The Contribution of the Presentation Brothers to Irish Education 1960–1998:
A Study of a Roman Catholic Religious Teaching Institute In a Time of Change and Transition

being a Thesis submitted for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in the University of Hull

by


September 1998
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people have helped me in the course of this study and I wish to acknowledge my gratitude to them. Firstly I would like to thank Professor V.A. McClelland of the University of Hull, School of Education for his encouragement, advice and guidance. A courteous and wise counsellor, his availability, his support and his enthusiasm for the study were an enormous help to me. At various stages along the journey, he challenged me in my thinking and encouraged me to go deeper. I am eternally grateful.

I also wish to thank Dr. J. Matthew Fecheney, F.P.M., Director of the Christian Leadership in Education Office (C.L.E.O.), Cork. As a fellow Presentation Brother, I am deeply appreciative of Dr. Fecheney’s original suggestion that I should undertake this study. His advice and support too have been invaluable. Since Dr. Fecheney’s contribution to the Presentation Brothers and to Catholic education forms part of this study, I will say no more here and let the record speak for itself.

The scholarly expertise of Dr. Frank J. Steele, particularly at the regular C.L.E.O. seminars for doctoral candidates was an inspiration to me and I wish to acknowledge his assistance and support.

Without the co-operation and encouragement of the Presentation Brothers, it would not have been possible for me to undertake this study. I thank, in particular, the Congregation Leader, Br. Stephen O’Gorman and the Province Leader in Ireland, Br. Bede Minehane for their support and for their interest in the work. The welcome and co-operation I received in Presentation communities and schools made the task of research a very pleasant experience. I thank all those Brothers, past-pupils, Presentation Associates and teachers who shared their experience with me of the Brothers’ presence and work in education. I trust that what I have written goes some way towards expressing the richness of what they shared with me.

I want to acknowledge in a special way the access I was given to both general and provincial archives, as well as to the annals and records of communities and schools.
We all build on those who have gone before us. I acknowledge previous Presentation Brother writers and historians. I owe much to the work of Brothers Cormac O’Carroll (R.I.P.), Henry Allen (R.I.P.) and Terence Hurley.

I would like to thank my own family for their special encouragement and support always, and especially over the last number of years when this work was in progress.

A special acknowledgement must go to the Brothers and young people of the Callan Community, Cork and the Glasthule Community, Dublin. I was resident in these communities while engaged in writing this thesis and I thank all concerned for their patience, understanding and friendship. It is at times of challenge and pressure that the concept of a supportive brotherhood comes alive in a very real way. They kept me going at the difficult times.

I owe a great debt to Margaret Murphy, Secretary at the Presentation Brothers Generalate, Mount Saint Joseph, Cork. Her efficiency, good humour and excellent secretarial skills were a marvellous support.

In 1853, Herbert Spencer offered a comment on politics which I, in this case, ascribe as a caution to myself and to the present study:

> When I remember how many of my private schemes have miscarried, how the things I desperately strove against as a misfortune did me immense good – how when the objects I ardently pursued brought me little happiness when gained ... I am struck with the incompetence of my intellect to prescribe for society. There is a great want of this practical humility in our political conduct.¹

In true humility, I offer this study as one record of the journey of the Presentation Brothers in education. Many have helped me bring it to fruition and I acknowledge my gratitude and debt to them all. I alone am responsible for any errors.

Finally, I thank God for the life and strength which has allowed me to complete this study. I dedicate it to the Presentation Brothers, their Associates and co-workers, as they continue to make their unique contribution to education –

*ad majorem Dei gloria*m.
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ABSTRACT

The Institute of Presentation Brothers is a Roman Catholic religious Congregation founded by Edmund Rice in Waterford, in 1802. The Brothers declare their mission to be Christian formation, primarily of youth and in particular of the poor and disadvantaged. The aim of this thesis is to outline and examine the contribution of the Brothers to education in Ireland in the period 1960–1998. Taking account of the Catholic Christian tradition and against the background of the nineteenth century Ireland the thesis describes the growth and development of the Brothers’ work. Particular attention is focused on the period from 1960 onwards and how the twin forces of change in society and in the Catholic Church impacted on the Brothers’ contribution to education. The thesis considers how the Brothers have dealt with the major educational issues of the time. The key issues of training and personnel are dealt with, along with an analysis of the special role of religious education, Irish culture and sport in the Brothers’ schools. The educational philosophy of the Brothers is traced from its origins as is the challenge to articulate a contemporary Presentation philosophy of education. The contribution of a number of significant educational leaders among the Brothers is highlighted and the views of a range of past-pupil writers are offered regarding the quality of their educational experience in Presentation schools. The primary motivation for the Brothers’ involvement in education is religious. They are committed to a Catholic vision of education which has profound implications for the lives of young people. The rapidity of change has radically altered the presence and role of the Brothers in Irish education in the last forty years. The thesis contends that this period can be divided into two phases, roughly approximating to twenty years each. During the first phase the Brothers’ educational mission lacked vision and strategy. It was a time of confusion. The second phase has seen the Presentation Brothers and their co-workers grapple with deeper educational questions. A new vision is forming and the present position of the Brothers and their associates is analysed along with the contemporary challenges they face in education. During the period 1960–1998, the Brothers conducted a network of schools at primary and secondary level. In the last ten years they have also developed a variety of other educational initiatives. This study contends that the Presentation Brothers have made and continue to make a distinctive contribution to the education of thousands of young Irish people. The problems that
face the Presentation Brothers as we move into the new millennium are many and complex. An analysis of the past may provide valuable learnings for the future and so an evaluation of the Brothers' contribution to education since the onset of rapid change in the 1960s is attempted. The study contends that the Catholic/Edmund Rice educational vision of the Brothers, given re-articulation and commitment has much to offer to young people and to the Ireland of the future.
INTRODUCTION

The aim of this thesis is to outline and examine the contribution of the Presentation Brothers to education in Ireland in the period from 1960 to the present day. The Institute of Presentation Brothers was founded by Edmund Rice in Waterford in 1802. The group gained final approbation as a Roman Catholic religious institute of pontifical rite in 1899. Throughout the nineteenth century and this century the Brothers developed a network of schools. The period chosen for study, 1960 to the present day, corresponds to a period of rapid change in Irish society and in the Catholic Church. This process of change has had and continues to have profound effects on the Brothers’ work in education.

The thesis is firstly descriptive since it attempts to outline the historical context of the Brothers’ work along with an account of the growth and development of the Presentation network of schools. Significantly, no previous work has attempted a comprehensive description of the Brothers’ contribution to education, particularly in the modern period. Such writings as exist tend to concern the period of foundation or the subsequent efforts of particular individuals or schools. This thesis attempts to paint an overall picture of the contribution and to achieve a synthesis on the topic. The Presentation Brothers and their co-workers have influenced the lives of thousands of young people during the last four decades. It is important that this particular aspect of Irish education be recorded and examined.

A historical approach forms a key element of the present work. The Presentation Brothers receive their mandate from the Catholic Church and are part of a long Catholic Christian tradition in education. The thesis also attempts to be analytical and evaluative. The contribution of the Presentation Brothers to education is examined in the context of a period of rapid change in Church and society. A central thrust of the thesis is that two phases can be delineated in the Brothers’ response to the challenge of change. Broadly speaking, the first phase from 1960 to 1981 was a time of reaction. In the early sixties a period of relative calm reigned but it was ‘the calm before the storm’. The Presentation Brothers had reached a numerical peak and there were large numbers of Brothers teaching in the schools. Vocations to the Congregation were plentiful. However, a period of rapid change was already underway in Irish society with the process of
industrialisation which had begun in the fifties. Allied to this, the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) would usher in profound changes in the life of the Catholic Church with major impact on the work of Religious Orders in education. The thesis contends that in the years following Vatican II and indeed until 1981, the Presentation Brothers’ mission in education lacked strategy and direction. Simply put, the Church and world in function of which the Brothers were formed had changed dramatically and they were largely adrift in a sea of change. Enormous effort was also invested at this time by the Brothers in the internal renewal of Religious life. Community life, dress, prayer forms, all faced unprecedented change. In education, the Brothers were reactive, doing well what they always did in the schools but generally speaking not facing the deeper questions raised by a world and Church in transition.

The year 1981 is chosen as the beginning of the second phase in the Brothers’ response to the challenge of change. In that year a General Chapter of the Brothers elected a new Superior General and General Council. This thesis contends that this new leadership team initiated a more positive view of change and facilitated the Brothers in being proactive in facing new challenges in education. Some of the Brothers, of course, were already well down the road on this journey but the positive and encouraging milieu created within the Congregation by the leadership team allowed a new educational vision and a coherent strategy to emerge among the Brothers. The thesis examines the implications of this new direction for the Brothers’ work in education since 1981.

The treatment of the Brothers’ contribution to education is thematic rather than chronological. Chapter One outlines the ‘Origin, Growth and Development of the Institute of the Presentation Brothers’. Bernard Lonergan has said that the meaning of Vatican II was the acknowledgement of history. This chapter examines the involvement of the Church in education from apostolic times. Particular attention is paid to the origin of institutes of teaching Brothers and to the context of the foundation of the Presentation Brothers by Edmund Rice in early nineteenth century Ireland. A summary is offered of how the Brothers’ work evolved from 1802 until 1960. Statistics relating to the Brothers and their schools are provided as appendices to this Chapter.

Chapter Two deals with the impact of change on the Brothers’ work in education in the period from 1960 to the present time. Theories of change and non-change are explored
along with an overview of change in Irish education and the Catholic Church over the last forty years. The multi-dimensional forces of change in society and Church are examined in terms of their impact on the Presentation Brothers and their work in education. Chapter Two also deals with training and professional development in the Brothers. The strengths and weaknesses of the Brothers’ tradition on this issue are explored. This chapter offers some insights on the Brothers’ relationship with lay teachers and parents.

Chapter Three concerns the critical issue of the Presentation Brothers and religious education. Edmund Rice founded the Brothers for the education of the poor. His vision of education was unequivocally Catholic and he saw religious education as central to the curriculum and life of the schools. The issue of religious education is examined in the context of the founding vision of Edmund Rice and the Presentation school tradition. In the period under review, which largely corresponds with the post-Vatican II period, religious education has faced both problems and challenges. The issue of change and a new cultural context have posed questions for how the schools approach this issue. The contribution of the Presentation Brothers is examined both in terms of fidelity to the Edmund Rice vision and also some of the responses the Brothers have made to the challenge of religious education at the present time.

Chapter Four looks at the Presentation Brothers in the contemporary educational scene in Ireland. The challenge of renewing a Presentation philosophy of education is explored. Scripture, tradition, the teaching of the Second Vatican Council and fidelity to the Edmund Rice vision are presented as key elements in this process. The celebrations surrounding the 150th anniversary of the death of Edmund Rice in 1994 and his beatification by Pope John Paul II in 1996 have offered the Brothers a special opportunity to re-appropriate the radical Catholic educational vision of Edmund Rice. This chapter treats of the core issues facing the Brothers today, particularly the issue of continuing to develop the Presentation charism in education. In the context of fewer vocations to the professed Brothers, new partnerships with laity are vital to growth in this area. The chapter outlines the development of concepts such as the ‘Presentation Family’ which finds practical expression in an increased partnership in mission involving Brothers, lay associates and young people. The development of a pro-active trusteeship of Presentation schools is also dealt with in this chapter. The approach of the
Presentation Brothers is outlined in the wider context of recent proposals emanating from the Conference of Religious of Ireland (C.O.R.I.), in which the Brothers play an active part.

Chapter Five attempts to draw together the strands of previous chapters and provides a comprehensive evaluation of the contribution of the Presentation Brothers to Irish education since 1960. An evaluative process is defined and attempted in response to certain key questions. The positive features of the contribution are examined. The writings of significant past pupils are mined for key insights on how people viewed their educational experience with the Brothers. The work of four individual Brothers is highlighted as offering further insight into the role of Brothers as educational leaders. The impact of highly dedicated and talented individuals forms a significant part of the Brothers’ contribution to education. The Brothers also have a long and honoured tradition of commitment to the co-curricular and extra-curricular aspects of education. This chapter examines the role of sport in Presentation schools, as offering a valuable picture of the dedicated commitment of so many Presentation Brothers and their impact on the lives of young people. All education has a political content. The approach of the Presentation Brothers to issues of Irish culture, language and nationality is offered as evidence of a sense of balance and integration which is such a positive feature of the Presentation tradition in education. Finally, Chapter Five outlines some of the deficiencies in the contribution of the Brothers. A number of weaknesses or missed opportunities are examined in order to offer some learnings for the future. The chapter ends with some final comments regarding the future role of the Presentation Brothers in Irish education.

The research for this study was undertaken in four phases. The first phase entailed studying the origins and the evolution of the Church’s involvement in education from apostolic times. The Presentation Brothers, founded in early nineteenth century Ireland, could only really be understood in the context of this history and tradition. This phase of the project also involved wide reading in Irish history in general, and in the literature of Irish education in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The words of Marcuse seemed apt: “remembrance of the past might give rise to dangerous insights, and established society seems to be apprehensive of the subversive content of memory”. This thesis sought to highlight some of these “dangerous insights” regarding the
Presentation Brothers. It is a central belief of the author that if the Brothers can re-appropriate the radicality and the Catholicity of their founding vision, that they possess something of great value to offer to the future of Irish education. Four years of study and research around this topic have, if anything, strengthened this belief.

A second phase of the project involved a comprehensive study of Presentation sources and literature. This involved material from General and Provincial Archives, Community Annals, Visitors' Reports, School Records and Registers, Presentation Brothers' Newsletters, Presentation Studies and circular letters of Superiors General and Provincials. The author had access to all available archival material. Particularly since 1960, the Brothers have produced a large amount of written material and reports, perhaps in itself a reflection of the turbulence of the times. Thirdly, the author, as a member of the Brothers, had access to the oral tradition, folklore and indeed humour of the Congregation. This often proved a significant asset in reading between the lines and in decoding some of the official writings of the Brothers! Much use was made of this oral tradition through informal interviews and conversations with senior Brothers, many of whom would recoil from the idea of a formal interview. A comprehensive written questionnaire was sent to thirty Brothers in the Province. These represented a cross-section of the Brothers in terms of age and educational experience. Twenty-two Brothers returned the questionnaire and commented freely on a broad range of issues concerning the Brothers' contribution to education over the last four decades. These responses are available in Appendix C, Chapter 5. This material, too, significantly informed the present work.

Finally, in the fourth phase of the project, an attempt was made to collate and integrate the information garnered from phases one to three. It was against this background that the overall contribution of the Presentation Brothers to education was outlined and evaluated. The project goes beyond the historical to an analysis of the current position of the Brothers in education and indicates emerging challenges and trends.

Wordsworth characterised the task of the artist as to "observe with accuracy things as they are in themselves, and with fidelity to describe them, unmodified by any passion or feeling." However, the present author possesses much passion and feeling regarding the mission of the Presentation Brothers. What follows is an honest attempt to outline,
examine, assess and evaluate the contribution of one group of teaching Brothers to the education of thousands of young Irish people since 1960. The Presentation Brothers are possessed of noble and high ideals. What amazes is not the deficiencies or flaws but how often the ideals were attained and lived. The effect of the study is to give hope for the future.
References and Notes: Introduction

1. The Brothers trace their original foundation to Edmund Rice in 1802. However, the group of Brothers who gathered around Michael Riordan and continued living the Presentation Rule after 1827, were a diocesan group for many decades. These Presentation Brothers did not seek recognition as a Pontifical Institute until 1885. Rome granted temporary approval in 1889 and final approbation in 1899.

2. I acknowledge the historical writings of Br. Cormac O’Carroll (R.I.P.), Henry Allen (R.I.P.), Terence Hurley and Matthew Feheney. Their work and views have influenced the present study. This study also draws on, considerably expands and further develops an earlier work of my own: “The Contribution of the Presentation Brothers to Irish Education 1900–1990”, M.Ed. thesis, University College Cork, 1990.


5. The general archives are located at Presentation Brothers Generalate, Mount Saint Joseph, Blarney Street, Cork. The Province archives are housed at Presentation Brothers, Provincial House, Glasthule, Co. Dublin. Each Brothers Community house has community annals and a ‘Visitation Book’ recording comments of Provincial and General Council visitors. Schools retain their own individual registers and records. The archives and records generally are of uneven quality. It often depended on the efforts of local Superiors or Principals and large gaps occur. Br. Albinus O’Donnell, Irish Provincial (1951–’57) and Superior General (1957–’69) deserves credit for his meticulous attention to record-keeping.

CHAPTER 1

ORIGIN, GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT
OF
THE INSTITUTE OF
THE PRESENTATION BROTHERS
1.1 The Catholic Church and Education

The Catholic Church has always been an educating community. From the very beginnings of the Christian story and especially in the life of the historical Jesus, great emphasis was placed on the roles of teaching and learning. Jesus of Nazareth is given many titles in the gospels. He is variously described as Lord, Saviour, Christ, yet he is referred to most frequently as teacher. The title didaskalos or teacher appears 48 times in the four gospels.1 Jesus identified himself as a teacher and was so regarded by the people of his time.

