

<u>Reasons Why LDS Teenagers Enrol in Seminary</u>

In considering why teenagers enrol in Seminary, we should realise

that they themselves may not be aware of their own motivations for doing

so, and still less be able to articulate them. The questionnaire,

therefore, approached this topic through five different questions, to

determine the consistency of the responses. Of these five questions, two

were open-ended, and three were closed-response types.

The first question, 'please explain why you enrolled in Seminary',

produced a wide range of responses, which were grouped into broad

categories. Table 25 lists the eight most common.

TABLE 25

<u>EIGHT MOST COMMON STUDENT RESPONSES TO THE REQUEST:</u>
<u>'PLEASE EXPLAIN WHY YOU ENROLLED IN SEMINARY'</u>

Reason	% Students
free volition, desire to learn	51
parental influence	33
the right thing to do, expected by Church culture	15
Curiosity	10
peer group influence	8
preparation for a mission	5
bishop's influence	2
teacher's influence	2
reward of graduation	1

Two categories were the most common by a pronounced margin. These were first, personal choice – a personal desire to learn, which was included by half the respondents; the second was influence or even force from parents, which 33 per cent mentioned. Of course, many students listed more than one reason, so it is interesting to note that 40 per cent of respondents listed their own choice as their only reason, whereas only 11 per cent described parental influence as their only reason. This suggests that a large degree of self-motivation is involved for many students. However, the third most common reason given was that enrolment in Seminary is the right thing to do, a duty expected by Church culture, the normal thing to do at fourteen, or words to this effect. Eighty-five, or 15 per cent of students mentioned this. It is conceivable that self-motivation for some is a result of home and Church influence.

All the reasons given can be grouped into two general classes: those indicating a degree of self-motivation as the main factor; and those implying some measure of external influence. The results are an even split of 348 for the former, and 343 for the latter. Of those implying external influence, 63 students (11 per cent) claim to have been actually forced against their will to do Seminary, in all cases except one by their parents.

When the teachers were asked to choose the main reasons why students enrol, their responses were quite close to those of the students, as can be seen from table 26. The coordinators were asked the same question, and were not as close to the students as the teachers. Their responses are given in table 27. They see the peer group as having a greater influence than the students claim. Both teachers and coordinators seem to underestimate the extent of personal motivation for the students.

TABLE 26

WHY STUDENTS ENROL IN SEMINARY, ACCORDING TO TEACHERS

Reason	% Teachers
parental influence	66
free volition, desire to learn	43
peer group influence	41
the 'right' thing to do; expectation of Church culture	34
encouragement from Church leaders	33
reward of graduation	3
curiosity, anticipation of fun	3
preparation for a mission	1

TABLE 27

WHY STUDENTS ENROL IN SEMINARY, ACCORDING TO COORDINATORS

Reason	No. Coordinators
peer group influence	8
parental influence	7
the 'right' thing to do; expectation of Church culture	7
free volition, desire to learn	5
influence of Church leaders	5
curiosity, anticipation of fun	1

A second question to the students asked them to select from a list of five the person who influenced them most to enrol. Responses produced the same two most common factors as the last question (parents and self), but in reverse order of significance. The response of those selecting only one choice, as instructed, is given in table 28. Of those selecting two choices, the most common combination was 'parents' and 'yourself', from eleven respondents. If multiple choices are included with the single choices, 51 per cent selected 'parents', and 27 per cent selected 'yourself'. The personal motivation of the teenager and parental influence are still easily the most dominant features, but here parents are shown to have more influence than the previous question suggested. This would be in line with what might be expected, given the strong Church background of most families, and agrees more with coordinator and teacher feelings.

TABLE 28

PERSON MOST INFLUENTIAL FOR ENROLMENT, ACCORDING TO STUDENTS

Influential Person	% Students
parent	48
yourself	24
teacher	12
friend	6
bishop	5
brother/sister	2
other	2

The next question was intended to look at motivations also, but since it considers a situation after enrolment has taken place, it is not directly comparable with the previous questions which were looking at

motivation leading up to enrolment.   Actually, many students found the

first two questions ambiguous, and particularly in the first qualified

their answers by saying things like 'I suppose at first it was because . . .

but now it is because . . .'. In retrospect, the difference between

'before' and 'after' should have been allowed for. Where students did make

a distinction, their first reason (before) generally indicated an external

influence, and the second reason (after) indicated personal motivation to

continue. This was endorsed by question three, which asked how many

students would continue in Seminary, if all external influences and

obligations were removed; 67 per cent said they would continue, 31 per cent

said they would not, and 2 per cent were unsure. This was surprising. I

had predicted that about 25 per cent would continue, and as many as 15 or

20 per cent would be unsure. The average estimate of the coordinators was

that 46 per cent would continue; the teachers were closer with 53 per cent.

It is possible that students were giving an answer they thought would

please, rather than their true feelings, though since they could choose to

be anonymous, this is unlikely. The result is supported by responses to

other questions, and a positive expression in the general reponses in the

questionnaire. Of course, other studies have indicated a strong interest

in religious questions among this age group generally, and when one

considers the Church and family background of these particular youngsters,

perhaps the results should not be so surprising. Interestingly, the

central office administrators were very close to the students on this

question. Perhaps the coordinators and teachers in Britain are overly

cynical in their assessment of students. However, we need to remember the

very low response to this questionnaire, and the possibility that only the

more motivated students, from the best classes responded. If it is assumed

that a larger proportion of the 43 per cent non-respondaents would choose

not to continue Seminary, the results would be more in line with the

coordinator and teacher estimates, which, of course, considered the total enrolment, and not just the 57 per cent who responded to the questionnaire.

The same positive trend is seen in the next question, where 82 per cent of respondents felt that Seminary makes a difference in their life. Of these, the majority described it as a positive difference. Only 12 per cent of comments were negative, and many of these were in combination with positive statements. The most common class of negative comment was to do with a restriction of freedom and free time, including interference with schoolwork and leisure pursuits. The main responses are in table 29.

TABLE 29

DIFFERENCE SEMINARY MAKES IN MY LIFE, ACCORDING TO STUDENTS

Difference	% Students
Greater awareness/knowledge of God, the gospel scriptures, purpose of life etc.	41
Awareness of moral/spiritual values; how to live & behave	26
Better attitude to life, better start to day; feel good, clarifies mind, school easier	10
Restricts freedom; interferes with personal life and/or schoolwork	8
Builds testimony of & obedience to, the Church	7
Can teach others about Church, better missionary	7
Improves scripture study habits	4

The responses can be grouped into two broad categories: first those which imply a Church orientation, i.e. the impact of Seminary is seen in terms of Church conformity; second those which relate more to the personal life of the student, such as friendship or relations with parents. The great proportion were of the first type: 73 per cent of students saw the difference made by Seminary in terms of Church involvement, teachings or duty. Probably Church culture has a far greater influence than the teenagers are consciously aware of.