The church, as the community of disciples, founded by Jesus has always seen education as an essential part of its mission. This is evident from the very inception of the church as an organised grouping or community. In the post-resurrection narrative of Luke’s gospel an account is given of the experience of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus.2 In the immediate aftermath of the crucifixion and death of Jesus, the two disciples are presented as confused, depressed and dejected. They are fleeing from Jerusalem. However, after their encounter with the Risen Jesus, the Lucan narrative presents them as fired with a new vision. Now the two disciples run back to Jerusalem. They have been helped to discover a truth and now they wish to share this with others. Thus Christianity begins its teaching mission.

The Catholic Church, in particular, is a teaching church. Few among the membership of the church or indeed those outside it, would argue with the accuracy of this description. The church considers that it holds the stewardship of divinely revealed truths. The church also believes that it has a mission to present these truths to all peoples. Today there are over 150,000 Catholic schools, colleges and institutes of learning throughout the world serving some forty million students.3 These range from small primary schools to large prestigious universities.

An overview of the historical development of the church’s involvement in education and learning will serve as a backdrop to an examination of the Presentation Brothers. The
Presentation Brothers were founded in early nineteenth century Ireland but as a religious institute the Brothers today are part of a church with an educational heritage of almost two millennia. Some of the challenges and problems faced by the Brothers in Irish education in the last forty years can only be fully understood in the context of this wider story. Any discussion of issues in contemporary Catholic education will need to be informed and enlightened by the tradition.

The early church was faced with the dilemma as to how best to initiate new members into the faith community. People who became followers of Christ through some kind of conversion experience needed further instruction in the practical implications of their faith. It must be remembered that instruction and teaching in the early church were directed mainly towards adults. This instruction was largely oral in character and came to be known as catechesis. The oral nature of the task is implicit in the Greek origin of the word catechesis which meant ‘echoing back’. The gospel according to St. Matthew is a text that was offered as a help to the process of catechesis. This process involved a highly structured probationary and instruction period for the initiation of new members. The aspiring members were known as catechumens and the probationary period itself was known as the catechumenate. In terms of its involvement in education and teaching the first few centuries of the early church can be termed the age of the catechumenate. Catechumens became members of the church through the rite of baptism. This usually took place on Holy Saturday night during the celebration of the Easter Vigil. This vigil in celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus was the high point of the church’s liturgy.

During the second and third centuries to become a Christian was, in many respects, a radical counter-cultural choice. Christianity had not yet become the official religion of the Roman Empire and Christian communities suffered social disapproval and indeed outright persecution during certain periods. Only genuinely sincere and highly motivated people wished to become catechumens. However, this was to change after the legal acceptance of Christianity in 313. Then as it became more and more
fashionable to be Christian, the quality and motivation of catechumens varied considerably. Having examined the educational endeavour of the church communities of Rome, of Alexandria, North Africa, Syria and Palestine, Michel Dujarier concludes that ‘in the third century, catechetical practice had the same structure everywhere’. The catechetical writings of church fathers such as Cyril of Jerusalem, St. John Chrysostum of Antioch and St. Augustine of Hippo, have influenced the teaching of religion for centuries. Much of this writing has a surprisingly modern ring to it and Augustine’s advice to the young teacher Deogratias would not be out of place in a contemporary manual for student teachers. Augustine suggests that ‘Deogratias should understand his subject, know his audience well enough to be able to adapt to their needs and, thirdly, develop a kind of cheerfulness (hilaritas) through counteracting whatever tends to weary the mind’.

So it seems that the problems of teaching and motivation are perennial! As well as technical or methodological advice, Augustine also offers hope and encouragement and may be the first Christian writer to offer what could be termed a spirituality for the religion teacher.

As the church expanded and grew in numbers the education of the young was to pose a major challenge. This was a very different enterprise to the catechetical initiation of the convert adult members. The church’s entry into the field of general education was inevitable as more and more children were born into the Christian community.

Though the church saw catechesis as its primary task, catechesis of the young had to take place within the context of a general education. The Christian view of the human person has major implications for the type of education devised for the young and the church’s entry into the field of general education also meant interacting with the culture and society of the day. In 202 in Alexandria, Origen faced with the challenge posed by Greek philosophy ‘re-organised his catechesis, incorporating it into the organisational structure of a didaskaleion, or typical Greek school of the period’. Origen’s school offered two programmes. The first directed towards average students, was a four year
course involving grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music. Origen's brighter students could proceed to a second programme which involved the study of philosophy and theology.

Origen was open to what was best in third century Greek culture and in turn incorporated positive Greek elements into the curriculum of his church school. In this sense he represents one tradition in Catholic education, i.e. a tradition which sought 'dialogue with different cultures and sought to examine and appreciate their richness in the light of faith'. A second tradition in Catholic Church history and perhaps the more dominant one, has viewed the surrounding culture with suspicion and hostility.

This problem of how the church views the world has been a major source of tension through the centuries. It is still a source of debate in theology, particularly ecclesiology and salvation theology. At a given period, whether the church chose to adopt an optimistic or a pessimistic view of the world obviously has major implications for a christian philosophy of education. The theology of Vatican Council II was largely optimistic in character and actively sought dialogue with contemporary culture. The world was seen as the locus for the drama of redemption. This is in contrast to the 'fuga mundi' philosophy which emerged from the Council of Trent and which depicted the world and the church as implacably opposed.

Through the early centuries of the church and indeed right through the middle ages, catechesis was largely the responsibility of parents and godparents. Very few had access to formal christian schooling. Alongside the family the celebration of the liturgy was a further locus for christian education. No special liturgical provision was made for children. The artistic depiction of children as small adults in medieval painting highlights the fact that children were regarded as mini-adults. They listened to the same sermons and the same instruction as their parents. Medieval catechesis laid great stress on the content of faith. The faith was presented as a set of formulae to be memorised. This approach was further developed after the invention of the printing press.
Martin Luther was among the first to see the possibilities of mass circulation of religious material as a way of educating people in the Christian faith. 'He it was who, in 1529, gave the world its first printed catechism. It was called Enchiridion and subtitled "A Small Catechism for the use of Ordinary Pastors and Preachers".' The leaders of the protestant reformation laid great stress on the bible as the word of God. They sought to make the riches of scriptural teaching available to ordinary people and so reformation catechesis was largely biblical in tone and content.

The response of the Catholic Church to the challenge of the reformers was largely formulated by the Council of Trent. This nineteenth ecumenical council of the church was held in the Italian city of Trent from 1545 to 1563. The council defined the canon of sacred scripture, original sin, grace, justification, the seven sacraments and many other doctrinal matters. The teachings of this council were to have a major impact and to largely define Catholic life until the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965).

Trent's response to Luther's Small Catechism was to issue a detailed and extensive work for use by priests in giving instruction. The Catechism of the Council of Trent or Roman Catechism has had a major influence on catholic education over the last four centuries. Written for the teacher rather than for the pupil, the Catechism while allowing for the fact that material could be adapted to the capacity of the learner nevertheless demanded a 'standard and prescribed form of propounding the dogmas of the faith'. The Roman Catechism also differed significantly from that of Luther in its approach to learning. Whereas Luther began with a treatment of human sinfulness and moved on to the justifying grace of God, the Roman Catechism began with a treatment of the Creed and the Sacraments. It began with God and the task of knowing who this God is, who enters into human history and then moved on to our human response through the spiritual life. A careful reading of the Roman Catechism challenges some popular but rather dubious assumptions regarding the Council of Trent. Often associated with a rigidity in doctrinal matters, nevertheless the Catechism issued by this
Council asserts 'that all Christian knowledge is reduced to one single head', to know Jesus Christ and him crucified. Trent also laid strong emphasis on the bible as a resource book for teaching and instruction, a point often neglected in subsequent Catholic tradition. The text of the Roman Catechism itself contains thousands of scriptural references as well as this clear admonition: that pastors should study the scriptures and instruct the faithful in them.

The Council of Trent gave impetus to a Counter Reformation movement which had as its aim a strong re-assertion of Catholic doctrine and discipline. The movement sought to counteract what it saw as the errors of Protestantism. The Society of Jesus founded by Ignatius of Loyola in 1540 was to play a major role in the Counter Reformation. The Society became an élite intellectual force in the Church at the direct service of the Pope. The Society of Jesus, or 'Jesuits' as they came to be known, founded an extensive network of Catholic schools and colleges. Though mainly concentrating on higher education and on the wealthier classes, Jesuit philosophy and methods of education were to have a major influence on all subsequent Catholic education. The Jesuit influence was a significant factor in the life of Edmund Rice, the founder of the Presentation and Christian Brothers. When he took first vows as a Religious in 1808, Edmund Rice chose to be known in Religion as Brother Ignatius, in honour of St. Ignatius of Loyola.

Following from the Roman Catechism, the publication and use of catechisms became a major feature in post-Tridentine Catholic education. The Dutch Jesuit, St. Peter Canisius (1521-1597) published three catechisms. In 1597 the Italian Jesuit Robert Bellarmine published Dottrina Cristiana Breve (Summary of Christian Doctrine) which became very popular and was translated into many languages. The Bellarminian tradition extended its influence to Ireland. Fr. Theobald Stapleton published a Latin/Irish catechism in Brussels in 1639 which was largely influenced by Bellarmine. One of the most famous English catechisms was Richard Challoner’s The Catholic
Christian Instructed published in 1739. The famous Penny Catechism, much used in schools up to Vatican Council II, was largely based on Challoner's work.

The advent of widespread and popular schooling throughout the nineteenth century was to herald a major change in catechesis. From this time onwards formal religious instruction has taken place mostly in schools. Whereas in former centuries the family, the local Christian community and the celebration of the liturgy were major loci for instruction, these now gave way to some degree and the school took a pre-eminent position.

Developments in Catholic education in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries will be dealt with later in this study in particular as they affected Irish education and the work of the Presentation Brothers. At this stage it may be helpful to look at what lessons can be drawn from this historical overview in relation to the work of the Brothers. Firstly, it is clear that from their foundation in 1802, the Brothers were shaped by an inheritance of many centuries. From early times the Church had attached great importance to education. This initially took the form of the initiation of adults into the faith community and later concentrated heavily on the instruction and training of the young. As it interacted with various cultures and societies, the Church had to face the challenges posed by the purpose, content and methods of general education. Nevertheless catechesis remained central to all of the church's educational endeavours and was the raison d'être of all the formal educational structures which it evolved. The Brothers of the early nineteenth century were thus not starting ex nihilo but were the inheritors of a tradition of teaching and learning and a corpus of writing stretching from apostolic times to the catechisms of the post-Tridentine era. Edmund Rice, the founder of the Brothers was very influenced by this tradition. For him religious education was central to the life of the Catholic schools he established:

The half-hour's explanation of the catechism I hold to be the most salutary part of the system. It's the most laborious for the teacher; however, if it were ten times what it is, I must own, we are amply paid in seeing such a reformation in the children.13
Edmund Rice attributes the change in the pupils' behaviour to the effect of the religious education they received. For Rice, religion and obedience to God's law were the bases for all right living. Rice and the early Brothers saw teaching as their God-given vocation and their basic religious philosophy permeated school life. Kent offers a key insight into the thinking of Rice himself on this issue:

Religious education can be considered to be part of education but it is also true that education can be viewed as part of the religious or overall development of a person and it is from the latter viewpoint that Rice saw his work. Rice's ideas on the formation of youth and the methods appropriate to it are at the centre of his distinctive educational philosophy though he never formulated it as such. It has little in common with Rousseau's naturalism or with the acquisition of objective forms of knowledge. Nor has it much in common with the classical-Christian or scholastic realism that is considered to represent the Catholic philosophy of education. Perhaps the educational ideas which come closest to the Brothers' view of the best way to help children improve their behaviour lie in the areas covered by interaction analysis, perceptual psychology or the theory of counselling.14

The work of the early Brothers and those who followed them was motivated by religious values and heavily inspired by a Catholic/Christian vision of life. In modern times, the Vatican Council II document on Christian Education, Gravissimum Educationis reaffirmed the Church's role in education and the importance of this task for the contemporary world:

For her part, Holy Mother Church, in order to fulfil the mandate she received from her Divine Founder, to announce the mystery of salvation to all men and to renew all things in Christ, is under an obligation to promote the welfare of the whole life of man, including his life in this world, in so far as it is related to his heavenly vocation; she has therefore a part to play in the development and extension of education. Accordingly, the Sacred Synod hereby promulgates some fundamental principles concerning Christian education, especially in regard to schools.15

The Council document goes on to speak of the dignity of the human person and of the inalienable right of the human person to education. This mandate to teach the truth, which the Church believes it has received from Christ, combined with its concern for
the dignity of the human person, form the twin bases of Catholic Church involvement in education down through the centuries.

1.2 De La Salle and the Origin of the Teaching Brothers

It is important to understand the particular historical origins from which groups such as the Presentation Brothers arose. Brothers are not ordained clerics. They are lay men who take religious vows and live in community. Congregations of teaching Brothers, active in the church today, owe their origin to seventeenth century France and to the inspiration of John Baptist De La Salle (1651-1719). De La Salle was a priest who came from a wealthy aristocratic background. With the rapid expansion of French towns and cities in the 17th century, De La Salle noticed the degradation and ignorance of the masses of poor children who had very little access to any type of education. To educate these poor children, he gathered around him and supported a group of twelve school masters, who formed the nucleus of what would later become a religious institute of teaching Brothers, known as the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

De La Salle’s vision and project was novel in a number of ways. Firstly, the education of the poor was not considered a priority by many of the people of his time. Secondly, though De La Salle himself was an ordained priest, he chose to found a lay religious institute to respond to the mission of the education of the poor. This was the first of many religious institutes of teaching Brothers in the Catholic Church. In subsequent centuries, and in many countries throughout the world, teaching institutes of Brothers have been to the forefront of the Church’s involvement in popular education, particularly with the education of the poorer sections of society. De La Salle’s foundation of the Brothers of the Christian Schools was to be a model for many other religious founders. The system evolved by De La Salle and his early companions was to have a major impact on subsequent Catholic Church involvement with the education of the poor. His philosophy is aptly captured in his work The Conduct of Schools, written in 1695 but not printed until 1720, one year after De La Salle’s death. Serving a similar
function to the *Ratio Studiorum* of the Jesuits, it was developed as a result of long experience in the schools of the poor. De La Salle placed great emphasis on the dignity of the individual student and also on the high standards demanded of the teacher. These themes were to influence significantly subsequent generations of teaching Brothers and were to have a major impact on the schools which they conducted. The success of the Lasallian system raised to a new prominence the profession of schoolmaster. In terms of the history of education, De La Salle and his early companions played an important role in promoting the right of the children of the poor to receive a good education. His system of education was responding to an increasing need in the society of his time, so that by De La Salle’s death in 1719, there were twenty-two communities of his Brothers in France and one community in Rome. At the beginning of the French Revolution of 1789, there were one hundred and twenty-one communities with over one thousand Brothers in France and six communities in other countries. De La Salle and his Rule were to be a significant influence on Edmund Rice and his Brothers at a particular stage in the evolution of their educational project.

1.3 The Situation of Catholic Education in Eighteenth Century Ireland

The Catholic Church in eighteenth century Ireland was a community shaped and influenced by several complex forces. A very significant factor was the Penal Laws and their effect upon the religious and civil freedom of Catholics. When fully and harshly applied the laws were indeed penal and this period of oppression has deeply affected the psyche of Catholicism in Ireland. At times, local factors mitigated against the full application of the laws in every area. However, Catholics, who constituted the majority of the Irish people, were during this period, relegated to the status of an oppressed class in their own country. They were excluded from political life and power precisely because of their religion. Access to the professions was denied to them and their religious and civil freedoms were severely curtailed. Irish history records many sad periods. The eighteenth century ranks among the saddest, given the destruction of the dignity of the Catholic people:
The penal laws enacted against Irish Catholics in the eighteenth century may be regarded as the worst in the annals of religious intolerance, not only because they were devised at a date when the world had freed itself from medieval ideas, but also because in themselves they were infamous, relying as they did on treachery and dishonour for their execution and being imposed on a majority by a minority, powerful only by reason of external backing.¹⁹

The share of the land of Ireland in Catholic ownership continued to fall throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In 1641 Catholics had owned 59% of the land. By 1703 this had dropped to 14% and by the 1778 it was down to 5%.²⁰ Though effectively excluded from professional and public life, trade and commerce did offer some opening to Catholics. In these areas it was still possible for Catholics to acquire some wealth. Contrary to the intention of those who designed them, the penal laws generally heightened and strengthened the religious faith of Catholics. Deprived of political and civil power, Catholics looked to their faith as a source of identity. Suffering and persecution forged a link between Church and people. Mass was often celebrated secretly and illegally in the countryside. Rural ‘mass-rocks’ are still sites of pilgrimage and popular devotion to this day. During the penal period, the traditional devotion of Irish Catholics to the Mass was strengthened as was the closeness between the people and the Catholic priesthood.