Responses to the last question partly support this view, and also the generally positive attitudes expressed in other questions. The range of options for enrolling, for this multiple-choice question were chosen to represent the main categories of reasons that students might have: social, duty, coercion, enjoyment, and avoidance of other chores. Table 30 records the response.

That almost one-third selected enjoyment as their main reason is significant, especially when this appeared on a list with what most conformist students would see as at least one other acceptable alternative: 'the right thing to do'. This suggests that the response is a genuine one, and not an attempt to please. Apparently, Seminary is proving to be attractive and enjoyable in its own right, for many students. Amongst those who selected more than the required single alternative, the most common combination was 'the right thing' and 'enjoyment'. If these multiple responses are included in the tally, 34 per cent selected 'enjoyment' and 51 per cent selected 'the right thing'. The 51 per cent does, of course, emphasise that a strong element of duty is also involved in the motivation for doing Seminary.

TABLE 30

STUDENT REASONS FOR DOING SEMINARY

Reason	% Students
it's the right thing to do	49
I enjoy it	30
to be with my friends	7
because I'm told to	7
to please someone else	6
to avoid doing something else	1

Student Activity In Seminary

There are a limited number of well-defined types of activity in the Seminary programme. They were compiled in a list, and students, teachers and coordinators were all invited to select those which the students found most enjoyable. Tables 31, 32 and 33 provide the results. There is general agreement between the three groups, at least in the order of the choices. The teachers and coordinators seem to be familiar with what the majority of students favour. The exception is the teachers' over-estimation of how popular their own weekly classes are.

TABLE 31

ACTIVITIES RANKED BY STUDENTS IN ORDER OF PREFERENCE

Activity	1st. Choice % Response			2nd. Choice % Response			3rd. Choice % Response		
	EM	HS	Total	EM	HS	Total	EM	HS	Total
the social aspect, being with other students	23	33	31	15	23	22	16	12	13
monthly meetings	20	21	21	24	17	18	19	16	17
scripture chase	35	11	15	23	12	14	16	14	14
local class	9	14	13	23	23	23	22	27	26
scripture reading	14	13	13	15	14	15	26	17	19
home-study work	...	8	...	...	10	...	...	13	...

TABLE 32

STUDENT ACTIVITIES RANKED BY TEACHERS, ACCORDING TO THEIR ESTIMATE
OF STUDENT PREFERENCE

Activity	1st. Choice % Response			2nd. Choice % Response			3rd. Choice % Response		
	EM	HS	Total	EM	HS	Total	EM	HS	Total
the social aspect, being with other students	44	55	54	31	25	26	4	8	7
local class	27	10	13	11	37	32	35	20	22
monthly meeting	4	15	13	15	17	17	27	20	21
scripture chase	19	11	12	27	8	11	23	24	24
home-study work	...	5	...	...	6	...	...	19	...
reading scripture	...	2	1	12	6	6	4	9	8
other	7	2	3	4	2	3	7	2	3

TABLE 33

Activity	No. Coordinators Responding		
	1st. Choice	2nd. Choice	3rd. Choice
social aspect	12	...	...
monthly meeting	...	7	2
local class	...	4	7
scripture chase	...	1	3
scripture reading	...	...	...
home study work	...	...	...

The student choices show a clear preference for those aspects of
Seminary which involve the most activity, fun and social interraction,
which was to be expected. Some of the detail is interesting. The
difference between early-morning and home-study students shows a tendency
for early-morning students to emphasise slightly less the social aspect of
the programme. This may be because their regular daily contacts with each
other provide them with more adequate social reinforcement, despite what
was previous said about small class sizes. They also enjoy scripture chase
much more. This is a once popular quiz-type activity where teams or
individuals compete to find scripture passages. Early-morning students
have the opportunity for more practice, and hence become more skilful.
They thus tend to win competitions with the home-study students, which

perhaps accounts for the different attitude. Scripture chase is clearly no longer such a favourite activity for the majority of students.

Although the teacher responses have been separated into home-study and early-morning responses, since there are only 27 early-morning classes, this may not be very meaningful. The early-morning teachers are aware of the popularity of scripture chase among their students, and with one or two exceptions, teachers seem to have a general grasp of the preferences of the students.

Coordinators and students were invited to select six choices in order, but through an oversight the teachers were only asked to select three choices from the six. There were many nil responses for the last three choices among the students, and because of this, and to make comparison with the teachers easier, only the first three choices have been given. However, the last three choices by students confirm the general trend revealed in the first three choices. In particular, the student home-study work-books are clearly the least-liked of all the activities in Seminary, although amongst home-study students this shares sixth place with scripture chase.

We should remember that this ranking does not measure degree, and we may be considering six activities that are all very much liked; sixth choice does not imply dislike. However, further questions qualified the responses.

Students were asked what aspects of Seminary they actually disliked. Many (one hundred) stated there was nothing they disliked, and a further sixty-six did not respond at all. The remainder provided a wide range of responses, which formed twenty-seven distinct complaints. These could be further grouped into broader categories, and the results are given in table 34. Only categories receiving ten or more mentions have been included.

TABLE 34

ASPECTS OF SEMINARY WHICH STUDENTS DISLIKE

Complaint	% Response		
	EM	HS	EM+HS
student work-books	11	32	29
scripture chase/mastery	9	16	15
monthly meeting lesson	7	7	7
getting up early	26	3	6
too much reading/writing	2	19	4
poor quality local teaching	2	3	3
personal relationships, teacher/students & student/student	2	3	3
reading the scriptures	...	3	3
time/venue of meetings & classes	2	2	2
old fashioned filmstrips	8	1	2

The most obvious feature is the very large proportion of complaints about the student work-book. These ranged from the quality of presentation and layout, to obscure and difficult to follow questions and exersises. There is much feeling about this area of the programme, and taken together with other comments indicates a substantial complaint, which will be discussed as a separate issue shortly. One hundred and seventy, or 29 per cent of students made at least one complaint about the home-study manual.

The number of complaints about the scripture chase programme supports the trend in table 31. Although originally a device to encourage the learning of scripture passages, it became so popular with inter-class

leagues and competitions, that it was felt the competitive element had obscured the original purpose. So a few years ago the name was changed to scripture mastery, and instructions were issued from central office to play down the competitive element. Scripture chase became one of many activities in the broader concept of scripture mastery. It has been in the period since this change that scripture chase/mastery has lost its popularity. It appears that less able students and classes still feel at a disadvantage, and more able students do not have the same opportunity to display their talents. Furthermore, the element of fun which previously was enjoyed by both types of student has been greatly reduced. It seems that this once highly successful programme has been de-naturized; some disadvantages have been retained, and good features lost. This seems to be another example of protecting the weak, at the expense of removing incentive from the able - the result can be a flat, unappetizing approach which does not appeal to anyone.

A surprising inclusion in the three most common complaints was the monthly meeting. Several students identified teaching and leadership by their coordinator as the problem. The meeting, which is intended to be an active, enjoyable experience had degenerated for some students into a rather humdrum affair.

An associated question for the students asked what they would like to see included or added to the programme. This attracted fewer responses than the complaints. The comments of the 350 students who responded are summarized in table 35. Almost one-third want more social activities - there is a consistent and strong feeling here, echoed in other questions, which seems at the moment to receive no response from CES administrators. A problem once again is the interraction between local Church leaders and Seminary personnel. Local Church leaders are responsible for providing activites connected with monthly meetings, but these are not always well

organised, or indeed organised at all. At one time the whole package was the responsibility of Seminary, and quality and consistency were generally high. The comparison, under 'new management', is not always good.

TABLE 35

THINGS STUDENTS WANT INCLUDED IN SEMINARY

Request	% Response		
	EM	HS	EM+HS
more social activities	29	32	31
better home-study work-books	17	16	17
more/better filmstrips & visual aids	17	11	12
more creative, enjoyable teaching	2	12	12
more students	17	8	10
more/better scripture chase/mastery	7	3	4
hold regional meetings	...	4	3
more meetings & lessons generally	6	2	4
better personal relationships	2	2	2
Seminary during Sunday School	3	2	2

The request for better home-study workbooks is also in line with other responses, and the request for more filmstrips reinforces the popularity of these items. The request for better teaching has already been commented on. Other items reflect relatively small groups. The request for more students relates to previous comments about class sizes. Just over twice the proportion of early-morning students compared with home-study students mention this, reflecting perhaps the smaller class sizes of this group.

The students were asked, finally, for an overall assessment of the Seminary programme, from two points of view. First, how enjoyable it is, and second, how useful and valuable they considered it would be for them. They were given a five-point scale for their assessment. Table 36 gives the results. There is a much broader spread than when students assessed specific aspects of the programme. Many students consider Seminary to be more prized for its value than for the enjoyment they receive. This no doubt reflects the importance of existing religious commitment for continued involvement. However, both assessments are on the whole very positive. If we remember yet again the low return for the questionnaire, that these results are possibility from the more committed students, then Seminary may be seen as something of a necessary chore by quite a large proportion of the total enrolment. Note also that early-morning students are again slightly more positive than home-study students, confirming this consistent trend.

TABLE 36

STUDENT ASSESSMENT OF THE OVERALL SEMINARY PROGRAMME

		% Response of Students				
		Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor
How Enjoyable	EM	26	61	12	1	...
	HS	17	49	25	5	2
	EM+HS	19	50	23	4	2
How Useful & Valuable For Life	EM	58	34	7	1	...
	HS	52	31	11	17	4
	EM+HS	53	32	11	3	1

<u>Student Curriculum Materials</u>

The student work-books, commonly called the 'student manual', were shown to be a source of dissatisfaction in tables 32, 34 and 35. A further question asked specifically how interesting the maual is for students. The results are from students, coordinators and teachers, and are in table 37. It is the most negative response for any question in the student survey. It is not a visually attractive product, and the exercises tend to be repetitive and unimaginative. Several years ago the manual was colourful, attractive and showed a creative approach to learning exercises. Changes have been made largely for reasons of economy, and because older versions tended to be gimmicky in a very American fashion. It is quite clear, at least from the students' point of view, that an acceptable alternative has not yet been found.

TABLE 37

STUDENT, TEACHER AND COORDINATOR ASSESSMENT OF THE
HOME-STUDY WORK-BOOK

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor
Students % Response	13	37	36	8	4
Teachers % Response	26	57	14	2	...
Coordinators No. Responses	...	4	5	...	1

Coordinator and teacher assessments of the student manual are also found in table 37. The teachers show a much less negative reaction. This is surprising, since discussions with teachers reveal that many of them are unhappy with the quality. Table 38 lists the most common requests for improvement in the student manual, made by teachers and coordinators. One

hundred and five teachers responded.

TABLE 38

TEACHER AND COORDINATOR REQUESTS FOR IMPROVEMENT IN THE
STUDENT MANUAL

Requested Improvement	No. Teachers	No. Coordintrs
More fun, more positive, less cautionary and negative	24	2
Better, clearer, less ambiguous questions & exercises	22	2
Anglicise language & terminology	22	2
More consistent theme: too fragmented	20	...
More attractive presentation & clearer layout; more illustrations	19	5
Broad ability range: several manuals needed	16	1
Bind in booklet form, not loose-leaf sheets	15	2
More creative, less mechanical exercises; more variety	10	1
More varied, better scripture mastery exercises	7	2
More illustrative stories	6	3
More opportunity for student involvement, opinion & comment	7	1

Characteristics and Background of Students

Table 39 provides the details of student characteristics and background. The overall picture is of young people well grounded in the Church, with the backing of a committed family. As expected, almost all are members of the Church, but what was unexpected was the number of years of Church affiliation. Most (82 per cent) have had at least five or more years of Church membership, and 45 per cent are lifelong members. This would be unremarkable in many churches, but because of the evangelistic nature of the LDS Church, a larger proportion of new members was expected.

It suggests a growing consolidation of the Church in this country, and perhaps a slowing down of home missionary work. The result may of course be distorted because of the poor response rate.

TABLE 39

CHARACTERISTICS AND BACKGROUND OF SEMINARY STUDENTS

Characteristics		No. Students	% Students
Age:	13	6	1
	14	110	19
	15	195	33
	16	141	24
	17	112	19
	18	25	4
	19	5	1
	20	...	...
	21	1	‡1
Sex:	Male	250	42
	Female	340	58
Students who are Church members		580	98
Five or more years of Church membership		463	82
Lifelong Church membership		251	45
Years of Seminary, including current year	1	214	36
	2	117	20
	3	142	24
	4	104	18
	5	10	2
	6	2	<1
Living with both parents		469	77
Living with one parent		113	19
Living with neither parent		10	2
Both parents Church members		397	68
Dad only Church member		16	3
Mum only Church member		142	25
Neither parent Church member		25	4

Characteristics		No. Students	% Students
No. brothers/sisters:*	0	13	2
	1- 3	363	61
	4- 6	183	31
	7- 9	31	5
	10-12	6	1
All brothers & sisters Church members	470	79	
No brothers & sisters Church members	39	7	
Family active in Church		497	84
Family not active in Church	-	92	16

*mean number children in home = 4.2

It was earlier explained that membership in the LDS Church involves an extensive time commitment for most practicing members. This can cause some tension in homes where some are not members. The family background of students gives some idea of the support they will get at home. It seems from the figures that most will receive support, or at least not discouragement. The term 'active' family is understood in LDS terminology to refer to members who attend regularly, normally each Sunday, and participate in the organisation. For 84 per cent of students their family appears to share the ideals they come to Seminary to be taught.