The situation of Catholic education was very difficult. The ban on education formed part of the Penal Code. Where these laws were strictly enforced, severe penalties could be imposed on anyone involved with any form of Catholic education. It could be argued that almost from the time of the Reformation, Catholic education was illegal in Ireland. However, it was from the time of William III onwards that the Penal Code had most effect. Laws were passed banishing Catholic bishops and members of Religious Orders. Inter-marriage between Catholics and Protestants was forbidden. During the reign of Queen Anne, the ascendancy Parliament extended the range of the Penal Laws. During the following fifty years, about two dozen Acts of Parliament were passed against Catholics.
In particular, in relation to matters of Catholic schooling, there is ample evidence of court proceedings being taken against people for keeping and running schools, particularly during the earlier part of eighteenth century. Court proceedings were regularly taken against schoolmasters for running a school or teaching privately and also against parents who sent their children to the continent for education in Catholic colleges there. As against this, it is clear that the authorities were frequently unhappy with the ineffectiveness, as they saw it, of the penal laws against Catholic education. The Catholic community responded in a diverse and varied manner to the obstacles put in its way. Since the Penal Code was not uniformly enforced, the authorities often turned a blind eye to the widespread establishment and existence of various types of Catholic educational initiatives. These ranged from the popular hedge schools, much described in Irish folk tradition, to more formal school-type settings, as well as teaching which took place in private houses.

The Relief Act of 1782 was a significant turning point in this whole saga of penal laws. Catholics were now given the right to teach in schools and, ten years later, in 1792, the legal necessity of obtaining a licence from the local Protestant Bishop was removed. In the aftermath of this Act, Catholic educational initiatives developed rapidly. The circumstances of the Catholic community during this period were such as not to favour the keeping of detailed records. Hence a complex and fascinating story of creativity despite adversity has often not been fully presented. However, the effect of the Penal Code, along with political marginalisation and the decline of the Irish language was devastating on the identity and self-esteem of the Irish Catholic Community. By the end of the eighteenth century, Irish Catholics were to a large extent, 'cut adrift from fourteen hundred years of Christian tradition and over two thousand years of native language and custom'. Well could Daniel O'Connell speak of 'a race of slaves'. Edmund Rice (born in 1762) was shaped and challenged by this religious and cultural milieu. It impacted significantly on his life and thought, and on his foundation of the Brothers in 1802.
1.4 Edmund Rice and the Presentation and Christian Brothers.

Nano Nagle (1718-1784) opened a school for poor girls in Cork in 1753. Over the next twenty years she devoted herself to the education of the poor. In 1775 she was joined by three other women who wished to dedicate their lives to this mission. Initially the group was known as the Sisters of Charitable Instruction of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Nano Nagle died in 1784. In 1787 Francis Moylan was translated from the diocese of Kerry to his native diocese of Cork. He initiated negotiations with Rome in order to secure canonical approval for the new religious institute of sisters. Qualified approval was granted by the Holy See in 1791. Bishop Moylan was instructed to frame new rules and constitutions for the sisters. He gave charge of this task to Fr. Laurence Callanan, a Franciscan friar. Fr. Callanan conferred a new title on the sisters i.e. the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Rome granted plenary approval to the Presentation Sisters in 1805.

The Presentation Sisters established a foundation in Waterford in 1798. The Sisters and their work among poor girls were major influences on Edmund Rice, a Waterford merchant, who was later to become the founder of the Presentation Brothers and the Christian Brothers.

Rice was born on 1 June, 1762 near Callan in Co. Kilkenny into a family of prosperous Catholic tenant farmers. His well-off background gave him access to an education which would not have been available to the majority of Irish Catholic young people of his time. He was taught at home by a local Augustinian Friar and sent to school in Kilkenny at the age of fourteen. A few years later, he went to work with his uncle who was a wealthy merchant in the city of Waterford. Edmund Rice succeeded in business and became active in the social and cultural life of the city. He married, but a few short years later, his wife died in child-birth, leaving him with a handicapped daughter. The death of his wife was a decisive turning point in the life of Edmund Rice. Out of his pain and grief, he developed a deeper sensitivity to suffering and to those who were less
well-off and less fortunate than himself. His brother was an Augustinian Friar and for a
time he considered entering a monastery on the continent. However, the turbulence of
the French Revolution of 1789 and the years which followed, meant that religious life
on the continent was going through a period of major upset and confusion. He threw
himself more into his very successful business and in his spare time devoted himself to
religious and charitable works. The idea of devoting his life to the education of the poor
developed gradually over a number of years. A major influence on his thinking was the
arrival of the Presentation Sisters in Waterford in 1798. Edmund Rice was a friend and
advisor to the Sisters’ community and used his considerable business skills in ensuring
the success of their foundation.

An early account of Rice’s foundation of an institute of teaching Brothers for the
education of the poor describes the sequence of events as follows:

In the year 1793, Mr. Edmund Rice of the city of Waterford, formed the
design of erecting an Establishment for the gratuitous education of poor
boys. In the following year he communicated his intention on this subject
to some friends, and particularly to the Rt, Rev. Dr. James Lanigan,
Roman Catholic Bishop of Ossory, who strongly recommended to him to
carry his intention into effect, and assured him that in his opinion it
proceeded from God. From that time forward, Mr. Rice did not lose sight
of the object he had in view, though from various causes, he did not
commence the building until the year 1802.26

The same document specifically highlights the influence of the Presentation Sisters on
Edmund Rice:

About this time, he had an opportunity of seeing the good effect of the
Moral and Religious education of the poor, in the conduct of female
children who were instructed by the Presentation Nuns, who established
themselves in this city in the year 1798.27

Walsh highlights the close links that existed from the beginning between Edmund Rice
and the Presentation Convent in Waterford:

Through the efforts of Edmund Rice the work of construction on the new
site was pushed forward and in the last weeks of 1799, the Sisters
occupied their new convent and schools.
And again:

In another way the Presentation foundation at Waterford was the prologue to significant events. From the beginning, Edmund Rice was an enthusiastic supporter of the establishment. He saw in the religious life and rule of the Presentation Sisters a pathway to perfection through the Catholic training of childhood.28

Another influence on Rice’s thinking at this time was a pastoral letter from Bishop Thomas Hussey, bishop of Waterford, issued in the year 1797. In this letter, Bishop Hussey condemned proselytising schools which were run by various Protestant agencies and individuals and severely criticised Catholics who permitted their children to attend them. It is against this background that Edmund Rice finally decided to devote his life and fortune to founding a Religious Institute whose chief work would be the education of poor Catholic children.

The Presentation Brothers of today owe their origin as a religious congregation to a division that arose among the early followers of Edmund Rice. Between 1802, when he opened his first school and 1808, Rice gathered around him a group of companions to help him in his work. These first Brothers took their vows on 15th August 1808 in the chapel of the Presentation Convent, Waterford. They lived their religious life based on the Rule of the Presentation Sisters, adapted for men. The Presentation Rule defined the new institute as a diocesan institute. This meant that, initially in Waterford, and later on in other dioceses where the Brothers worked, the local Bishop was their Superior. Unlike institutes of pontifical rite, the new religious institute had no Superior General of its own. As the work of Edmund Rice expanded to Dublin, Cork and other Irish cities and towns, a need for central planning and direction emerged in the developing educational mission of the Brothers.

Local bishops offered a measure of support and protection to the Brothers in their dioceses, in what was still, technically an illegal work in the years prior to Catholic Emancipation. However, individual bishops were often more concerned with issues of control and were not concerned with the educational mission of the new institute,
beyond the boundaries of their own dioceses. From 1817 onwards, Edmund Rice began to consider adopting a constitution along the lines of that used by the Brothers of the Christian Schools in France. As mentioned above, De La Salle’s Institute was to prove a model for the foundation of other institutes of teaching Brothers. It is worth noting however, that while De La Salle himself was a priest, Edmund Rice was a lay man and deliberately chose to be a lay man and found a lay religious institute.

As a form of religious life, an institute of lay teaching Brothers was quite a revolutionary concept as there was no previous model in the English-speaking world. The De La Salle Brothers were an institute of pontifical rite. They had their own Superior General and elected administration. They were, to a great extent, independent of local bishops and this gave them great freedom in the development and expansion of their work. While Rice’s Brothers remained subject to local bishops in various dioceses, it was difficult to organise training, transfers of personnel and new projects. After his study of the De La Salle Rule, Edmund Rice found something very similar there to what he envisaged for his own Brothers in Ireland. The Presentation Rule had served the group well in its early years, but Rome would only grant his group pontifical status if they adopted a pontifical rule already in existence. He decided to propose to his Brothers that the group should adopt a new De La Salle style rule.

Controversy and debate ensued over a number of years and ultimately led to a division within the group. The vast majority of the Brothers ultimately accepted the adoption of a rule along the lines of that used by the Brothers of the Christian Schools in France. A minority of two continued to live the Presentation Rule and remained under the jurisdiction of their local bishops. The majority, known as the Christian Brothers since 1822, elected Edmund Rice as their first Superior General. The group experienced considerable expansion and development during the following decades. Of the two Brothers who chose to remain with the Presentation Rule, Brother John Ignatius Mulcahy taught school at Cappoquin until his death in 1845. He was not joined by any
followers. The second Brother, Michael Augustine Riordan of Cork, was joined by a number of followers and thus there continued within the religious movement begun by Edmund Rice, a group of Brothers who would continue to follow the Presentation rule.

Brother Michael Augustine Riordan had entered the North Monastery in Cork in 1814. There had been considerable division in the North Monastery concerning the acceptance of the new rule over a number of years. Brother Riordan was a friend of the local Bishop, John Murphy of Cork. An architect by profession, he had helped in the building of many Cork churches before his entrance to the Brothers. His personal sense of loyalty to the local bishop greatly influenced his decision to remain with the Presentation Rule. In 1827, with the support of Bishop Murphy, he left the North Monastery and was given a house in Douglas Street, on the south side of the city. This became known as the South Monastery and Brother Riordan was joined there by some companions who lived as Presentation Brothers under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Cork.

The Brothers began to conduct two schools in the city, one in the South Monastery itself, another a Lancasterian School on Great Georges Street, today known as Washington Street. Thus, Brother Riordan played a pivotal role in the survival of the Institute of Presentation Brothers who would continue to live the original rule chosen by Edmund Rice and his early companions.

The Presentation Brothers continued their work in the Cork schools and expanded to Kerry in 1838. A foundation was made in Dartford in England in 1876 and in Birr, Co. Offaly, in 1879. By the 1870s however, a new younger group of Brothers began to address the issue of diocesan versus central control. As various types of schools were founded in diverse places, it became obvious that the Presentation Congregation should develop from its present diocesan status to being an institute of pontifical rite. In 1874, the Bishops of Cork and Kerry, on behalf of the Brothers, requested Rome to grant pontifical approval to the Presentation Institute. A Decree was received from Rome in
the same year granting temporary approval. In 1885, the Presentation Brothers submitted a petition to Rome requesting its approval for a central government for the Presentation Institute under its own Superior General. By 1889, Rome responded with the customary and cautious temporary approval and final approbation came ten years later in 1899.

Throughout these developments, the Brothers retained the original Presentation Rule. Changes were inserted however to allow for a central government under a superior general and council. The first formal general chapter of the Brothers of the Presentation Institute was held in the South Monastery Cork in July 1889. Brother Patrick Shine was elected superior general and with him four assistants to help in the government of the Congregation.

It is evident from annals, accounts and letters written throughout the 1870s and 1880s that a new spirit was evident among the Presentation Brothers. With the advent of a central administration ambitious new plans and projects were initiated. Chief among these was the building of a central novitiate and training college. This was completed at Mount St. Joseph, Blarney Street, Cork, in 1894. Mount St. Joseph was to serve the Presentation Brothers as a central novitiate or training house as well as a generalate for close on a century. It still continues as the generalate of the Institute today.

The Brothers of the 1880s were very poor and lived frugal lives. Mount St. Joseph was financed mainly through donations from friends of the Brothers and from the fundraising efforts of a number of Brothers among Irish emigrants in the United States.
1.5 The Presentation Brothers in Nineteenth Century Irish Education

It is important to locate the work of the Brothers within the wider context of what was taking place in education in Ireland in the nineteenth century. This is a complex and fascinating story. In the early years of the century the majority of the Irish people, particularly the poorer classes, were uneducated and illiterate. Various efforts had been made by voluntary charitable societies to address the problem. Most of these groups were Protestant in origin and character. Almost inevitably they were viewed by Catholics as proselytisers and consequently their efforts were largely rejected or viewed with suspicion. The plight of the poor demanded a systematic response from the Catholic community and so came about the foundation of Catholic religious institutes devoted to the education and health of the poor. Thus the Presentation Brothers must be seen as one component of a much larger phenomenon which had its genesis as a response to the social conditions of the time.

The National System of Education for Ireland was approved by parliament on 9 September 1831. As far back as 1812 the Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Irish Education had recommended the establishment of a State funded system of primary education. It was intended that the system would be non-denominational in character. Throughout the 1820s the Catholic Bishops had petitioned for a system of education to cater for the Catholic poor. They would have preferred an avowedly denominational system. Nevertheless, they saw the new system as a considerable advance and initially at least, most of the hierarchy were prepared to support it. It is outside the scope of this work to deal with the evolution of the national school system. Suffice it to say that the system was a source of much controversy within the Catholic hierarchy and the Catholic community generally. However, over the years, it became in effect a thoroughly denominational system.

What is of interest to this present study is the different attitudes adopted by the Presentation Brothers and the Christian Brothers to the National Education Board.
Initially, the Christian Brothers affiliated some of their schools to the National Board. However, their relationship with the Board and its inspectors was an unhappy one. The Brothers felt that the Board’s regulations hindered their freedom, particularly in regard to religious education. In 1836 Edmund Rice called an extraordinary general chapter of the Brothers to discuss this question. At this Chapter, the Brothers decided to sever all links with the National Board. The Chapter appointed a committee to investigate alternative funding for the six schools that had been affiliated to the Board up to that point. In debating this issue the Christian Brothers prefigured a major debate which was to take place within the Catholic hierarchy just two years later. In 1838 Archbishop John MacHale of Tuam supported by Bishop Higgins of Ardagh and Clonmacnoise questioned the idea of continued Catholic participation in the national school system. MacHale’s position was similar to that of the Christian Brothers. He held that the rules of the National Board hindered the freedom of the Church to provide a thoroughly Catholic education. Other members of the hierarchy disagreed with this view. Division among the Bishops led to three years of intense controversy in the Irish Church. After repeated appeals Rome finally took a middle ground position allowing each bishop to determine matters in his own diocese.

The Presentation Brothers formed a markedly different relationship with the National Education Board. The Presentation school in Killarney affiliated to the Board in 1839 and the Milltown Presentation school followed in 1842. Br. Paul Townsend was the Superior in both Kerry schools at the time of affiliation to the Board. When Br. Townsend was appointed Superior in Cork in 1848, he immediately sought to bring the Lancasterian School run by the Brothers into connection with the National Board. It must be remembered that at this stage the Presentation Brothers were still a diocesan institute. They were very poor and dependent for financial support on bishops and other independent benefactors. Affiliation to the National Board had obvious advantages for the Brothers and the poor pupils whom they taught. The thrust towards affiliating Presentation Schools to the National Board seems mainly to be associated with Br. Paul
Townsend. Affiliation occurred over many years and on a school by school basis depending on local circumstances.

Akenson makes a number of points which throw light on this process. The national school system appeared surprisingly early. The Brothers were cautious, valued their independence and were greatly influenced by the views of the local bishop concerning the Board. Akenson notes that on this issue some bishops were themselves undecided and that the national school system was 'a continual process of adaptation to the religious and political realities of 19th century Ireland'. Gradually the system became in fact if not in theory denominational and thus more acceptable to a group such as the Presentation Brothers. The Brothers entered the system under the Convent and Monastic schools scheme. This gave them the same rights as non-vested schools. Akenson notes that the rules regulating non-vested schools gave the owners of such schools almost all the freedom possessed by the owners of independent denominational schools.

Br. Paul Townsend gave evidence before the Powis Commission of 1868 on behalf of the Presentation Brothers. Br. John Augustine Grace also gave evidence on behalf of the Christian Brothers. To read the transcript of their evidence is to see very clearly the differing attitudes of the two teaching institutes to the question of the National Board. Br. Grace repeated the Christian Brother objection to the rules of the National Board, i.e. that the Brothers felt restricted by these rules in the promotion of a Catholic spirit in their schools. On the other hand, Br. Townsend asserted that he experienced no difficulty in operating under the Board's rules. Furthermore, he went on to assert that even if Presentation schools were not affiliated to the Board, he would see no reason to make any significant changes.

There is some evidence to suggest that Edmund Rice himself differed from the position taken by the 1836 General Chapter of the Christian Brothers vis à vis the National Board. If this is true then his personal views on the national board question may have
been closer to the position adopted by Br. Townsend and the Presentation schools. Certainly this position concurred with the view of Dr. Murray, Archbishop of Dublin that the national system gave a sufficient degree of freedom to teachers to implement the essentials of a Catholic education.