However, separate questions in the teacher, coordinator and student surveys asked specifically about the kind of support provided by parents, and the responses do not bear out the above expectations. It has been established that parents have a major influence in getting the students to enrol in the first place, but then, for many, the help stops. There was general agreement between teachers and coordinators that little support is provided by many parents. Nine out of twelve coordinators, and 53 per cent of teachers feel that the average parent provides little or no support.

The students were rather more positive about their parents, but still 32 per cent receive little or no support. One girl wrote in the margin 'lots of encouragement, but no help'.' (the question specified help and encouragement).

This is an area needing development. Although 98 per cent of teachers said that their own contact with parents was important, only 53 per cent actually made contact as often as monthly. Since most teachers will have the opportunity to see parents each Sunday at church, this figure is rather poor.

Only 18 per cent of students are in their fourth (usually final) year, whereas 36 per cent are in their first year. This is only partly due to a dropping of interest with age, since the figures show that 104 students joined Seminary in their fifteenth, sixteenth or seventeenth years. Apparently a number of students do not join Seminary when they become eligible at fourteen - an indication of reluctance? The mean age of students is 15.6 years.

The overall picture, referred to already, is of young people who are raised in the nurture of the LDS faith, and receive a background of support from home.

1.   David Billis, 'Voluntary Sector Management: Research and Practice' (Working paper 1 of the PORTVAC group, Brunel University, December 1984), pp. 1,2

2.   Patrick Wright, 'Should the Salt of the Earth be Managed?', MDU Bulletin (May 1983), p. 2

3.   Church Educational System, Policies and Procedures (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 1984), C3-2, p. 2

4.   ibid., B1-2

5.   Church Educational System, Book of Mormon Teacher Outline (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 1986), p.1

6.   Church Educational System, Church Educational System Guide For Priesthood Leaders (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 1984), p.1

7.   Church Educational System, 'British Isles Seminary Year-End Report, 1984/85'

CHAPTER 7
CONCLUSIONS

General

This thesis has attempted to show that religious education in schools has had an unusually contentious and controversial history, which has continued to the present day. There is still no general agreement or uniform approach. Religious education is unusual because of the nature of the religious experience, and the spiritual knowledge claimed by believers. By its nature, religious education within a state school can only ever be a partial one, no matter how accommodating the school. In their search for an unbiased form of religious education, educationalists have created a climate of opinion which rejects the promotion of even basic Christian teachings in schools, and seeks to avoid any of the traditional confessional approaches.

As a result of an intimate historical relationship between religion and education, the schools have traditionally been an important vehicle for transmitting basic Christian doctrine, and were relied on by the churches to provide a grounding in Protestant dogma. Now that they no longer do so, there is an urgent need for Christian churches to provide alternative programmes of religious education, to make good the vacuum created by changing patterns in the schools. Such programmes are likely to rely heavily on volunteer staff.

Although there has been some progress in some areas, and individual parishes may be quite successful, the overall provision in Christian churches for the religious education of adolescents is poor, and characterized by lack of direction and purpose, even confusion.

Chapter 6 examined in detail the Seminary programme, of the LDS Church which is an apparently successful model of a volunteer-based religious education programme for adolescents, having operated in this country since 1968. A number of strengths and weaknesses in the programme were identified.

Seminary: Factors Contributing to Success

1. Church Support and Programme Structure

In the LDS Church there is a strong historical, philosophical and doctrinal commitment to education in general, and religious education in particular. There is also a strong emphasis on self sufficiency. The LDS Church has therefore been willing to invest money and manpower on a large scale to support Seminary. A situation has been created in the Church where it is the normal and expected thing to do, for teenagers to enrol in Seminary at fourteen. This is possible in large measure because of the strong sense of divine approval and of the rightness of the cause, at all levels of the programme.

There is a strong central control in the LDS Church, which extends to CES. Whilst local autonomy is extended for programme details, there is a clear organisational structure, with clear lines of responsibility. Curriculum materials and programme policies are centrally produced. This unifies the programme worldwide, allows the pooling of talent, and reduces costs. However, it also causes some problems, described in the next section. Seminary utilises the existing Church membership and geographical divisions, of wards, stakes, regions and areas. This simplifies organisation and makes correlation with ecclesiastical leaders easier, but can also cause problems.

2. Staffing

The programme has a full-time administrative staff, which provides the consistency, drive and direction needed by a constantly changing group of volunteers. The organisational structure is very simple, however, and every teacher has direct access to one of the full-time administrators. Teachers are generally established, mature Church members. They are usually willing participants, who do not have to be pressed into service. The lay-run nature of the Church makes voluntary service of some kind an expected duty for all active members, but Seminary teachers genuinely enjoy their involvement. This is combined with a strong tradition of loyalty to authority, and an unusually high commitment to their faith. This last point is of great significance: the LDS Church is a total way of life, and for those who are established to the extent that Seminary teachers are, their work will be regarded as a sacred mission rather than a teaching appointment. Such an attitude is capable of overriding many shortcomings in the programme.

3. Training and Supervision

There is a definite, organised programme of inservice training which follows a regular pattern of meetings, in which the curriculum is based on local need. The quality is generally high. Teachers' welfare, and moral support are of first importance to the coordinators, and the coordinators have a good grasp of the needs and attitudes of teachers, hence there is generally a cooperative, positive spirit in the organisation. Coordinators regard the supervision of individual teachers as their most important function, though practice does not reflect this priority, as will be mentioned.

4. Teaching

From the coordinators' and students' point of view teaching seems to be good; an attempt to judge the success of this and other areas will be made later. At least teachers seem diligent and caring individuals who try hard. Teachers' manuals and other aids are generally adequate, and provide the necessary direction and structure for teachers to plan their lessons. However, more research into the needs of volunteer teachers is required.

5. Student Response

Teachers and coordinators have a good grasp of the attitudes and feelings of the youth about Seminary, though they tend to be overly pessimistic. The teenagers generally enjoy Seminary. Their own wishes are a dominant factor in their reasons for enrolling. Only a few are forced, or even strongly coerced to participate. However, students are influenced strongly by their parents to enrol in Seminary, and though specific help after enrolment is weak, the general religious ambience in most LDS homes is strong, and Seminary is supplemented by regular family worship. This creates a strong, unstated climate of support for Seminary.

Seminary incorporates and fosters a social element, which although not as good nor extensive as students would like, is enjoyed by them more than any other aspect of the course, and serves an important function.

Student study materials, even though in need of improvement are substantial, as are teacher materials; this gives a sense of solidity and purpose for students. Assessments, tests and the concept of credit leading to graduation reinforce this, and provide goals and incentives external to the actual study. The influence of these factors is important, signalling clearly to the students that Seminary is important, and taken very seriously by the Church.

<u>Weaknesses and Concerns in Seminary</u>

1. Programme Structure

The development of early-morning Seminary, vis-a-vis home-study Seminary seems to be departing from that expected by CES policy in the matter of class sizes, which in this country are smaller for early-morning than home-study Seminary. Since this has important staffing and other implications, the situation should be studied and decisions made concerning policy changes.

2. Staffing

There is confusion, misunderstanding and poor communication in several areas of ecclesiastical and CES cooperation. In particular, the appointment of teachers is done very badly, though this is not only a result of poor correlation, but also poor performance by the coordinators. This results in confusion for teachers, especially concerning lines of responsibility. There is a need for more education about Seminary for ecclesiastical leaders. The turnover of teaching staff is unacceptably high, and weakens the programme through the lack of continuity, and the problems of training such a large annual influx of new staff. There is a need for a sustained campaign by CES for a longer retention of teachers. Many teachers have too many other Church positions, presumably the result of a lack of appreciation of the extensive nature of a Seminary teacher's commitment by local Church leaders, and this is a common cause for resignations. Over half the teachers complain of insufficient time to do the job well. Most of those who wish to resign are in their first or second year, which may be partly a result of appointment procedures, and also training, to be mentioned shortly.

The proportion of women teachers is very high; more men are needed

to provide a better balance.

3. Training and Supervision

Pre-service and initial training of new teachers is very poor, and many have none at all. A standard programme of introductory training should be developed, as a required course for all new teachers. There is confusion over the basic nature and purpose of Seminary amongst teachers and coordinators. This is exacerbated by the lack of any comprehensive written statements or explanations of the objectives of the programme.

Teachers do not receive enough personal visits and interviews from their coordinators. Workload does not permit the coordinators sufficient time for the frequency of contact which the teachers would like, and seem to need. An examination of workload and priorities is perhaps needed. Also in supervision, a concern over the need to treat volunteers with care can result in an unnecessarily tentative approach in matters of standards and accountability.

4. Teaching and Curriculum

The biggest problem for teachers is keeping students up-to-date with their work, and this together with other responses suggests that the general area of personal relationships in the classroom is the greatest challenge. Even so, concern with teaching seems to focus on the product rather than the process. Although the LDS Church is committed to principles associated with education, such as autonomy of thought, the cultivation of an enquiring, creative mind etc., there is little emphasis given to these qualities in assessment or training in Seminary. Even the concept of 'teaching by the spirit', and spiritual factors generally, which are highly stressed in Seminary literature, were notably absent in responses in the survey. This is a serious indictment, given the doctrinal

and historical commitment of the Church in these areas.

There are many complaints about the student work-book, which needs considerable improvement. It is produced centrally in America, for a wide range of cultures, and for a wide age-range, and perhaps too much is being attempted with one product. However, many complaints were about the quality and variety of questions and exercises, independent of cultural or age problems.

How Successful Is Seminary?

Success in education is difficult to measure and depends on the objectives. Since the objectives in Seminary are poorly defined, the measurement of success is difficult. Furthermore, as was mentioned in chapter 6, there is a reluctance by many teachers to use objective testing procedures and assess grades for students. This makes the assessment of learning achievement dependent on subjective evaluation.

If the objective is to provide a stable organisation to provide religious instruction for the teenagers of the Church, then Seminary is doing well. It has operated since 1968, it is vigorous and shows no signs of decline, and enrolment is growing. However, if success is judged in terms of the quality of instruction given, and the extent to which educational principles are respected, judgement is more difficult. Although the organisation is committed to educational principles, little training focuses on this. Since the LDS Church has a strong regard for individual agency, and the development of testimony for oneself through a seeking, searching mind and spirit, this area should receive more prominence. The response from coordinators and teachers suggested a lack of careful thought aboout these concepts. More understanding and training is needed in this area.

If success is judged by student response and attitude, which is how

many teachers judge the success of their teaching, then Seminary is doing well. In fact, students are extraordinarily complementary about their Seminary experience, and even allowing for distortions due to the low response rate, they are very positive. If we guage success by the relationships between students and the teacher, which is regarded as very important by coordinators, Seminary is successful. However, teachers themselves feel uneasy and express concern about this aspect of their work.

Objective criteria, such as completion rates and attendance figures argue success in involving students and generating their interest. However, requirements for credit leading to graduation are rather general, requiring little more than the physical presence of the student on a regular basis, and his completion of a quantity of exercises and reading commensurate with his ability. The emphasis is on an external act, or performance, without reference to effort, quality or outcome. The rote learning of forty scripture locations, and the reading of an assigned text (part of the requirements for credit) indicate some learning, but at a rather superficial level. This does not suggest that Seminary is failing in the learning process, or in its formative intentions, but a mechanism does not exist for adequate assessment, and any judgement must be largely subjective. This ought to be of serious concern to the administrators.

Overall, on the basis of a largely subjective assessment, the conclusion of this study is that Seminary is a thriving programme, successfully involving large numbers of teenagers in a confessional, doctrinal type of religious education, which has now disappeared from the schools. Only 4 per cent of students express a positive dislike, and a majority claim to enjoy the experience. The programme can be improved substantially in certain areas, which have been noted, but even so, it should be of interest to the many Churches who are still grappling unsuccessfully with the religious education of their teenagers.

Application For Other Churches

The above sections on strengths and weaknesses are of interest in considering any applications of Seminary for other Churches. One of the difficulties in making recommendations is the unusual background and characteristics of the LDS Church, described fully in chapter 4, which make it something of an oddity among Christian faiths. It seems to the author that the following characteristics of the Church make the greatest contribution to the success of Seminary.

1. A historical, philosophical and doctrinal heritage, as a result of which Church leadership is willing to commit extensive resources and cash for curriculum materials, salaries and staffing.

2. The strength of commitment and faith by the leaders and general membership, leading to a high degree of self-motivation amongst students, and a general ambience in which it is the normal and expected thing for young people to enter Seminary at fourteen.

3. The availability of willing, committed, caring adults as volunteer teachers. The faith of such people in the rightness of their cause, and a surety by them of the approval of the Holy Spirit - a sense of mission.

4. The support of the home in providing a positive religious background, and supportive activities such as family worship and Bible reading.

5. A strong central control which decides policies and organisational structure, defines the syllabus, and is able to draw on the combined resources of the whole Church.

If a programme similar to Seminary is to be as successful in another faith, then at least some of the above characteristics would need to be developed. They seem to be key features of the programme. They reflect a vigorous Church community, with confidence in itself. It was mentioned in

chapter 3 that many churches seem defensive about religious education, and seem to confuse the aims of schools and their church. Ministers appear embarrassed to be seen to be committed, and fear the charge of indoctrination. This results in a tentative, ineffective approach. It is a conclusion of this study that religious education within each faith needs to be tackled with a more robust determination. In large measure success in Seminary is the result of a will to succeed, and the faith and commitment of the members of the LDS Church. We are reminded of the quotation from J. W. D. Smith, on page 42 of this study, in which it is stated that 'Genuine Christian Education awaits the emergence of a Christian Community renewed and unified in thought and life'.