What concerns us here is not so much the merits of the different positions taken by the Presentation or Christian Brothers but rather the underlying insight the controversy gives us into the mentality of each group. From 1836 onwards the Christian Brothers set about the construction of an independent school system which was certainly an alternative if not in many places a definite opponent to the national system. The rapid expansion of the Christian Brothers was aided by the explosion of vocations to Religious life which occurred in Ireland in the years immediately after the famine. The Presentation Brothers, possibly due to the diocesan status of the institute, remained much smaller and thus could not have sustained such an independent stance. However, the advantages of the Presentation position were many. The Brothers in their affiliation with the National Board developed a tradition of tolerance and co-operation with other agencies in education. The Presentation Institute showed itself capable of adaptation and flexibility. This philosophy of openness, tolerance and collaboration became features of the Presentation Brothers' approach to education and influenced the educational strategy of the Institute throughout its history.

1.6 Educational Philosophy of the Presentation Brothers

The popular image of the Brothers, even to this day, is that of a teaching institute whose main purpose is education and schooling. However, the Brothers themselves have always regarded this as a basic misunderstanding of their way of life. Education and teaching are indeed the works in which the Brothers are engaged. But this work flows from a deeper sense of vocation. Primarily, the Brothers feel called to a Religious way of life.
The early Constitutions of the Brothers clearly set down the priorities. The first priority of the Institute was to be the following of the Religious Life itself. The secondary aim was the instruction of poor boys in Christian doctrine. The first Constitution reads as follows:

The Brothers admitted into this Institute, besides the principal end common to all Religious Institutes, such as particularly attending to the perfecting of themselves in the way of the Lord, must also have in view, what is peculiarly characteristic of this Institute, that is, a most serious application to the instruction of poor boys in the principles of Religion and Christian piety.

The early Brothers were not philosophers or academics. In general, we can say that they did not have a written philosophy of education. The urgency of their educational work among poor children demanded a total commitment of their time, energy and skills. It is clear however, that they were motivated by religious faith and a sense of calling. This Christian vision of life underpinned all their work. When one looks at the background and context of their educational work and then examines how the system developed, it is possible to outline some of the significant formative and philosophical influences on their thought and action. The motivation for their work was certainly religious. It was based on the faith belief that Jesus Christ is present in a special way among the poor. The Brothers also believed that the poor, in virtue of their human dignity as children of God, were entitled to all the benefits of education.

Though the Brothers were involved in general education at an elementary level, religious education was a central feature of their work from the beginning. The Presentation Rule contained 356 Constitutions, only three of which referred directly to general or secular education:

- The education of the children should, as far as possible, be suited to their future prospects in life. – Constitution 13
- The advances of modern education require that secular study be diligently prosecuted by the Brothers, so that their schools may not only keep abreast of the times, but prove models to others. – Constitution 125
• He (the Visitor) should in particular .... see for himself whether the schools are religiously conducted and correspond to the requirements of secular education. – Constitution 125

In the reality of the life of the teaching Brother, there has always been a tension between the duties of his Religious life and those of his teaching life. In theological terms, this mirrors the difficulty of integrating both the contemplative and active aspects of the spiritual life. Despite the theory of the Rule which put the Religious life first, in practice the work of the schools dominated the lives of the early Brothers. This has continued to the present day and debate around this issue continues.

The Institute was founded to serve the poor and this service is certainly provided in many places. With the advent of some private pay schools, however, and the general success of the Brothers’ schools, more and more of the personnel of the Institute found themselves working among the middle or upper middle classes. This created a certain tension which will be analysed in some detail in relation to other issues at a later stage in this study.

Rice and the early Brothers were pragmatists rather than educational theorists and the task of articulating a philosophy of education fell largely to later generations of Brothers. The influences which shaped Edmund Rice and the early Brothers have had a major impact on the life of the Presentation Institute. It is worth recalling that Rice was a wealthy, educated, eighteenth century Catholic lay man. His position was different from that of many of his contemporaries. Firstly, he was well-off when most Catholics were poor. Secondly, he had access to a formal education. As a successful businessman, he was deeply involved in social affairs and works of charity and he read widely in the area of spirituality. He was well-acquainted with the Scriptures and spiritual writings at a time when this was largely confined to the clergy. His spirituality was, however, deeply rooted in eighteenth century Catholicism. In the view of the time, the aim of the Christian life was to save one’s soul and also to help in the salvation of
others. Works of charity were seen as a means of attaining salvation. Even as a young man, and before the death of his wife, Edmund Rice was living a very active Christian life. After the death of his wife, he devoted himself in a deeper way to works of charity. In the context of searching for a new purpose in life, he identified the urgent need for education among poor children.

As a pragmatist and a businessman, he approached this in a very practical way. Secular and vocational subjects played an important role in his schools. But his motivation was deeply religious. From the beginning, religious education was central to the life of the schools. This shaped all aspects of the educational project in which the Brothers were involved. While the motivation of Rice may have come from traditional religious sources, his response was creative and imaginative.

Diverse spiritual influences and his experience of life went to shape the complex character that was Edmund Rice. We have already mentioned the influence of the De La Salle Rule as well as the example of the Presentation Sisters. The Jesuit influence was also strong in Rice's own spirituality. Peter Kenny, the Jesuit founder of Clongowes Wood College was a friend of Edmund. In Catholic Church terms, the Jesuits have traditionally been seen as an élite, intellectual force. They were founded in the context of the Counter-Reformation to promote in a determined way Catholic teaching and doctrine. While Jesuit education concentrated mainly on the upper classes, Edmund Rice’s system of education concentrated on the education of the poor. However, traditional Jesuit virtues such as discipline, dedication to duty, loyalty and intellectual excellence, came gradually to be very strong elements in the Brothers’ schools. Edmund Rice the businessman, also bequeathed to his Brothers a very practical down-to-earth approach to reality. Some have argued that the special teacher-pupil relationship which was fostered in the Brothers’ schools from the beginning owes its origin to the master-apprentice relationship which would have been at work in the trade and business world of Rice’s time.
While a Presentation philosophy of education was not articulated in the early days, we can say in conclusion that there were major theological and philosophical influences which shaped the thought of the founder and the early Brothers. These influences were later evident in the life of the schools and in the educational system which the Brothers evolved.

1.7 Life in Presentation Schools

While Edmund Rice and Michael Augustine Riordan were the major influences in the foundation and development of the Presentation Institute, there were other foundational figures. We will now look at two other Brothers who had a major influence on the development of the Presentation school system.

Brother Paul Townsend was one of the first companions to join Brother Michael Augustine Riordan in 1827. Over the next half century he played a major role in the development of the Presentation Brothers. He pioneered the first two foundations of the Brothers in Kerry, in Killarney and Miltown and on his return to Cork he was responsible for the building of a school at Greenmount. From 1838 onwards he was Superior of Killarney for ten years. In 1848 he was recalled to Cork as Superior of the South Monastery on the death of Brother Michael Augustine Riordan. For the next twenty-three years he was Superior of the Presentation community in Cork.

Brother Townsend was mainly associated with the Lancasterian school in Cork. He developed a reputation as gifted teacher and administrator. The annals of the Institute, as well as some independent accounts written by past-pupils frequently refer to Brother Townsend’s kindness and courtesy. He also had a reputation for being broad-minded and tolerant. This is supported by the fact that children of other denominations attended his school in Miltown, Kerry, in 1844, despite the fact that the town contained a number of other schools catering for various Protestant denominations.
In 1854, he began the building of a school at Greenmount on the south side of Cork city. Originally the area had been known as Gallows Green because of its association with public executions. It was Brother Townsend who renamed the area Greenmount, a name which it has retained to the present day. A special rapport with students, as well as his ability to deal with the civil authorities and respond to the needs of the wider society, are features of Brother Townsend’s approach to education. Brother Townsend made a major contribution to education in Cork and Kerry. He developed a network of Presentation schools which, though faithful to Rice’s vision of the education of the poor, were at the same time able to co-operate with the National Board. All education is ultimately about relationships and the impact of one person upon another. Brother Townsend excelled not just in his skills as an administrator and school builder, but more importantly, in the positive educational effect which his teaching had upon his students. His example and his achievement in this regard influenced subsequent generations of Brothers.

A second pivotal character in the development of the Institute was Brother Patrick Shine (1843-1905). Born in Kerry, he entered the Brothers in 1868. When the Brothers opened an Industrial School at Greenmount Cork, he was posted there. In 1870 the Elementary Education Act had given power to Local Authorities to build or to support industrial schools. The Greenmount Industrial School was the second such school for boys built in Ireland. In 1874, Brother Shine was appointed Superintendent of the school at the young age of thirty-one. He was to prove an effective administrator, noted for his efficiency and hard work. By 1877 Brother Shine had been elected superior of the Brothers in Cork and now resided at the South Monastery, Douglas Street. From that year until his death in 1905, Patrick Shine was to lead the Presentation Brothers, first as local superior and later after pontifical approval, as first superior general. His vision involved an expansion of the Institute and he made a great effort in the recruitment and training of suitable young candidates. In 1878 he posted six Brothers to Birr, Co. Offaly, to establish a new foundation. In the following year a new chapel was
added to the South Monastery. This was to be the first of many building projects in which Brother Shine was involved.

On November 3rd 1879, the Institute opened its first secondary school at No. 13, South Mall, Cork.\(^3\) This followed on the passing of the Intermediate Education Act of 1878. Brother Shine saw the urgency of responding to the needs of the developing Catholic middle classes for the education of their children. From the beginning, this school proved to be a great success. In 1881, it moved to more spacious premises on the Grand Parade and finally, in 1887, it was moved to the Mardyke. At first, this school was known as the Mardyke College, but soon became known as Presentation College. During the following decades Presentation College Cork was to be the model for every subsequent endeavour in secondary education attempted by the Brothers, both at home and overseas.

Brother Shine’s role as founder of the first Presentation secondary school was to have major implications for the Institute. Up to that time the Brothers had been mainly involved in the primary education of the poorer classes. With the opening of Presentation College Cork, a move was made into secondary education. As well as this, the school drew its students from the expanding middle class who saw education as a means of upward social mobility. This inevitably led to an emphasis on successes in examinations, which is a dominant feature of all Presentation secondary schools to the present day. Presentation College, Cork, was also a valuable source of income for the expanding Institute. At this stage, the Brothers were poor and finance from pay schools was often directed towards the poorer schools in which most of the Brothers taught.

Brother Shine was a key figure in the movement towards pontifical approbation described earlier. As superior general from 1889 onwards, he presided over a rapid expansion of the educational work of the Institute. During his time as Superior, foundations were made at Queenstown [(Cobh) (1889)], Kinsale (1891), Carrick-on-Shannon (1893), Letterkenny (1894), Boyle (1897), Enniskillen (1890), Dungannon and
Glasthule (1902). Two further foundations were also made in England at Orpington and Carlisle. His greatest building achievement however, was the building of a central novitiate and generalate at Mount St. Joseph, Blarney Street, Cork. Mount St. Joseph has played a major role in the life of the Presentation Institute ever since. The Presentation Brothers of the twentieth century, both in their network of schools and their general approach to education, owe much to the founding vision of Patrick Shine.

1.8 Outline Growth of the Institute, 1900-1960

In the year 1900, there were 104 Brothers in the Irish Region of the Institute. The Presentation Brothers now had their own superior general and a generalate at Mount St Joseph, Cork. Despite the crisis of 1827 and the poverty and problems of the ensuing decades, the Institute had survived and grown. Rapid growth and expansion in terms of the number of foundations had taken place, particularly between 1889 and 1902. The background culture of the Brothers, was mainly rural and Gaelic. Most came from the Munster counties of Cork, Kerry and Limerick, usually from farming backgrounds.

Given this background and the Catholic Church culture of the time, it is not surprising that the Brothers were theologically and socially conservative. Any form of systematic critical reflection was inhibited and discouraged. There was an urgency about the task of the education of the poor and the Brothers were encouraged to apply themselves diligently to this mission. By the turn of the century the Presentation Brothers were teaching nearly 4,000 thousand pupils in fifteen primary schools. Since the total number in primary education in Ireland at the time was over 600,000, the Presentation Brothers were teaching less than 1% of Irish primary school children. They were teaching 400 students in their Intermediate schools. This was just a little over 1% of the 36,000 students in such schools at the time. Cork City had a particular importance for the Brothers. There the Institute had four schools with over 2,000 pupils. In 1902 the Institute opened its first foundation in Dublin, Presentation College, Glasthule. In the
same year a foundation was made in Dungannon, Co. Tyrone and the Brothers conducted a primary school there.

On the death of Brother Patrick Shine in 1905, Brother Thomas Aloysius O’Rahilly was elected superior general of the Institute. He remained in office until 1925. He had a great interest in Irish language and culture and this helped the Brothers cope with the political changes which took place during the 1916-1922 period. In 1910, the Brothers opened a foundation in Montreal, Canada. Presentation Brothers went there, again to teach poor children and their first pupils were the children of emigrants who were arriving in Canada from many European countries.

Mount St. Joseph was recognised as a teacher training college by the Commissioners in 1908. It was never really successful at this level, and from 1916 onwards those Brothers who were sent for teacher training went to the De La Salle Training College in Waterford. The Rebellion of 1916 and subsequent struggle for independence were to change the course of Irish history. The Brothers, particularly the younger Brothers, were caught up in the events of the time and a new enthusiasm developed for the promotion of the Irish language and culture in the schools. In 1921, a second foundation was made in the Archdiocese of Dublin at Bray Co. Wicklow.

In 1925, Brother Peter Curtin was elected third superior general of the Institute. Three years later, he purchased a house in Douglas, Cork, and established a secondary boarding school for the training of junior candidates to the Institute. At this stage, the authorities within the Institute began to become aware of the importance of qualifications for teaching. From this time onwards it became common practice for the Institute to recruit candidates at a very young age. This is in contrast to the early days of the Brothers when many of the candidates who joined Edmund Rice were mature men.

In 1931, Brother James Angelus Keane was elected superior general. One of his main contributions to the development of the Institute was to establish the norm whereby
almost every Brother was given the opportunity to be professionally trained as a teacher. In 1938, the Brothers opened a primary school in the Turners Cross suburb on the south side of Cork city. A ‘Secondary Top’ was soon provided here also. This new school, Scoil Chriost Rí promoted a Gaelic ethos from the beginning. There was a great emphasis in the curriculum on Irish culture and gaelic games. Chriost Rí students were mostly working class and their parents saw education as a means of upward social mobility.

Up to this time in Cork city, the flag ship of the Institute had been the fee-paying Presentation College. For the first time now one of the Brothers’ non-fee-paying schools began to enjoy a certain prestige. Brother Alphonsus Campbell, the first principal, looking back on the foundation of the school, wrote:

> It is very difficult for anyone who has not been teaching in Scoil Chriost Rí .... to realise in what low estimation as teachers we were held by the people on our advent to Turners Cross. There seemed to be a complete lack of confidence in us among parents who were really interested in the education of their children. This was chiefly due to the fact the Christian Brothers had such excellent secondary schools in the city, and also due to the complete lack of cheap secondary education in all schools for the children of respectable working-class parents. But for some time past, there has been a gradual change of opinion in our favour, as we have shown that type of parent that we too can successfully do what the Christian Brothers have been doing from the beginning.

Scoil Chriost Rí very soon became a very successful primary school, with a reputation for academic and sporting excellence. This was chiefly due to the commitment and dynamism of Brother Alphonsus Campbell and Brother Dermot Kenneally. Brother Kenneally spent almost his entire teaching career in the school.

Throughout the 1940s, the first generation of professionally qualified Brothers came into positions of influence in the Institute. In 1945 a series of educational conferences were held at the Brothers’ house in Douglas, Cork. Educational topics of the day were debated and from these conferences we see emerging evidence of a critical consciousness. In the three years, 1945, 1946 and 1947, the Presentation Brothers
published a Journal called *Timire na Toirbhíre*. Brothers who wrote for this Journal showed a real awareness of educational issues and controversies. There was evidence of a new professional spirit and a willingness to explore new ideas in education.

In 1947, a mission was opened in the West Indies. Beginning in Grenada, the Brothers founded a network of schools in Trinidad, St. Lucia and Barbados. In 1951, the Irish region of the Institute was designated an independent Irish Province, with its own provincial. It was no longer directly administered by the superior general. The first provincial, Brother Albinus O'Donnell, was a very good administrator. In 1952, a secondary school was opened in Birr and in 1960, the 'Secondary Top' which had existed for many years in Scoil Chríost Rí became a full secondary school, known as Coláiste Chríost Rí. This became one of the most important secondary schools run by the Brothers.

Great stress had always been placed on success in examinations in Presentation schools. Achieving high standards in public examinations added to the prestige of a school. As well as this the Brothers of the nineteenth century had always been in debt. Community houses and school buildings were built on borrowed money. After the Powis Report and the payment by results system dating from 1872, the Brothers saw success in examinations as a pathway to ensuring the financial security of their schools. Extra finance was always welcome and as an incentive this added to the natural desire on the part of educators to attain the best possible standards with their students. By the beginning of the twentieth century a tradition which attached great importance to success in public examinations had been firmly established in Presentation schools. Seán Ó Faoláin, the writer, recalls his days as a pupil in Presentation College, Cork, very much in terms of the dominance of the examination system on the life of the school:

*The Pres, in my time, which is now fifty five years ago, was a fake in every respect except two. It provided some sort of religious education and it was a useful cramming factory for the sons of well-heeled parents – clerks, civil servants, lay teachers and the like. In this latter it*
sometimes succeeded to remarkable effect when it got hold of specially bright students.