APPENDIX 1

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

SEMINARY TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

Full Name: _____ Date: _____

Ward/Branch: _____ Stake: _____

Seminary Coordinator/Supervisor: _____

Instructions

Draw a ring around your answer for all yes/no and multiple choice questions. For other questions, write your response or follow the specific instructions. Please give only one answer, unless directed otherwise. Where the term "supervisor" is used, it refers to either a CES Coordinator, or a Seminary Supervisor, whichever you directly report to.

Section 1: Teacher Background

1. Are you male or female? M / F   2. How old are you? _____ years

3.   a) Are you married?   YES / NO

  If Yes: b) Is your spouse a Church member?   YES / NO

  If Yes: c) Are you sealed in the Temple?   YES / NO

4. If you have children of your own, are any studying, or
   have any studied Seminary?   YES / NO

5. a) How many years have you been a Church member   YES / NO

   b) Are you Temple Endowed?   YES / NO

6. Including the current year, how many years have you
   been a Seminary teacher?   _____ years

7. a) Have you studied Seminary as a student?   YES / NO

   b) Have you studied or taught Institute?   YES / NO

8. a) Do you have Church positions other than Seminary? YES / NO

   b) If YES, please list the positions:

9. a) Do you have a full-time, paid job?   YES / NO

   b) Do you have a part-time, paid job?   YES / NO

10. a) Are you qualified to teach professionally?   YES / NO

Section 2: Selection & Appointment

1. Following is a list of possible reasons why you were invited to teach in Seminary. Please select the three which most apply to you, and rank these three in order of importance, by placing a number in the space provided: 1 being most important, 2 next most important, and 3 next.

I was the only one willing or available _____

I get on well with teenagers _____

I'm the only one who could control the class _____

I have a good knowledge of Church doctrine and the scriptures _____

It was a calling, inspired of the Lord _____

I have some skill and ability as a teacher _____

I am generally dependable _____

I am an experienced, worthy member of the Church _____

Other (please specify): _____

2. a) Did you make the initial approach, by expressing an
    interest for teaching Seminary?   YES / NO

    b) If NO, who did make the initial approach? Ring one choice:

    Bishop / Supervisor / Stake President / Other (say who):

    c) Did you receive an appointment interview?   YES / NO

    d) Did you receive a formal letter of appointment from
    your supervisor?   .   YES / NO

3. If you received an appointment interview, please say to what extent it helped you to understand what would be expected of you as a Seminary teacher.

4. Which of the following best describes the position of Seminary teacher? Ring one choice:

professional volunteer appointment / Church calling

5. Following is a list of possible reasons why you accepted the invitation
    to teach in Seminary. Please select the three which most apply to you,
    and rank these in order of importance by placing a number in the
    space provided: 1 being most important, 2 next most important, and
    3 next.

    To avoid being asked to do something else in the Church _____

    I said yes out of a sense of duty to the Church _____

    I enjoy teaching _____

    I enjoy working with teenagers _____

    I thought I might benefit personally, because of the study required _____

    I felt a sense of divine calling - the Lord wanted me to do it _____

    Other (please specify): _____

1. a) As a new Seminary teacher, did you receive any special
        induction training, in addition to the regular faculty
        meeting programme?   YES / NO

    b) If YES, did this training provide you with sufficient basic
        knowledge to enable you to start teaching the course with
        reasonable confidence?   YES / NO

2. a) Do you have difficulty attending faculty meetings regularly?
                                                              YES / NO

    b) If YES, please state what your difficulties are:

    c) There are usually 8 faculty meetings held each year. Please
        give the number you anticipate you will have attended by the
        end of the current academic year (Sept 1984 - June 1985): _____

3. a) How good is the training you are given for helping to improve
        your teaching ability? Ring one choice:

            Excellent / Good / Fair / Poor / Very Poor

    b) Do you have any specific needs which are not provided
        for in your training?   YES / NO

    c) If YES, please state what these needs are:

4. Have you completed the Church's Teacher Development
    Basic Course?   YES / NO

5. Briefly describe the distinctive features and objectives of Seminary,
    which make it different from other Church programmes of instruction.

Section 4: Supervision

1. How many times, since the beginning of the current course in September 1984, has your supervisor:

   a) Conducted a personal interview with you? _____

   b) Visited your class to observe you teach? _____

2. a) If you had a choice, how often would you like your supervisor to visit your class to observe you teach? Ring one choice:

   once per month / once per quarter / once or twice annually / not at all

   b) When your supervisor visits your class, is it:

   primarily at his initiative / primarily at your request (ring one)

   c) Do you, or would you, enjoy having your supervisor visit your class to observe you teach?   YES / NO

   d) Do you, or would you, enjoy having a personal evaluation interview with your supervisor?   YES / NO

3. a) How often are you contacted by your supervisor, on average, by letter, telephone and personal visit? Ring one choice:

   several times per week / once per week / once or twice per month / less than once per month

   b) Do you feel you have enough contact and support from your supervisor?   YES / NO

   c) Does the supervision you receive provide the kind of help you need, to improve as a teacher?   YES / NO

   d) Briefly state any changes you would like to see in the supervision you receive:

4. To whom are you primarily responsible, in the day-to-day running of the programme in your unit? Ring one choice:

   CES Supervisor / Bishop or Branch President

5. a) Do you feel your views are considered seriously, when you make requests, or suggestions for improvement?   YES / NO

     b) Do you feel that the administrators are in touch with the "grass roots", or are they sealed off in an "ivory tower"? Are programme changes the result of an understanding of the real needs of teachers and students, or the implementation of abstract, theoretical principles? Briefly state your views:

1. a) Have you taught in both home-study and early-morning
        Seminary?   YES / NO

    b) Are you currently an early-morning or a home-study
        teacher?   EM / HS

    c) How many students are enrolled in your class   _____ Male

                                                              _____ Female

2. Briefly explain how you know if you are being successful as a Seminary
    teacher:

3. a) Following is a list of common problems experienced when teaching
        Seminary. Please select the three which most apply to you, and
        rank these three in order of importance by placing a number in the
        space provided: 1 being most important, 2 next most, and 3 next.

                                        Classroom control and discipline _____

                     Obtaining participation and response from the students _____

                      Physical environment: lack of suitable room for teaching _____

                             Your lack of sufficient knowledge of the subject _____

                        Lack of sufficient time for thorough lesson preparation _____

                                      Poor ability in general teaching skills _____

                 Making lessons relevant for the students' day-to-day lives _____

                         Keeping students up-to-date with reading and work _____

    Other (please say what):   _____

    b) Does in-service training and supervision help you with
        the difficulties selected above?   YES / NO

4. a) Do you have sufficient free time to fulfill to your
        satisfaction the requirements of a Seminary teacher?   YES / NO

    b) Do you enjoy your work as a Seminary teacher?   YES / NO

    c) Are you willing to continue teaching Seminary, when the
        current course is concluded?   YES / NO

    d) If NO, why not?