The prison gates closed on me the first day I started to cram French, Latin and Algebra at breakneck speed, an experience for whose drudgery it is not possible to find adequate language.

I am sure that under a better system the Man could really have made young Latinists of some of us. He had no time. Too many examinations lay ahead, like fences in a four-year race. 46

In the primary schools also examinations were important. This was particularly the case after the introduction of the Primary Certificate Examination in 1929. This examination became compulsory in 1943 and came to dominate the work of the Brothers in the primary schools.

With a gradual improvement in social conditions and living standards, the Brothers became more conscious of the wishes and demands of parents. Parents, anxious to promote the upward mobility of their children attached great importance to examination results. Economic advancement and job security dominated the thinking of parents and pupils in the decades following the establishment of the new Irish State in 1922. Contemporary novelist, John McGahern, was a pupil in the Brothers' school in Carrick-on-Shannon, Co. Leitrim. In a fictional work, which draws heavily on his own experience of school life, he captures admirably the mood of the times:

You had to get high in the Honours to stand a chance in the cut-throat competition for the Scholarships or the E.S.B. or training college or anything. Passing was only good if you had your own money to go to the university and few at the school had that. Most came from small farms in the country on their bicycles, stacked downstairs where they ate their lunches out of paperbags and horseplayed on wet days. They knew too it was get high honours or go to England. The air was tense with their fear through the exam., the folding doors that separated the class-rooms drawn back to make an examination hall. 47

Almost from the beginning lay teachers had been employed in the Brothers' schools. In recent decades with the rapid increase in student numbers, the percentage of lay teachers on staffs has increased dramatically. Throughout their history, the Brothers have generally enjoyed very good relations with their lay teacher colleagues. The Institute
never had a major dispute with a teachers’ union and even in the 1930s some Brothers were members of the primary teachers union, the I.N.T.O. (Irish National Teachers Organisation).

However, until very recent times the position of the lay teacher in a Brothers’ school was a limited one. There was no prospect of promotion to the post of principal, for example, a role which was always held by a Brother. A very good spirit of co-operation between Brothers and lay teachers existed in most Presentation schools and the lay teachers made a great contribution to the success of the schools. Both Brothers and lay teachers developed a strong commitment to the value of classroom teaching. Religious education was central to the schools and most Presentation schools developed a strong extra-curricular tradition, particularly in the area of sport. Some schools also gained a reputation for the teaching of the Irish language and enthusiastically supported and promoted the cultural and linguistic policies of the new Irish State.

The writings of past-pupils are generally positive and the issue of corporal punishment is not a major feature of their reminiscences, as it is perhaps with other recollections of Catholic education, during this period.

By 1960, the Brothers had established a network of schools at primary and second level throughout the country. There were 4,166 pupils in Presentation primary schools and 1,874 pupils in Presentation Secondary Schools in that year.

The year 1960 is a convenient point at which to end this outline of the Institute’s growth. Broadly speaking, we can see three major phases in the evolution of the Institute from its foundation in 1802. The first phase was between 1802 and 1827 when, generally speaking, what we may term a Society of the Presentation, existed. This was the early foundation of Edmund Rice, an Institute of Brothers living the Presentation Rule, who were committed to the education of poor children. After the decision of Brother Michael Augustine Riordan to leave the North Monastery, we can discern a
second phase, between 1827 and 1889. This is what we may term the ‘survival phase’ for the congregation of Presentation Brothers as we know it today. The Institute survived under Brother Riordan’s, and later Brother Townsend’s leadership, as a diocesan Institute, mainly in Cork and Kerry. The third phase would begin with the pontifical approbation of 1889 and the election of Brother Patrick Shine as first superior general. This was the beginning of an expansion and development in the Institute’s membership and its work in education, which continued right down to the 1960s.

Major changes were to take place in the 1960s and 1970s, both in the Catholic Church and in Irish society, which were to have a profound impact on the life and work of the Presentation Brothers. However, the late 1950s and the early years of the 1960s could be termed ‘the calm before the storm’, both in terms of the Religious Life and the educational work of the Presentation Brothers. At the dawn of a new decade in 1960, very few could foresee the extent and dramatic nature of the changes which were about to take place.
References and Notes: Chapter 1


7. Devitt, *op. cit.*, 32.


9. Ibid., 54.


16. It can be argued that Religious life as a movement within the Church was essentially lay in its origins but became clericalised over the centuries.


18. Ibid., 29.


21. It was during the 1790s, that Edmund Rice, the layman became involved in many charitable projects in Waterford to aid the Catholic poor.


23. T. J. Walsh, *Nano Nagle and the Presentation Sisters*, (Published privately 1959), 47.

24. Ibid., XIV.

25. Ibid., XV.


27. Ibid.

28. Ibid., 154.


34. Ibid., 32.


37. Ibid., 14.
38. The Constitutions were revised in 1967, 1975 and 1989. Those referred to here are the pre-1967 Constitutions - based on the original Presentation Rule.

39. Presentation Record, No.10, April 1918, 1.

40. Register of the Presentation Brothers, Generalate, Cork.

41. Census of Ireland, 1901, (Cd 1190), H.c. 1902, CXXIX, 61.

42. Ibid.


45. Akenson, *op. cit.*, 313.


APPENDIX A : CHAPTER 1

SCHOOLS

Douglas Street ................................................. South Monastery N.S., Douglas St., Cork
Lancasterian ...................................................... Lancasterian N.S., Washington St., Cork
Mardyke .................................................................. St. Joseph’s N.S., Mardyke Walk, Cork
Greenmount .......................................................... St. Patrick’s N.S., Greenmount, Cork
Killarney ............................................................. Monastery N.S., Killarney, Co. Kerry
Milltown ............................................................. Monastery N.S., Milltown, Co. Kerry
Industrial .......................................................... St. Joseph’s Industrial School, Greenmount, Cork
Birr .................................................................... Monastery N.S., Birr, Co. Offaly
Western Road ...................................................... Presentation College, Western Road, Cork
Kinsale ............................................................... Monastery N.S., Kinsale, Co. Cork
Cobh .................................................................... Monastery N.S., Cobh, Co. Cork
Carrick ............................................................... Monastery N.S., Carrick-on-Shannon, Co. Leitrim
Letterkenny .......................................................... Monastery N.S., Letterkenny, Co. Donegal
Boyle ................................................................. Monastery N.S., Boyle, Co. Roscommon
Enniskillen .......................................................... Monastery N.S., Enniskillen, Co. Fermanagh
Dungannon .......................................................... Monastery N.S., Dungannon, Co. Tyrone
Glasthule ............................................................. Presentation College, Glasthule, Co. Dublin
Bray ..................................................................... Presentation College, Bray, Co. Wicklow
Turner’s Cross ...................................................... Scoil Chriost Ri, Turner’s Cross, Cork
Douglas ............................................................. Coláiste Mhuire, Douglas Road, Cork, (after 1966)
Bishopstown ........................................................ Coláiste an Spioraid Naoimh, Bishopstown, Cork
Juniorate ............................................................ Coláiste Mhuire, Douglas Road, Cork, (before 1966)
APPENDIX B : CHAPTER 1

SOURCES FOR STATISTICS

A note on the sources for the statistics used in the following appendices:

Most of this data was gathered by the present author as part of a previous study completed in 1990.

A questionnaire was forwarded to each community with the request that it be completed from the Annals and Records of each school. All but two were returned. The figures for enrolment were generally available (though sometimes rounded off to the nearest ten) but information on the composition of the various staffs, prior to 1940, was rather vague. Hence, breakdown of staffs is not attempted for years prior to this date.

The figures provided were then checked against the statistics compiled by the Provincial Superiors since 1951 and against the various Department of Education reports. As a result, the figures for the years later than 1951 are completely reliable.

For 1900 and 1910, it was possible to check the supplied figures against the Census of Ireland Reports of 1901 and 1911 and against Reports of the Commissioners of both National and Intermediate Education.

As the enrolments in secondary schools was published in the various Reports of the Department of Education, the figures for the secondary schools are also reliable.

This leaves the enrolments in the primary schools for 1930 and 1940. Where these were not available, an estimation was attempted on the basis of:

(i) the number of Brothers in the community;
(ii) the recollection of Brothers who taught in the school;
(iii) the Catholic Directory for that particular year.

This latter source was, however, found to be quite unreliable.

The figures for 1990 were taken from the Provincial Directory (1990) of the Irish Province.
APPENDIX C : CHAPTER 1

ENROLMENT IN PRESENTATION SCHOOLS, 1900

Primary Schools

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<tr>
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Totals: 15 schools .................................................. 3916

Intermediate and ‘Superior’ Schools

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Totals: 6 schools .................................................. 400

Overall: 21 schools .................................................. 4316
### APPENDIX D : CHAPTER 1

#### ENROLMENT IN PRESENTATION SCHOOLS, 1910

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Totals: 17 schools ................................................................................................ 3976

**Intermediate and ‘Superior’ Schools**

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</table>

Totals: 8 schools ................................................................. 397

Overall: 25 schools ............................................................. 4373
## APPENDIX E : CHAPTER 1

### ENROLMENT IN PRESENTATION SCHOOLS, 1930

#### Primary Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Pupils</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Douglas Street</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mardyke</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenmount</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Killarney</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milltown</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birr</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Road</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinsale</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cobh</td>
<td>430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrick</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letterkenny</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enniskillen</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dungannon</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glasthule</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bray</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Totals: 16 schools** ................................................................. 4200

#### Secondary Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Pupils</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western Road</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cobh</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enniskillen</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glasthule</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bray</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juniorate</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Totals: 6 schools** ................................................................. 445

**Overall: 22 schools** ............................................................... 4645
APPENDIX F : CHAPTER 1

ESTIMATED STATISTICS FOR PRESENTATION SCHOOLS, 1940

Primary Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Pupils</th>
<th>Lay Teachers</th>
<th>Brothers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Douglas Street</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mardyke</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenmount</td>
<td>578</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Killarney</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milltown</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>*13</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birr</td>
<td>356</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Road</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinsale</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cobh</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrick</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letterkenny</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enniskillen</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dungannon</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glasthule</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bray</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turner’s Cross</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals: 17 schools</td>
<td>4293</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Secondary Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Pupils</th>
<th>Lay Teachers</th>
<th>Brothers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western Road</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cobh</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enniskillen</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glasthule</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bray</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juniorate</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juniorate</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals: 6 schools</td>
<td>615</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall: 23 schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pupils</th>
<th>Lay Teachers</th>
<th>Brothers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4908</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* These 13 teachers were master craftsmen rather than trained teachers and their inclusion distorts the percentage for lay teacher employment.
APPENDIX G: CHAPTER 1
ESTIMATED STATISTICS FOR PRESENTATION SCHOOLS, 1955

Primary Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Pupils</th>
<th>Lay Teachers</th>
<th>Brothers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Douglas Street</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mardyke</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenmount</td>
<td>501</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Killarney</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milltown</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birr</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Road</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinsale</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cobh</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrick</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letterkenny</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enniskillen</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dungannon</td>
<td>383</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glasthule</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bray</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turner’s Cross</td>
<td>610</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals: 17 schools</td>
<td>4728</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(23%) (77%)

Secondary Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Pupils</th>
<th>Lay Teachers</th>
<th>Brothers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western Road</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cobh</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enniskillen</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glasthule</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bray</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrick</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birr</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juniorate</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals: 8 schools</td>
<td>1020</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(47%) (53%)

Overall: 25 schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>5748</th>
<th>54</th>
<th>120</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(31%)</td>
<td>(69%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Two priests, their inclusion raises the percentage lay teacher employment from 45% to 47%.
APPENDIX H : CHAPTER 1

ESTIMATED STATISTICS FOR PRESENTATION SCHOOLS, 1960

Primary Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Pupils</th>
<th>Lay Teachers</th>
<th>Brothers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Douglas Street</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mardyke</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenmount</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Killarney</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milltown</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birr</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Road</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cobh</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinsale</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrick</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letterkenny</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enniskillen</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dungannon</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glasthule</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bray</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turner’s Cross</td>
<td>608</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals: 16 schools</td>
<td>4166</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(28%) (72%)

Secondary Schools

<table>
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<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Pupils</th>
<th>Lay Teachers</th>
<th>Brothers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western Road</td>
<td>517</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cobh</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enniskillen</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glasthule</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bray</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrick</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birr</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turner’s Cross</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milltown</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juniorate</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals: 10 schools</td>
<td>1874</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(56%) (44%)

Overall : 26 schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall: 26 schools</th>
<th>Pupils</th>
<th>Lay Teachers</th>
<th>Brothers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6040</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(40%) (60%)
APPENDIX I : CHAPTER 1  
ESTIMATED STATISTICS FOR PRESENTATION SCHOOLS, 1970

### Primary Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Pupils</th>
<th>Lay Teachers</th>
<th>Brothers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mardyke</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenmount</td>
<td>616</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Killarney</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milltown</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birr</td>
<td>367</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Road</td>
<td>321</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cobh</td>
<td>504</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrick</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letterkenny</td>
<td>364</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enniskillen</td>
<td>502</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dungannon</td>
<td>464</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glasthule</td>
<td>331</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bray</td>
<td>409</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turner’s Cross</td>
<td>1045</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals : 14 schools</td>
<td>5722</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|         |        | (57%)       | (43%)    |

### Secondary Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Pupils</th>
<th>Lay Teachers</th>
<th>Brothers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western Road</td>
<td>373</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cobh</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enniskillen</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glasthule</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bray</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Douglas</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrick</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birr</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turner’s Cross</td>
<td>539</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milltown</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dungannon</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bishopstown</td>
<td>393</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juniorate</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals : 13 schools</td>
<td>3503</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|         |        | (78%)       | (22%)    |

| Overall : 27 schools | 9225 | 239          | 109      |

|         |        | (69%)       | (31%)    |
APPENDIX J : CHAPTER 1
ESTIMATED STATISTICS FOR PRESENTATION SCHOOLS, 1990

Primary Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Pupils</th>
<th>Lay Teachers</th>
<th>Brothers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mardyke</td>
<td>407</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenmount</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Killarney</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milltown</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birr</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pres. Junior</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cobh</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dungannon</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glasthule</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bray</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turner’s Cross</td>
<td>789</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals: 11 schools</td>
<td>2931</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(85%) (15%)

Secondary Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Pupils</th>
<th>Lay Teachers</th>
<th>Brothers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presentation College Cork</td>
<td>652</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coláiste Muire, Cobh*</td>
<td>568</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glasthule</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bray</td>
<td>624</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birr*</td>
<td>851</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turner’s Cross(Coláiste Chríost Rí)</td>
<td>793</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milltown*</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dungannon</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bishopstown(Coláiste Spioraid Naoimh)</td>
<td>675</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals: 9 schools</td>
<td>5106</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(92%) (8%)

Overall: 20 schools

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8037</td>
<td>365</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(90%)</td>
<td>(10%)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* Cobh and Milltown are co-educational voluntary secondary schools. In Cobh, the Brothers share management with the Sisters of Mercy and in Milltown with the Presentation Sisters. there is a number of Sisters on the staffs of both schools. These are included under the figure for ‘Lay Teachers’ giving rise to a slight distortion. Birr is a Community school and there is also a number of Mercy Sisters on the Staff.
CHAPTER 2

THE IMPACT OF CHANGE
ON
THE BROTHERS' WORK IN EDUCATION
2.1 The Meaning and Challenge of Change

We are living in the greatest revolution in history, a huge, spontaneous upheaval of the entire human race. Not a revolution planned and carried out by any particular party, race or nation, but a deep elemental boiling over of all the inner contradictions that have ever been in people, a revolution of the chaotic forces inside everybody. This is not something we have chosen, nor is it anything we are free to avoid.¹

The comment, written in the 1950s by Thomas Merton, an American Cistercian monk and spiritual writer aptly captures the historical sense of the period under review in this chapter. The period 1960–1998 has been one of unprecedented and rapid change in our world. The process of change has deeply influenced and shaped Irish society and the Irish educational system. This chapter has four main purposes, firstly, to examine the general meaning and challenge of change with specific reference to educational change; secondly, to provide a general account of the response of the Irish State and of Irish educationalists to the challenge of change; thirdly, to examine the impact of change within the Catholic Church on the work of Catholic religious teaching institutes; fourthly, to focus specifically on the Presentation Brothers. As a consequence of profound change both in Irish society and in the Catholic Church, the work of the Presentation Brothers will be examined. An attempt will be made to analyse how the Brothers coped with the challenge of change. The relationship of the Brothers with other partners in education will be looked at, along with the crucial issue of recruitment and training.

Change is a complex phenomenon posing many challenges and problems to individuals, corporate bodies and whole societies. While sometimes it is voluntary or sought after, it is often imposed by external factors. All change involves a loss experience and challenges participants to adapt to new reality. While change has always been a feature of the human condition, it is the rapidity of change in our own time that makes the process of coping particularly difficult. Change is a complex reality and we often underestimate it, both in its causes and its consequences. As human knowledge and scientific 'know-how' increase by quantum leaps, the implications for all of human affairs, and especially for the world of education, are immense.
Change can come about as a result of natural events, accidental happenings or intentional reform. It often occurs in response to dissatisfaction with the status quo. At the beginning of a process of change the ultimate meaning of the process may be hidden or unclear. A time of transition is usually a time of confusion, anxiety and a breakdown of the established order of reality. We may underestimate the socio-psychological effect of change on individuals. The analogy of the grieving process which follows a bereavement is often used to illustrate the time and patience which are needed as individuals and institutions come to terms with change. This is a process of involving several distinct, yet often overlapping stages, none of which can be skipped or pre-empted. Fullan quotes Marris’ (1975) analysis of this issue which will be of central relevance as we examine how the Presentation Brothers coped with the challenge of change in Irish education.

No one can resolve the crisis of reintegration on behalf of another. Every attempt to pre-empt conflict, argument, protest, by rational planning, can only be abortive: however reasonable the proposed changes, the process of implementing them must still allow the impulse of rejection to play itself out. When those who have power to manipulate changes act as if they have only to explain, and when their explanations are not at once accepted, shrug off opposition as ignorance or prejudice, they express a profound contempt for the meaning of lives other than their own. For the reformers have already assimilated these changes into their purposes, and worked out a reformulation which makes sense to them, perhaps through months or years of analysis and debate. If they deny others the chance to do the same, they treat them as puppets dangling by the threads of their own conceptions (p.166).²

Social systems provide a framework which helps individuals make sense of their lives when change is perceived as being a threat to the system or to a given set of meanings, then the result is uncertainty, anxiety and ambivalence. This anxiety can give rise to the conservative impulse which resists change. Those attempting to introduce change frequently view this conservative impulse as a negative and inhibiting factor. However, this is not always the case. The conservative response can fulfil a valuable service to the overall social scheme of things. All change is not necessarily progressive and the forces of conservatism fulfil a protective function within the social system. An effective process of change, if it is seen to work, can bring about individual and collective growth and a great sense of achievement. However, there is no growth without pain and pain is often the dominant experience at the beginning of the process of change.
The general problem of the meaning of change can provide a backdrop to an examination of the issue of educational change. Change needs to be viewed from the point of view of meaning and of process. At the level of meaning, there is both the objective meaning of change and the subjective meaning of change. With reference to the Presentation Brothers, it will be shown that the subjective experience of educational change among the Brothers was often very different to the objective norms of change outlined in State planning and policy. It will also be argued that successive leadership teams within the Brothers failed to give sufficient weight to the subjective meaning of change in their attempts to initiate and support a process of educational reform. Administrators relied too heavily on a logical/rational process of explanation. Frequently, these administrators had more exposure to current educational thinking and opportunities for on-going education than the majority of the Brothers at the ‘chalkface’ in the classroom. The goals of educational reform were often seen by administrators as so obviously good and worthy in themselves that all that was required was for these goals to be explained in order that they be enthusiastically adopted by the Brothers. It is sufficient to say here that such a naive, albeit well intentioned approach on the part of leadership often led to confusion, resistance and a lack of shared meaning.

The work of Huberman, Crandall and other researchers has well documented the ‘classroom press’ that daily affects the lives of teachers. This too could be said to describe the Presentation Brothers as a body of teachers. The Brothers generally had a short-term perspective. Their focus was on the day-to-day work of the classroom. The culture of the Brothers did not encourage any kind of critical or philosophical approach to education. The culture of obedience which was such a dominant feature of Religious life up to relatively recent times, did not encourage individual initiative or responsibility and left the Brothers ill-prepared to meet the challenge of rapid change. As with teachers in general, the Brothers’ work often isolated them from other adults. Since about half the Brothers for the period under review were involved in primary education, this was especially the case. Educational interaction with colleagues was often minimal. Indeed, in many schools, fraternisation with lay teachers was discouraged and in some places the Brothers and the lay teachers had different staff rooms. While a certain isolation from other adults in the work situation can be a feature of primary teaching in
general, this was doubly so in the case of the Brothers. Up to the early '80s, it could be argued that the official leadership and policy of the Brothers promoted a monastic style of the Religious life which did not encourage contacts with other adults outside the community. While individual Brothers and indeed some communities would have collectively ignored such strictures, nevertheless the prevailing policy was a major influence on the lives of many Brothers.  

The daily work of the classroom demands huge resources of energy. Teaching can be a tiring and stressful occupation. As the Brothers have aged as a group of teachers, the effects of exhaustion and 'burn out' have become more and more obvious. The ethos of the Brothers would place a high value on the work ethic and the Presentation Brothers as teachers have been dedicated and hard workers. The Brothers have given themselves unstintingly to the traditional work of the classroom. Irish teachers generally have a proud and generous record in the area of extra-curricular activities and the Presentation Brothers were very much part of this tradition. However, youth and enthusiasm are required to sustain such enormous expenditure of energy. The age profile of the Brothers increased rapidly through the '70s and '80s. School work became more complex and demanding. Fewer and older Brothers found themselves faced with heavier workloads. The result has been a tiredness, reflected not just in individual cases, but sometimes on a corporate scale. The result of all these factors has been a suspicion of change and a resistance to change among many Brothers. House (1974) affirms that there are few incentives available to teachers to test the worthwhileness of change.

The personal costs of trying new innovations are often high ... and seldom is there any indication that innovations are worth the investment. Innovations are acts of faith. They require that one believes that they will ultimately bear fruit and be worth the personal investment, often without the hope of an immediate return. Costs are also high. The amount of energy and time required to learn new skills or roles associated with the new innovation is a useful index to the magnitude of resistance (p.73).

This encapsulates the attitude of many Presentation Brothers, particularly those in direct class teaching, to the challenge of change in education over the last forty years. From the 1920s onwards the Brothers had placed a high value on teacher training. Having gone through the process of training, the young Brother was expected to begin his
teaching career and what he had learned in teacher training was expected to last him through the next forty years. This static view of the world and of education made it increasingly difficult for such people to cope with the dynamic and rapid change which has been a feature of Irish education since the 1960s onwards.

At the level of the subjective meaning of change, two forms of non-change can be seen to be operational at both individual and corporate levels. These can be characterised as false clarity without change and painful unclarity without change. False clarity occurs when people believe they have changed but this change remains at a very superficial level. Surface aspects of a new practice may be adopted but deeper change at attitudinal and value levels has not taken place. The introduction of the new curriculum to primary schools in 1971 is a case in point. The curriculum was based on the psychological theories of Piaget, Erikson and others. These placed the child at the centre of the learning process. The child and not the subject became the focus and teachers were encouraged to design strategies to encourage each child to learn and progress at her own rate. The curriculum demanded a great change in teaching, both in terms of content and style. Many Presentation Brothers, along with teachers generally, reacted positively to the introduction of the new curriculum. However, many continued to teach in the ways to which they had been accustomed. Full class teaching rather than groupwork remained the norm. While the new curriculum placed great emphasis on areas such as music, art and crafts and physical education, many Brothers continued to devote an inordinate amount of time to the 3Rs – reading, writing and arithmetic. So while lip service was paid to the new curriculum and many Brothers believed they had changed, this change remained at a very superficial level.

A second form of non-change is characterised as painful unclarity without change. This situation arises when assumptions and goals of educational reformers are not related in any realistic way to the concerns of teachers. The introducers of change may see the broad educational benefits of a certain strategy, while teachers are concerned with how the implementation of this strategy will affect them personally. The introduction of boards of management to secondary schools is a case in point. Boards of management were seen by the Department of Education and the trustees of the schools (mostly Religious Orders) as a move towards more participative and democratic management.
structures. Elected teachers and parents were to have places on the boards, along with nominees of the trustees. The Presentation Brothers began the process of establishing boards in the secondary schools under their trusteeship in 1991. Despite official government and teacher union policy, which approved this move, the reaction of many teachers on the ground was negative. These teachers were suspicious of the role and functions of parents on the boards and it took some years before these fears and misconceptions were overcome.

Teacher ethos can often be conservative and individualistic. Change imposed by outside forces can be resisted or thwarted in a multiplicity of ways. Adaptation to change can be matter of degree. Some individuals or groups may adopt superficial aspects of change or choose to change as little as possible. Fullan cautions against defining or attempting educational change according to the reality of only one group or perspective:

The extent to which proposals for change are defined according to only one person’s or one group’s reality (e.g. the policy-maker’s or administrator’s) is the extent to which they will encounter problems in implementation. This is not to say that subjective realities should define what is to change, but only that there are powerful constraints to change or protections against undesirable or thoughtless change (depending on your viewpoint and the particular change). Ultimately, the transformation of subjective realities is the essence of change.

Educational innovation is multidimensional. New or altered instructional resources, teaching styles or educational theories may be involved in any new strategy or policy. The challenge of change is that real change demands changes in thinking, in belief and in behaviour and practice. The belief and practice angles illustrate the real difficulty of change. Experience teaches and experience changes and if a group is open to only a very narrow range of experiences, then fundamental change becomes very difficult. Two broad approaches to change are evident in much of the literature of educational change, viz. the fidelity perspective and the mutual adaptation or evolutionary perspective. The fidelity approach to change assumes a package of change already developed and complete and asks that it be implemented faithfully according to the intention of the developer. The mutual adaptation approach sees change as a complex mix of the developer’s original proposals along with the decisions and creative input of the ‘users’ of change as they work with policies and programmes. While many set out with the intention of adopting the fidelity approach to change, the mutual adaptation
approach often becomes the norm over time. In the educational work of the Brothers over the last forty years, the mutual adaptation approach has been dominant. From the early Brothers of the last century, the Presentation tradition in education has retained the capacity to adapt to changing demands and circumstances. The size of the Presentation Brothers, as compared to larger teaching Orders, has necessitated constant interaction and accommodation with other constituent groups in the educational process. While there is a strong tradition of independence and individuality in each Presentation school, there is no tradition of the Brothers ‘going it alone’, independent of the concerns and interests of parents, lay teacher colleagues or government policy in education. On the contrary, the Brothers have shown themselves more than willing to respond to the views and wishes of these groups.

As noted earlier, all proposals for change are not necessarily authentic or progressive. The conservative impulse within the teaching profession generally, and within the Presentation Brothers, plays a role here in conserving what is of value in current practice. In group situations, a group may genuinely adopt certain worthwhile goals without realising the implications of what they are adopting. A feature of Catholic Religious Orders in recent years has been the adoption of a ‘Mission Statement’ outlining the general aims or ‘mission’ to which a particular Order is committed. For many Orders founded to educate the poor, a renewed focus on the needs of the poor and marginalised in today’s society has been a prominent feature of their mission statements. The Presentation Brothers adopted their current mission statement at the General Chapter of 1987. It asserts:

We, Presentation Brothers, faithful to the spirit and charism of our Founder, Edmund Ignatius Rice, trusting to God’s providence and relying on the protection of Our Lady, declare our mission to be Christian formation, primarily of youth and in particular of the poor and disadvantaged.

We desire to unite with people of good will to transform the world – by fidelity to Gospel values – and by a serious commitment to the ministry of justice and peace.

Fullan refers to Sarason and Doris’ (1979) observation where ‘a large number of people endorse an innovation because of value agreement without realizing what specific changes might be involved’.10
The Mission Statement adopted by the 1987 Chapter reflected the views or aspirations of the majority of Chapter delegates. It was largely based on a report prepared for the Chapter by a special commission of Brothers who had spent the previous year investigating the needs being addressed by the Brothers in education. This report ‘The Presentation Brothers and the Option for the Poor’ is a clear, incisive and challenging document. It proposed a radical redeployment of the Brothers’ personnel and resources in education in favour of the needs of materially poor young people. The report had a great influence on the thinking of the 1987 Chapter and the formulation of the Mission Statement.11

While the report and the Mission Statement were sincerely adopted by the Chapter delegates, no radical redeployment of personnel and resources took place, as originally proposed, over the next six years. If literally implemented, this strategy would have demanded that the Brothers withdraw from most of their existing schools. The membership were not prepared to accept this, either theoretically or in practice. While significant initiatives have been launched by the Brothers in the area of the education of the poor, there has been no large scale redeployment of personnel or resources. Indeed, it is arguable if such a simplistic course of action would have been progressive in any coherent sense, even from the point of view of the educational needs of deprived and marginalised people. However, it is clear that a certain tension exists between the official mission statement of the Brothers and the reality of current practice. This has surfaced in debate at recent meetings and assemblies of the Brothers. Significantly, the 1993 General Chapter chose to focus more on community rather than on mission, thus sideling at least temporarily, an effective resolution of the issue.

Administrators and leadership within the Brothers, in their enthusiasm for change, have tended at times to ignore the existing realities of the ordinary membership. This has led to a gap in understanding between the leaders and those led, reflected at times in mutual misunderstanding and recrimination.12

In the period under review, certain changes were imposed on the Brothers from without. Change in the world, in Irish society and in the Catholic Church had inevitable consequences for the educational work of the Brothers. Certain other forms of change were initiated from within the Institute, whether from individual leaders or groups of
Brothers. In both instances, however, insufficient attention was paid to the exploration of shared meaning and there was a failure to give due time and weight to the psychological process of coping with change. Educational change incorporates the twin aspects of theories of education and the theories of change. While the Brothers at local and administrative levels, had some familiarity with theories of education, nothing in their culture or training had given them the opportunity for sustained reflection on the theory of change itself. An understanding of the complex social process of change was foreign to the ethos and milieu of pre-Vatican II Religious life. In hindsight, it is clear that so many hazards could have been avoided if the Brothers had some elementary familiarity with theories pertaining to the management of change. However, the social sciences were largely a closed book to the Brothers of forty years ago. To expect them to have acted differently is perhaps to expect people to have a vision which would reach beyond their own time. Such vision is rare and the benefits of hindsight are, of course, luxuries which were not available to those who had to cope with sudden and extensive change.

2.2 An Overview of Change in Irish Education 1958–1998

The year 1958 provides an interesting starting point for this overview of change in Irish society and education. In 1958 Eamon de Valera was still Taoiseach or head of the Irish government. Pius XII was coming to the end of his reign as Pope. Within a relatively short time both would be replaced by men very different in character and vision at the head of their respective institutions. De Valera assumed the figure head role of President of Ireland and was replaced as Taoiseach by Seán Lemass. Lemass was committed to making Ireland a modern industrial economy. With the death of Pius XII, Angelo Roncalli, Patriarch of Venice, was elected to the chair of St. Peter. Even in his choice of name as John XXIII the new Pope indicated a break with tradition. Pope John was responsible for convoking the Second Vatican Council which led to a period of major change and upheaval in the life of the Catholic Church. The initiatives set in train by both men were to have a major impact on Irish society during the ensuing decades.

Coolahan describes the period 1960–1980 as a remarkable one in the history of Irish education. He asserts that the extent and range of the changes during this transitional
epoch were such that they require to be seen against the background of wider social and attitudinal change during the period. Modern Ireland is a relatively new State with a complex past. The intricate nature of the Irish educational system reflects this history. The churches and particularly the Catholic Church have been deeply involved in education. The majority of Irish schools are denominational in character. There are roughly 3,500 national or primary schools, of which 90% are under Catholic control. The Church of Ireland and other Churches also conduct national schools. In recent years there has been a growth in multi-denominational primary schools. However, in terms of percentage of pupils attending such schools, the multi-denominational movement is still minor in national terms. At second level, roughly two-thirds of pupils attend Church run schools. Up to 1964 these secondary schools received no direct State grant for building. This has now been changed with the State paying the bulk of building costs, the site being provided by the Church.

In 1958, the Government issued a White Paper on economic expansion. This led to the First Programme for Economic Development. The programme sought to accelerate the attainment of a modern industrial economy in Ireland. The post-war period had been a time of economic stagnation and high emigration. Lemass sought to change radically the nature and shape of Irish industry. The new programme promoted concepts such as efficiency, competitiveness and quality, both of management and labour. J.J. Lee notes that few of the goals of the programme ‘could be achieved without a transformation of the quality and quantity of education. This in turn had fundamental implications for the nature of society’. As the new decade dawned in 1960, it was becoming increasingly clear to significant figures in government, industry and education that the prosperity of a modern industrial society depended on the availability of an educated and skilled workforce. Since education was seen as the key to progress and economic development, the State was now determined to play a much more active role in educational planning.

From the end of the Second World War, the notion of equality of educational opportunity had been a focus of debate in many European countries. The debate now gained ground in Ireland. Breen et al. note that:

Equality of educational opportunity and increased access to education, together with the proposed move towards a more vocationally orientated system, were presented as being of benefit to the nation as a whole, rather
than any one class: they were part of the policy of economic development and of the "rising tide" which would raise all boats.\footnote{15}

Rapid change throughout Irish society in the 1960s provided the context for what amounted to a sustained public focus on education itself and on debate of educational issues. The advent of television in 1961 and an increasingly questioning media generally contributed to a new climate where educational policies were seen as issues of public interest. The census of 1966 showed an increase in population of 62,000 – the first increase since the famine.