5.   Some forms of religious education are accused of being, not education at all, but "propoganda" or "indoctrination" - attempts at transferring doctrines and values whilst suppressing the individual thinking and free agency of the students. How far would you regard what you are doing as indoctrination, or education?

6.   a)   How helpful are the lesson materials (teacher manual, audio-visual aids etc.) which you recieve? Ring one choice:

Excellent / Good / Fair / Poor / Very Poor

b)   Describe any improvements you would like to see:

c)   Is the Seminary curriculum relevant for teenagers in a modern world?   YES / NO

d)   If NO, why not?

Section 6: Students and Parents

NOTE: Please do not ask the students for their response to these questions,
answer them according to your own experience and observations.

1. Who takes the main initiative in your Church unit, for recruiting
students for Seminary?   Ring one choice:

Seminary Teacher / Bishopric / Youth Leaders / Other (say who):

2. a) Why do teenagers enrol in Seminary?   Please outline the main
reasons, for most studetns:

b) If all forms of external pressure (e.g. from parents, Church
leaders) were removed, how many students in your class would
continue to study Seminary?

The number who would: _____

The number who would not: _____

3. a) How suitable is the student manual for home-study by students?
Ring one choice:

Excellent / Good / Fair / Poor / Very Poor

b) Describe any improvements you would like to see:

4. Following is a list of the main activities of a student in Seminary.
Please select the three which you think most students enjoy the most,
and rank these three by placing a number in the space provided:
1 being most enjoyable, 2 next most enjoyable, and 3 next most.

Reading the scriptures _____

Monthly Meeting lessons _____

Scripture Chasing and Mastery _____

Working on the home-study booklets (for home-study students) _____

The social aspect - being with other students _____

Weekly or daily class lessons _____

Other (please say what): _____

5. a) Do you consider that your relationship with the parents
   of your students is important?   YES / NO

   b) How frequently would an individual parent be contacted by you,
   on average, concerning Seminary matters? Ring one choice:

   once per week / once per month / once per quarter /
   once or twice per year / not at all

6. a) How important is parental support for the success of the student?
   Ring one choice:

Very Important / Important / Fairly Important / Unimportant / Undesirable

   b) Generally, how much support and encouragement do the students
   receive from their parents? Select one choice:

   a great deal / quite a lot / a little / none at all / they discourage

_____

Thank you very much for your help; I appreciate the time you have
taken. Would you now please check through the questionnaire to ensure
that you have not missed any questions by mistake.

APPENDIX 2

COORDINATOR QUESTIONNAIRE

CES COORDINATOR QUESTIONNAIRE

A. Selection of Teachers

1. Which of the following people has the greatest influence in determining who is selected as a ward Seminary teacher? Ring one choice.

   Bishop / Coordinator / Stake President / Other (say who):

2. Which of the following people do you think should have the greatest influence in determining who is selected as a ward Seminary teacher? Ring one choice:

   Bishop / Coordinator / Stake President / Other (say who):

3. Following is a list of reasons why someone may be selected as a Seminary teacher. Please select the three which most commonly apply to your teachers, and rank them in order of importance, 1 being most important, 2 next most important, and 3 next.

   the only one willing or available _____
   gets on well with teenagers _____
   the only one who can control the class _____
   good knowledge of church doctrine and scriptures _____
   a calling, inspired of the Lord _____
   skill & ability as a teacher _____
   generally dependable _____
   experienced, worthy member of the Church _____
   other (please specify) _____

4. Do you, personally, conduct an appointment interview with all new teachers?

   YES / NO

5. Do you send a formal letter of appointment to all new Seminary teachers?

   YES / NO

B. Training & Supervision

1. a) Do you provide special induction training for new teachers, in addition to the normal inservice training programme?

   YES / NO

   b) If YES, briefly summarise what this training consists of:

2. How good would you assess the training which you give your teachers, to help improve their teaching? Ring one choice:

   Excellent / Good / Fair / Poor / Very Poor

3. a) How often, on average, do you make a teacher visit, either to the class or for an interview? Ring one choice:

   more than 2 per week / 2 per week / 1 per week / 2 per month / les than 2 per month

   b) Is this as often as you would ideally like to visit?

   YES / NO

   c) If NO, why don't you visit more often?

4. Approximately what percent of your teachers will:

   receive a visit once per year _____

   receive a visit twice per year _____

   receive a visit more than twice per year _____

5. a) What is your main objective in visiting teachers?

    b) How successful are you in reaching this objective?

6. a) Is the training and supervision of volunteer teachers
        different from that of professional teachers in schools?

                                                        YES / NO

    b) If YES, what are the main differences?

C. Teaching

1. Briefly explain how you determine how successful a teacher is:

2. Following is a list of common problems experienced by teachers when teaching Seminary. Please select the _three_ which you think are most generally found amongst your teachers, and rank them in order, 1 being most important, 2 next most, 3 next most.

classroom control and discipline _____

obtaining participation and response from students _____

physical environment: lack of suitable room for teaching _____

lack of sufficient knowledge of the subject _____

lack of sufficient time for thorough lesson preparation _____

poor ability in general teaching skills _____

making lessons relevant for the students' day-to-day lives _____

keeping students up-to-date with reading and work _____

Other (please say what): _____

3. Some forms of religious education are accused of being, not education at all, but "propoganda" or "indoctrination" - attempts at transferring doctrines and values whilst suppressing the individual thinking and free agency of the students. How far would you regard teaching in Seminary as indoctrination, or education?

4. a) How helpful are the lesson materials (teacher manual, audio-visual aids etc.) for the teachers? Ring _one_ choice:

Excellent / Good / Fair / Poor / Very Poor

b) Briefly describe any improvements you would like to see:

5. Is the Seminary curriculum relevant for teenagers in a modern world?

YES / NO

6. Please assess the average, overall standard of teaching of your teachers. Ring _one_ choice:

Excellent / Good / Fair / Poor / Very Poor

D. Students

1. Why do teenagers enrol in Seminary? Briefly summarize the main reasons, for most students:

2. If all forms of external pressure (e.g. from parents, Church leaders) were removed, what percentage of students would continue to study Seminary?

   _____ %

3. a) How suitable is the student manual for home-study by students? Ring <u>one</u> choice:

   excellent / good / fair / poor / very poor

   b) Briefly describe any improvements you would like to see:

4. Following is a list of the main activities of a student in Seminary. Please decide how enjoyable each is, for most students, and rank them in order, 1 being most enjoyable, 2 next most, and so on to 6.

   reading the scriptures _____
   monthly meeting lessons _____
   scripture chasing and mastery _____
   working on the booklets (home-study students) _____
   the social aspect - being with other students _____
   weekly or daily class lessons _____
   other (please specify what): _____

5. a) How important is parental support for the success of the students in Seminary? Ringe one choice:

    very important / important / fairly important / unimportant / undesirable

    b) Generally, how much support and encouragement do most students receive from their parents? Select one choice:

    a great deal / quite a lot / a little / none at all / they discourage

E. Personal Background and Observations

1. Outline briefly why you think you were offered a full-time position in CES:

2. Briefly state your main reasons for accepting a full-time position in CES:

3. a) As a new employee, did you receive adequate training to initiate you into the job?