In 1966 the Investment in Education Report was published. It gave immediate impetus to the movement for educational change and is a key document in the history of modern Irish education. The findings of this OECD/Irish Government funded report were striking. The report noted large social class and regional disparities in participation rates in education. It also highlighted the restricted nature of the curriculum on offer in schools, particularly the failure to promote modern languages and the inadequate facilities that existed for the teaching of the sciences. The report was also critical of the failure generally to provide for both aesthetic and practical subjects. In the context of better facilities and wider curricular options, Investment in Education noted that approximately two-thirds of national schools had an enrolment of less than 150 pupils.

In the light of these findings it now became government policy to promote greater participation by as many pupils as possible in second level education. Alongside the effort to increase participation, there was a parallel policy to seek to diminish the academic/technical divide by raising the status of vocational education. In 1967 Donagh O’Malley, Minister for Education, announced the ‘free education’ scheme. Basically the scheme meant that the State would give increased finance to secondary schools, thus allowing them to abolish fees. A free school transport scheme was also introduced. In 1971 a new curriculum for national schools was published. It was radically different both in theory and content from the existing curriculum. The new curriculum was based on the philosophy of child-centred education and was greatly influenced by contemporary educational trends in Britain and the Continent. The teaching profession generally responded with a degree of openness and enthusiasm towards the changes. However, from early in the debate, disturbing questions were raised regarding the
seriousness of the government’s commitment to change. In-service training, finance and the resourcing of change were still inadequately attended to at this stage.

Another major change in Irish education which began in the late 60s and continued through the following three decades has been the decrease in the numbers of Religious Sisters, Brothers and Priests in teaching. The reasons for and effects of this decrease will be discussed in detail later, particularly with reference to the Presentation Brothers. In the context of this present overview of educational change during the period, it is sufficient to note it as a significant feature at national level. The 60s generally began a questioning of the role of the churches in education which has continued to the present time. These decades also saw periods of tension and contestation between diocesan and religious trustees of the schools on the one hand and the teachers unions on the other.

State financing of education increased rapidly, particularly during the 70s, despite times of high inflation and economic recession. In relation to this period, it is worth enquiring if the State received a return on its investment and if the policy goals of the State in education were attained? Breen et al. contend that:

\[
\text{Despite the shift of the financial burden of education on to the State, the degree of control possessed by the State over the system remains limited ... We argue that the State’s lack of control over the system which it funds has been crucial in determining the consequences to which the reforms gave rise.}^{16}
\]

The same authors argue that the innovations of the 60s and 70s have contributed little to the lessening of class disparities in educational outcomes. Up to the end of second level pupils now have the opportunity of educational participation. A different quality of education, however, is available to pupils depending on the financial circumstances of their parents and the social background from whence they come. Achieving equality of access in no way guarantees equality of outcome. Witness the problems of schools in disadvantaged areas compared to schools in middle class areas. Many have noted a further source of educational inequality in the existence of private fee-paying secondary schools. A second major objective of government policy in the 1960s was to promote the vocational schools and a more technical and scientific bias in the educational system. However, most of the growth in enrolments took place in the more ‘academic’ secondary schools with a traditional grammar school type curriculum.
In retrospect, it could be argued that a certain naive optimism permeated the thinking of those responsible for government educational policy in the 60s and 70s. The rapidity of change in society inevitably contributed to a climate where the educational system had to respond quickly. In such a climate a certain inattentiveness to theoretical clarity and detailed planning was inevitable. Drudy and Lynch draw attention to this point:

In his review of the ideational basis of Irish educational policy, O’Sullivan (1989) claims that there never has been an open debate in Ireland about the merits and demerits of different paradigmatic perspectives on education. Irish educational thinking, he says, is fundamentally atheoretical. In the area of public political debate on education, ‘slogans replace principles in that slogans provide a moral loading but they differ from principles because they are not derived from a social theory or vision ....'17

The role of the churches in response to educational reform during this period has been reactive rather than proactive. From the mid 80s onwards innovative thinking on education has come from some sources within the Catholic Church, such as the Conference of Major Religious Superiors (CMRS), now known as the Conference of Religious of Ireland (CORI). The Bishops, however, have generally been conservative and cautious. Their concern has been to maintain the traditional role of the church in education. They have particularly sought to maintain the traditional Irish pattern of church ownership and management of schools, albeit with more participative models of management in recent years. The State, however, is responsible for the bulk of both capital and current expenditure costs in schools, while having to contend with the limited influence of State policies in education alluded to by Breen et al. However, the State also gains from Church involvement in education on both financial and ideological grounds. Secondary school buildings prior to 1964 were built mainly by Religious Orders at no cost to the State. Even with the newer buildings, the State has contributed just 90% of the costs. Drudy and Lynch also draw attention to the financial benefit to the State from the unpaid labour invested by Religious in the past. In ideological terms, Inglis (1987, 156-65) has described the Catholic Church as a ‘civilising’ force in Irish society.

The Church has developed, through the schools, many qualities that are vital for establishing and maintaining political legitimacy, including self-control, orderliness, obedience and discipline.18
A corollary of the decline in the numbers of Religious has been the increasing laicisation of Catholic schools both in terms of management and teaching staffs. Certainly from the mid-80s onwards, with the advent of Boards of Management and the appointment of lay principals, this trend has become evident. The boards have parent and teacher representatives and the majority of Religious Order schools now have lay principals.\(^{19}\)

In summary, it is clear that the past three decades have been a time of enormous and profound change in Irish society and consequently in Irish education. The Ireland of 1998 is not the Ireland of 1958. It is an increasingly sophisticated, well-educated, industrialised and articulate society. The influence of the European Union is very keenly felt in Ireland and there is a rapid transition taking place to a liberal pluralist democracy along Western European lines. The Catholic Church too has lived through a time of immense change. Its role in education in the new pluralist Ireland is questioned and there is indeed within the church, a fundamental debate on what constitutes the nature, purpose and content of Catholic education. We now turn to examine this process of change within the Church over the last forty years. This change has had a major effect upon Catholic teaching Orders such as the Presentation Brothers.

2.3 Change in the Catholic Church and its impact upon the Presentation Brothers during this period

The modern world has been decisively shaped by rapid advances in science and technology. The origins of the scientific revolution in the 16\(^{th}\) century coincided with the Protestant Reformation period in church history and the rise of critical reasoning and scepticism. The Catholic counter-reformation promoted by the Council of Trent was largely an attempt to restore internal church discipline and order in the face of perceived division and disintegration. The mindset of the Post-Tridentine Church generally regarded the modern secular world with suspicion, if not hostility. McBrien summarises the church’s relationship to modernity in the following terms:

Sociologists have described the modernisation process in different ways. Some insist that it happened in spite of, or in the teeth of opposition from, the Church and organised religion generally; others, fewer in
number, argue that Christian faith made the scientific and technological revolutions possible in the first place.\textsuperscript{20}

The church was also aware that material progress was not without ambiguity. Progress itself created new problems and posed ethical challenges which could not be ignored. For example, many workers laboured in appalling conditions in the factories and mills created by the industrial revolution in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century and in the contemporary world the gap between the rich northern hemisphere and the poor southern hemisphere grows with frightening speed.

When the Second Vatican Council opened in 1962 few Catholics could have foreseen the extent and depth of the changes which the Council would bring to the life of the church. In its discipline, teaching and liturgy, the Catholic Church had not changed in the four centuries since the Council of Trent and was generally perceived as a conservative and monolithic institution in antithesis to the spirit and feeling of the modern world. Like any large institution the church found it very difficult to deal proactively with change. This deficiency was reinforced by a theology which firmly postulated a static rather than a dynamic view of revelation, truth and history. The church considered itself the only valid interpreter of divine truth and outside the Church there was no salvation. The life of Catholic Religious Orders was heavily influenced by this theology. The call to the Religious life was a path to attain personal salvation and in the case of the teaching Orders to promote the truths of the Catholic faith among the young. Thus the work of the Presentation Brothers in education was underpinned by an absolutist theology which claimed to be in possession of the fullness of truth.

The Vatican Council inaugurated a new and very different era in Catholic life and theology. Patrick Hannon describes the significance of the Council in the following terms:

The Church is still a community gathered in the faith that Jesus is Lord and by the same token sent to proclaim that Jesus is Lord. But what that means from age to age is progressively disclosed, as the community in fidelity to its tradition engages with the changing times.

The Church’s understanding of itself is therefore always in process. But the process is sometimes punctuated by moments of special significance. The Second Vatican Council was such a moment, for in that event the
Roman Catholic Church engaged self-consciously and deliberately, with the world in which it finds itself now.21

Through the Vatican Council the Church gained a deeper insight into its own nature and also re-defined its stance towards the modern world.

On December 7th., 1965, the Council issued a Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the modern world known as ‘Gaudium et Spes’.22 The Latin title by which the document became commonly known reflected the hopeful and optimistic spirit of the Council. In theological terms the secular world was now seen not with suspicion or hostility but as the locus for the process of grace and salvation. One of the more popular descriptions of the church advanced by the Council was that of the church as the People of God. This model of church placed great emphasis on the common baptism of all members of the church. It emphasised the dignity and call to holiness of each and every Christian. Perhaps for the first time, since the days of the early church, the lay vocation and the vocation to marriage now became the object of serious and positive theological reflection. The pre-conciliar church had an avowedly more hierarchical structure. In this model of church the vocation to the priesthood or religious life was seen as a higher vocation and a greater way of perfection. The clergy and Religious were the élite members of the church and the function of the laity very much a secondary one. The theology of Vatican II was to change all this.

The Council had great difficulty in dealing with Religious life. It did issue a document on this way of life, ‘Perfectae Caritatis’ but the document is of uneven quality. The majority of the Bishops of the Council were chosen from the diocesan priesthood, only a minority were themselves members of Religious Orders. There has been a traditional misunderstanding of the Religious vocation on the part of diocesan priests and bishops. The majority of Religious are women and about one third of the male Religious in the Church are lay Brothers, not ordained clerics. So Religious life, in its origins and essence is a lay vocation in the Church. It belongs to the prophetic dimension rather than the hierarchical aspect of the Church’s life. With the clericalisation of male Religious life over the centuries, the distinctive charism of Religious life as a different rather than a higher response to baptism was often lost. The true theology of Religious life suffered by an attempt to incorporate this way of life into a hierarchical theology.
Vatican II raised serious and challenging questions for Religious on a number of fronts. The Council’s emphasis on the dignity of the laity and of the vocation to marriage threatened some Religious. If their way of life was no longer a higher vocation, what was its raison d’être in the church? Teaching Orders, in particular, had been to the forefront of the church’s evangelisation and missionary efforts. This was based on the premise that it was urgent to proclaim the message of Christ to all peoples in order that they might attain salvation. The Vatican II view of salvation was very different. The Council emphasised the salvific will of God for all peoples but recognised the paths to salvation possible in other religions and for all people of good conscience. For some Religious such a theology undermined the urgency of mission. The challenges posed by the Council to Religious life were, of course, healthy challenges. But it would take the theology of Religious life many decades to come to terms with these questions and to begin to provide adequate responses. In the meantime, a period of confusion ensued.

Great changes took place in Religious life in the years following Vatican II. Some would argue that Religious expended vast amounts of energy debating relatively superficial changes in dress and time-table without attending to more fundamental questions. It was a time of hope for many Religious who had viewed the pre-Vatican II model of religious life as narrow and constrained. Most groups were swept along with the optimistic spirit of the Council. The Presentation Brothers held an extraordinary general chapter in 1967 to deal with matters arising from Vatican II. One delegate, a young Brother at the time, remembers this gathering as a time of great hope and enthusiasm. However, the storm clouds were gathering on the horizon. Large numbers of people began to leave Religious life. The phenomenon appeared at precisely the time when the numbers entering Religious life began to drop dramatically. Thus began what is termed the vocations crisis which has been a major feature of Religious life for the past thirty years. This crisis has been dramatic and extensive posing many problems for Religious life particularly in Western Europe and North America. Some commentators see the crisis as the death of Religious life. Others, particularly those more attentive to the history of this way of life, postulate a transition to a new type of Religious life in the Church.
Many, particularly more conservative Catholics blamed Vatican II for a ‘liberalisation’ of Religious life which would inevitably lead to its demise. There is a danger in this argument, perhaps, of a confusion between *post hoc* and *propter hoc*. Everything that happened to Religious life after the Council cannot be said to be *because* of the Council. It could be argued that the crisis in Religious life would have been even greater had the Council not somehow alerted Religious to read the ‘signs of the times’ and, in the case of apostolic Religious, to respond in new and creative ways to the needs of the contemporary world. The vocations crisis will be dealt with in more detail later. However, it is clear that it has had a major effect on the apostolic viability and effectiveness of teaching institutes, including the Presentation Brothers.

Indeed, the Brothers had particular difficulties to face in the crisis which followed Vatican II. They had little or no formal training in Scripture or theology and had no tradition of critical reflection on the Religious life itself. Allied to this, very few Brothers had any training in the human or social sciences. This left them ill-at-ease in dealing with challenges or criticism and ill-equipped to deal with the rapidity of change in church and society. As well as this, the Presentation Brothers, being largely an Irish institute, could be somewhat limited in their view of things. They lacked the broader perspective sometimes available to international and multi-lingual institutes. The Brothers had also failed to build up an indigenous province of any size overseas. The traditional pattern was that Ireland supplied much of the manpower needs of the overseas regions of the Institute. When the vocations crisis began to seriously affect Ireland from the early 70s onwards, the decline in numbers was not offset by an increase in vocations in the Third World, as happened with many more internationally based institutes. To their credit, a high level of respect and tolerance for the individual has always been part of the culture of the Presentation Brothers and the Brothers have generally maintained very good relations with those who have left the Institute. An association of former members has been in existence since 1974 and quite a few former members of the Institute are still closely associated with the Brothers in their apostolate.

The high level of departure of younger Brothers, allied to the low level of entrants has, however, dramatically changed the age profile of the Presentation Brothers over the last thirty years. The reasons for this situation are varied and wider social and attitudinal
factors must be taken into account as well as change within the Church. One commentator summarises the contemporary situation in the following terms:

A greater emphasis on individual freedom and opportunity, the emancipation of women, a re-evaluation of and emphasis on the dignity of marriage, a sexual ethic that emphasises personal responsibility, multiple career choice for qualified creative people, the increasingly provisional nature of decisions of whatever kind and the possibility of temporary commitment in a variety of apostolic endeavours, may well make a permanent option for poverty, chastity and obedience seem less and less attractive or important.

Moreover, the inevitable internalisation of the prevailing ethic in a consumerist society hardly promotes the values of dedication and self-sacrifice. 26

The momentum of the decline in vocations creates something of a vicious circle from which it is difficult to break out. The decline in numbers and the rising age profile makes it increasingly difficult to attract new members. Those who do join find it more difficult to stay unless the leadership in Religious institutes is deliberately prepared to make what could be termed an option for the future. By this is meant that the function of leadership in Religious Orders is to nurture Religious life into the future. Given the complexity of the present crisis a way forward is only possible if new members are placed in communities and situations which are growth producing and challenging. This demands a careful attention to the formation and accompaniment of new members. Many institutes are not prepared to invest the necessary energy and personnel in this task. Leadership can often be taken up with issues of maintenance and the needs of an ageing group can often in reality take precedence over mission or new life.

Again, to their credit, the Presentation Brothers have attempted to be creative and proactive in this area in recent years. However, the Brothers were starting from a very weak base. By the early 80s, traditional recruitment methods had collapsed. In the previous half-century the usual path to membership of the Institute began at a very young age. In 1928 a juniorate, Coláiste Muire, was established at Douglas, Cork. This was a secondary boarding school for boys who intended to join the Institute on the completion of their Leaving Certificate examination. This began the practice of recruiting members for the Institute at a very young age and most of the present membership would have come through this system. The system was of dubious value from a human and psychological point of view. However, it is important to add that up
to the 60s, boarding school was a very common option for boys from rural areas and that the majority of those who came to the juniorate did not go on to become Brothers. Boys were genuinely free in choosing whether or not to join the Institute and through the juniorate system the Brothers did make a contribution to the education of thousands of young people who would otherwise not have had the benefit of a secondary education.

In the mid-80s, however, the juniorate, by then located at Greenmount, Cork, was closed. The decision to close was taken for both philosophical and practical reasons. It was now recognised that recruiting candidates at too young an age was not the best method of formation. In any case, very few candidates had come from the juniorate since the early seventies.

The Presentation Brothers went through various stages in their response to the vocations crisis. The closure of the juniorate was seen as a defeat for the conservative option which resisted any change but for some years nothing was put in place of the juniorate system. The background and training of the majority of Brothers inhibited a broader perspective on the problem. Most Brothers came from rural and farming backgrounds, mainly from the counties of Munster. Having entered the juniorate at an early age, their perspective on both Church and society tended to be formed by a very similar and narrow set of influences. A tradition of minimal qualifications and the failure to encourage professional development or critical inquiry, left the Brothers in a very weak position in interacting with questioning lay people, particularly the young. As well as this, in the 70s, the nature and profile of those who were actually presenting themselves to Religious institutes began to change dramatically. The majority of candidates now came from urban backgrounds and many were middle class or working class. Age-wise, they were also older and more mature. The Brothers still operating with a rural mind set and accustomed to dealing with young boys, found it difficult to adapt to this new brand of candidate. The integration of new members coming from today’s pluralist society into the world of the Presentation Brothers continues to pose problems.