    YES / NO

    b) State any improvements or changes you would like to see in the training provided for a new employee:

4. a) Is the on-going inservice training you receive adequate for
        your needs?

                                                            YES / NO

    b) State any improvements or changes you would like to see in
        inservice training:

5. Have you either taught or completed the Church's Teacher
    Development Basic Course (new or old versions)?

                                                            YES / NO

6. Briefly describe the distinctive features and objectives of
    Seminary, which make it different from other Church programmes
    of instruction:

7. a) Do you have enough contact and support from your Area
        Director?

                                                            YES / NO

    b) State any improvements or changes you would like to see in the
        supervision you receive from your Area Director:

8. a) Does the British Isles have enough contact and support from
        Central Office in Salt Lake City?

                                                            YES / NO

    b) Do you feel that Central Office Staff are sufficiently aware
        of the needs of the British Isles?

    c) State any improvements or changes you would like to see in the
        relationship with Central Office Staff:

9. a) Is 44 hours per week sufficient time to fulfill to your
      satisfaction the requirements of your job?

                                                    YES / NO

   b) Do you enjoy your work?   YES / NO

APPENDIX 3

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

SEMINARY STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Student,

      My name is Craig Marshall, and I am studying for an M.A. degree at Durham University. My research involves a study of the Seminary programme. I am hoping you will help me with my studies, by completing this questionnaire. Your answers will be completely confidential; your teacher, parents and Church leaders will not see them unless you wish it. I am not checking on individual students - I am trying to find things out about students as a group. It is very important that you are totally honest: please do not give the answers you think I want to hear, but answer according to your actual experience and feelings. The results of this survey should be of great value in helping improve the Seminary programme.

****

YOU NEED NOT PUT YOUR NAME ON THIS FORM

Draw a ring around your answers for all yes/no or multiple choice questions; for other questions write your response or follow the specific instructions. For the questions in section 1 concerning membership, a Church member is defined as someone who has been baptized, or if under 8 years of age, attends Church regularly. (i.e. you may have been a member all your life)

Section 1: Personal Background

1. a) How old are you? _____ years b) Are you male or female? M / F

2. a) Are you a Church member?   YES / NO

    b) If YES, for how many years   _____ years

3. Including the current year, how many years of Seminary have you studied?   _____ years

4. a) Do you live with: both parents / one parent / neither parent

    b) Which of your parents are Church members?   dad / mum / neither

5. a) How many brothers and sisters do you have?   _____

    b) How many of them are Church members?   _____

6. Would you describe your family as mostly an <u>active</u> Church family?
                                   YES / NO

7. Are you an early-morning, or a home-study student?   EM / HS

Section 2: Opinions About Seminary

1. a) Please explain briefly why you enrolled in Seminary:

   b) Who influenced you the most, to enrol? Ring one choice:

   Parents / Bishop / Seminary Teacher / Yourself / Friend /
   Other (say who):

   c) If Seminary was not regarded as very important by your parents
   or the Church, and there was no feeling of obligation or pressure
   for you to be involved, would you still continue to study Seminary?

   YES / NO

2. a) Does Seminary make a difference in your life?   YES / NO

   b) If YES, briefly explain the difference it makes:

   c) Circle one statement that   most nearly describes your feelings:

   I do Seminary to avoid doing something else

   I do Seminary because I'm told to

   I do Seminary to be with my friends

   I do Seminary because I enjoy it

   I do Seminary because I feel its the right thing to do

   I do Seminary to please someone else

3. a) How enjoyable is your daily or weekly Seminary class?
   Ring one choice:

   enjoy a lot / enjoy / its not too bad / dislike / dislike a lot

   b) For home-study students: how interesting do you find the home-
   study booklets? Ring one choice:

   Excellent / Good / Fair / Poor / Very Poor

3. c) Please rank the following Seminary activities according to how enjoyable they are to you, by placing a number in the space provided, 1 being most enjoyable, 2 next most enjoyable, and so on to 6 (or 5 for EM students)

Reading the scriptures _____

Monthly Meeting attendance _____

Scripture Chasing and Mastery _____

For home-study students: Working on the home-study booklets _____

The social aspect: being with other students _____

Weekly or daily class lessons _____

4. a) What have you found in the Seminary programme that you dislike?

b) What would you like to see included in Seminary, that is presently missing?

c) For home-study students: would you prefer to do early-morning instead? YES / NO

For early-morning students: would you prefer to do home-study instead? YES / NO

5. a) Please say how good you think your teacher is; ring one choice:

Excellent / Good / Fair / Poor / Very Poor

b) How much help and encouragement do you get from your parents? Ring one choice:

a great deal / quite a lot / a little / none at all / they discourage me

6. Please assess the overall effect of the total Seminary programme for you, in two separate areas: how enjoyable and attractive you find it; and how useful and valuable you think it will be in your life. Please ring one choice for each:

    a) How enjoyable: Excellent / Good / Fair / Poor / Very Poor

    b) How valuable: Excellent / Good / Fair / Poor / Very Poor

7. It was stated that you do not need to give your name for this questionnaire. This is true, however it may be useful for me to follow-up a small number of students with a few additional questions. If you would have no objection to this, please complete the details below, but otherwise, leave blank.

    Name:

    Address & Telephone:

    Ward: Stake:

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR HELP

APPENDIX 4

SCHEDULE OF QUESTIONS USED IN INTERVIEWS

WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF VARIOUS CHRISTIAN FAITHS

QUESTION AREAS FOR INTERVIEWS WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF VARIOUS CHRISTIAN FAITHS

General

1. What are the main ways in which your church provides for the religious education of teenagers / children / adults.?

2. What provision, if any, does your church make for religious education outside of the school, or the regular religious worship services?

3. Do you feel existing provisions are adequate?

4. How would you like to see things changed?

Volunteer Lay Teachers

1. What use does your church make of volunteer lay teachers in religious education?

2. How are they selected and recruited?

3. What training do you provide for them?

4. How are they supervised, and by whom?

Curriculum & Course Design

1. What materials are teachers and students supplied with?

2. Who determines the course content.

3. How is the programme funded?

4. What is the nature of the curriculum – the main purpose of the course?

5. Is there an attempt at integration with other forms of religious or secular education?

Teaching

1. When are lessons held?

2. How often does instruction take place?

Students

1. How are students recruited?

2. To what extent is participation voluntary?

3. What age groupings are involved in one class?

4. What kind of retention rates do you have?

5. How do you assess success?

Philosophy

1. To what extent is your programme one of indoctrination, rather than education?

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