Throughout the 70s and early 80s, the thinking of most Brothers on the vocations crisis was rather limited. Many were in denial and chose to ignore the reality all around them. Even those who tried to come to grips with the problem were concerned mainly with recruiting new members to replace Brothers retiring from the schools._staffing the
schools, in the face of a perceived secularist threat was the ultimate value with many Brothers. Beyond this, very little attention was paid as to why vocations were needed or the type of training appropriate to ministry in the modern world. However, this strategy was inevitably doomed to failure and by the end of the 70s, morale was very low, particularly as regards vocations. With the election of a new Superior General and council in 1981, a new spirit took hold and a concerted effort was made to help the Brothers to face core issues of identity and mission which were fundamental to the vocations issues. Much progress was made in raising awareness and in approaching recruitment and formation in a creative fashion throughout the 80s. Yet even as late as 1990, a motion was placed before the Provincial Chapter calling for a return to the 'traditional method' of recruiting and training Presentation Brothers. It was defeated.

Throughout this period of disintegration within and challenge from without, most Brothers still retained a strong belief in and loyalty to the apostolate of classroom teaching. Many theologians of Religious life at this time were advocating that Religious should respond to new and more urgent apostolic needs. Teaching institutes, in particular, were challenged by the abundance of suitably qualified lay people, some of whom found it difficult to gain employment. Most older Presentation Brothers were unwilling or unable to move from classroom teaching. Some younger or more progressive members were frustrated at this inability to achieve significant movement. Again, official policy from the authorities within the Institute was ambiguous. The strategy seemed to be to encourage new apostolic initiatives while at the same time holding on to the schools. The 'schools' debate, however, failed to focus critically on what was actually happening in Religious run schools. Some of those committed to the school apostolate tended to lack creativity in their approach to Catholic education. O'Brien describes the situation in the following terms:

Most Catholic schools simply fitted into the State's view of what the school and the curriculum should be. Increasingly, that view is defined by technological goals defined in function of the economic structures of an advanced capitalist economy, without reference to moral principles, social justice or the spiritual dimension of the human person.

... When it came to the real agenda, the values of the market, competitiveness, individual advancement, material success and class distinction, were tacitly accepted and solidly reinforced, almost without reference to any gospel-based ethic.29
2.4 The Relationship of the Brothers with other Partners in Education

The term partners in education is a relatively recent term in educational thinking and language. The term arises from a theory of education where parents, teachers, school trustees and management are seen as being in a partnership aimed at the educational good of the student. The Constitution of Ireland (1937) recognises the pre-eminent role of parents as the primary educators. Only in recent years, however, have structures been put in place to give real power to parents in education. The establishment of a National Parents Council, the election of parents to school boards and the setting up of parents associations in many schools have been the visible manifestations of increased parental involvement in the educational process. Parents increasingly have a voice which is listened to, however, real parent power in education is still in its infancy.

In partnership theory, parents, teachers and management are seen to have distinct but overlapping interests and all constituent groups need to support each other so as to improve and enhance the quality of education available to the student. Teacher unions have a long tradition in Irish education and wield great influence on contemporary educational policy. Since the foundation of an independent Irish state, the government, through the Department of Education, has determined the school curriculum and the examination system, while leaving issues of educational philosophy and school ethos to the various trustee and management bodies, largely the churches.

The relationship of the Brothers with the Department of Education has generally been docile and non-contentious. The Brothers were happy to implement government policy on curricular matters and the Brothers made no corporate contribution to any debate on curriculum reform. Examinations have always been important in Presentation schools, particularly in the secondary schools. Success at examinations was seen as adding to school prestige and as meeting one of the central concerns of parents. Generally, the Brothers' schools have achieved excellent examination results and at this level would be known as 'good' schools where a strong work ethic prevails. In the primary sector, the department of education inspectorate plays a more prominent role and schools and individual teachers are the recipients of regular visits from inspectors. Again, inspectors' reports are generally very laudatory towards the Brothers' work and
particular local issues aside, no evidence exists of any major tension between the Brothers and the Department of Education.

Debates concerning co-education, community schools and school rationalisation policy will be referred to later. During the ‘60s and ‘70s, as the State’s interest in educational policy and planning increased, some Brothers became convinced of a ‘secularist threat’ to Religious schools. Tension existed at times with certain principals around local situations, but generally the Brothers had a very good working relationship with the Department of Education. Frequently, the Brothers were willing and uncritical agents of government educational policy, sometimes to the actual detriment of the foundational Religious ethos of the schools.

The Presentation Brothers have never had a major dispute with a teachers’ union. Many Brothers were members of the primary teachers’ union – the Irish National Teachers Organisation (INTO). Religious were barred by union policy from membership of the secondary union – the Association of Secondary Teachers of Ireland (ASTI). At local level in the schools, relationships between the Brothers and lay teacher colleagues were very good. Lay teachers have always played a major role in the curricular and extra-curricular life of Presentation schools. As freedom within the Brothers’ life increased following Vatican II, individual Brothers developed increased working and social relationships with a wide variety of lay teacher colleagues. In this area, the Brothers have always prided themselves on cultivating relationships of equality and co-operation.

The relationship of the Brothers with parents has been more complex. As with most teachers of their generation and training, many Presentation Brothers have viewed parental involvement in schools with suspicion. In the past, teacher/parent contact was sometimes fraught with tension and often associated with incidents of dispute and conflict. Up to the 1970s, parents rarely visited schools and regular parent/teacher meetings are a relatively new phenomenon. Many teachers feel threatened by increased parental power and in this regard the Brothers are no different. Changing attitudes is a slow process and while the Brothers have made much progress in this regard in recent years, some residue of older attitudes still persists. It should be noted that individual Brothers have done pioneering work with parents and were in this field long before it became popular educational practice.
The official policy of the Institute, in line with the Vatican II document on education, would affirm the pre-eminence of the parental role in education, yet this has often not translated into practice on the ground in the schools. The issues of parent education and parental empowerment are tackled in a haphazard and sporadic way in Presentation schools. The work of the Christian Formation Resource Centre (CFRC), in which the Brothers played a major role, has been innovative and pro-active. CFRC concentrated mainly on the professional development of teachers and members of boards of management. The vast field of parent education in general, however, is not being dealt with in a sufficiently systematic way in Presentation schools.

Since 1975, the Presentation Brothers have been involved in two co-educational secondary schools, Coláiste Muire in Cobh, Co. Cork, and Meánscoil na Toirbhíre, Milltown, Co. Kerry. In Cobh, the Brothers are joint trustees of the school with the Mercy Sisters, while in Milltown, trusteeship is shared with the Presentation Sisters. Since 1979, the Brothers, along with the Mercy Sisters and the Co. Offaly Vocational Education Committee, are joint trustees of St. Brendan’s Community School, Birr. Br. Denis Minehane, a Presentation Brother, was appointed principal of this large school, a post which he gained as a result of open competition and interview.

It is significant that the Presentation Brothers were prepared to facilitate the evolution of co-educational schools in Milltown, Cobh, Birr and Dungannon. Since some of these initiatives were taken over thirty years ago, this is not a recent policy. Larger teaching institutes, like the Irish Christian Brothers, would have been opposed to co-education up to more recent times. Once again, this highlights the pragmatic aspect of the Presentation tradition in adapting to various local situations and needs. As well as this, the Birr school is not a voluntary Catholic secondary school, but rather a community school, thus showing the Brothers’ willingness to teach in schools other than the traditional type of Presentation school.

These co-educational schools apart, most Presentation schools were and still are, boys’ schools. The traditional image of a ‘Brothers’ school’ in Ireland tends to come from the schools of the Christian Brothers. Other teaching institutes of Brothers such as De La Salle, Marist, Presentation, tend in common discourse to be all put together under the
heading of the ‘the Christian Brothers’ or ‘the Brothers’ schools’. In one sense, this is understandable since, due to the rapid expansion of the Christian Brothers in the late 19th century, there was hardly a town in Ireland of any size where they did not found a school. However, while certain features may be held in common, it will be argued that the Presentation schools have certain features of a positive and distinctive nature, particularly in the manner of how the Brothers related to students. The Presentation Brothers prided themselves on cultivating good relations with students. However, the schools were thoroughly male institutions. Only the last ten years have large numbers of women teachers been employed in Presentation schools, particularly in the primary schools. Success in examinations, competitive sports, especially team games, were dominant features of school life. Discipline and ‘manliness’ were important qualities and there was often a neglect of the feminine, the intuitive and the aesthetic in this form of education.

Relations between Brothers and students were generally good and parents prided themselves on sending their sons to a Brothers’ school. However, the shadow side of the tradition is to be found in the excessive use of corporal punishment by some individual Brothers. This, along with society’s recent coming to terms with child sexual abuse in educational institutions in the past, constitute two sources of pain and hurt. However limited the instances of this behaviour, there is no doubt that great damage was done to certain pupils. Happily the vast majority have positive memories as evidenced in the writings of past pupils. For the past five years the Presentation Brothers have put in place comprehensive child protection policies and structures in all their schools and projects.

2.5 Training and Professional Development in the Brothers

When Br. James Angelus Keane was elected as superior general of the Presentation Brothers in 1931, he set about ensuring that every Brother would have the opportunity to do professional teacher training. Up to this time, the opportunity to go to teacher training college depended on the whim of the superiors and if a Brother could be ‘spared’ from the schools. The first generation of Brothers to take university degrees on a large scale came to prominence in the schools in the late ‘40s and early ‘50s.
By 1960, the traditional formation and training process pursued by most Presentation Brothers was as follows: The Brother entered novitiate at a very young age, often only sixteen, having come through the secondary school juniorate system. The novitiate consisted of two years of study and formation under a novice master at Mount Saint Joseph, Cork. The quality of the novitiate process often depended on the personality of the novice-master. Many Brothers look back on their novitiate days with mixed feelings. The style of life was monastic and discipline was very rigid. During the decade of the 60s, vocations were still high and large groups of novices were often treated more like primary school children than like adolescents or young adults. Novices were sometimes ‘sent home’ for minor infringements of the rules. The course content of the novitiate was of uneven quality. There was no systematic or critical study of theology, scripture or philosophy. Courses were rudimentary but those who survived this régime did learn a certain discipline of life, particularly in the practice of prayer and meditation.

The novitiate was intended to be a time of solitude, a ‘desert experience’, during which the novices were separated from the world. From a spiritual point of view, this might have been something positive as one part of a wider formation process. However, it seemed to constitute an end in itself and in over-emphasising the minutiae of rules to the point of banality, the overall purpose of formation was lost. Some groups of novices came to Mount Saint Joseph only having completed their Intermediate Certificate. This meant that the secondary school Leaving Certificate programme and examination had to be completed during the second year of novitiate. Thus young novices were forced to straddle the sometimes competing demands of secular and religious formation. One Brother, a novice at the time, remembers trying to write essays on current affairs topics as part of the Leaving Certificate English programme at a time when newspapers and radios were banned from the novitiate!

At the end of the novitiate, the young Brother took temporary vows which he renewed each year until the time of final profession, between three and five years later. The choice in terms of career path was now three-fold. Firstly, he could be sent for a year or two to teach as an untrained assistant in one of the Cork city primary schools. Most Brothers spent some years in this manner. Then the superiors decided to send the young
Brother either to teacher training college or to University. Those sent to teacher training college were destined for primary teaching, while those sent to university were expected to take a basic degree and a higher diploma in education in order to qualify to teach in a secondary school. The individual Brother had no choice in this matter. Obedience was the order of the day. Those going for primary teaching spent two years at the De La Salle Teacher Training College in Waterford, while those going to university attended University College Cork, while still residing at Mount Saint Joseph. Brothers going to Waterford at least had the opportunity to widen their horizons a little by leaving Mount Saint Joseph and Cork. During novitiate or as young temporary professed, the Brothers had very little contact with the outside world and many Brothers recall a gap of five years before they had their first holiday at home with their own families. While formation began to change radically in the mid '70s, the above was certainly the norm in the '50s and '60s. At both a spiritual and a human level, it ill-prepared young men for ministry in the modern world. It is worth recalling that Brothers trained under this system were to become the educational leaders of the '80s and '90s. Nothing in their early training had prepared them for the challenge of rapid change and in the light of where they were coming from, it is to their credit that they coped so well.

Community was a strong element of the Presentation formation process and community still remains a strong value among the Brothers and in Presentation schools. Large groups of young people thrown together in the narrow confines of pre-Vatican II novitiate life had to learn to pull together. People survived because of the friendship, the mutual support and the camaraderie. There is no doubt that such a shared background and training, despite its drawbacks, has contributed to the esprit de corps of the Presentation Brothers. However, the traditional training, despite its strengths, did damage as well, particularly to those of a more sensitive, creative or independent character. Service to the Institute, service to the Church were the ultimate aims and the dignity and rights of the person were often not recognised. Personal choice or freedom was very limited. Examples abound of young Brothers with an interest in arts forced to do science degrees (and vice-versa) often with disastrous consequences.

There is a long tradition of primary teaching in the Presentation Brothers. The early Brothers were involved in primary schools from the beginning and this tradition
continues to the present day. Until its closure in 1971, Presentation Brothers attended the De La Salle Teacher Training College in Waterford. This was a small college and the student body initially included both religious Brothers and male lay students. The student Brothers were drawn from the various teaching brotherhoods in Ireland with the exception of the Christian Brothers, who had their own training college at Marino in Dublin. The practice of spending a year or two as untrained assistants in Cork schools was a plus for the Presentation Brothers when they began formal teacher training in Waterford. They acquired a reputation for competence and efficiency in teaching and the records of the College attest to the high academic record of the Presentation Brothers in Waterford over four decades. However, De La Salle Training College closed in 1971 and afterwards Presentation Brothers intending for primary teaching went to the Christian Brothers College in Marino.

By the ‘70s, a number of factors combined to reduce greatly the number of Presentation student Brothers going for teacher training. Firstly, the entry qualifications for training rose to such an extent that it became considerably easier to enter an arts course at University. Secondly, as vocations began to plummet, the authorities within the Brothers directed more young Brothers into secondary teaching. Indeed, for some years, the policy had been to qualify Brothers in science teaching and the overseas missions had claimed some of the more talented younger Brothers. Primary teaching was attracting fewer men in general, let alone fewer Brothers, and was coming to be perceived as a profession for women. The last Brother to qualify as a primary teacher graduated in 1979. With retirements, departure and the drift into secondary schools, only a handful of Brothers in the Irish Region now remain in full-time primary teaching. The Brothers continue to serve on boards of management, however, and are trustees for a number of large schools.

Brothers who attended university usually completed a primary degree in arts or sciences along with a higher diploma in education. Many of these were involved in teaching and doing extra-curricular work in the schools along with being full-time students. The policy of the authorities was for the Brothers at primary or second-level to secure minimal qualifications and then to get on with the work of the schools. There was no encouragement to pursue higher degrees and only a very few ever got the opportunity to
do any kind of postgraduate work. Indeed, one provincial instructed a number of Brothers pursuing honours degrees to switch to pass courses in order to complete their studies more quickly.

Throughout the 1950s, Irish religious teaching Orders secured some of the brightest and most talented young people of their generation. Large numbers of intellectually gifted people still continued to join up to the early ‘70s. In many respects, the system failed to develop to the full potential of these young people. Their independence, creativity and confidence was often damaged. In particular, the Presentation Brothers were very limited in their understanding of, or commitment to professional development. For a curious combination of reasons there was what amounted to an anti-intellectual tradition within the Brothers. Minimal qualifications were secured mainly to satisfy government requirements for payment of teaching salary. Beyond this, anyone interested in pursuing higher studies was often perceived as ‘getting beyond himself’. Teaching in the schools was everything. There was no tradition of research and no attempt to look at education in its broader context. Among some of the older Brothers in particular, qualifications were seen as amounting almost to an ‘occasion of sin’. The more qualifications one achieved, the more pride could enter the picture and the greater the chance a young Brother would leave the Order and go for the priesthood. In the context of the time, it was possible for such a notion to flourish, though it betrayed a basic misunderstanding of the Brother’s vocation.

The Brothers too had a very provincial attitude towards professional development. Brothers either attended University College Cork or the De La Salle College, Waterford. The idea of studying at university in Dublin or pursuing specialised studies abroad was practically unheard of before the mid ‘70s. The first Presentation Brother graduated from Trinity College Dublin in 1979.

With the exception of summer courses there was very little available by way of in-service training until recent years. All this added to the stress and lack of preparedness of the Brothers in dealing with the challenge of change.

Not until the election of Br. Jerome Kelly as Superior General in 1981 did the Brothers take a serious approach to the challenge of change and the need for on-going
professional development. In 1986, Brother Kelly and his leadership team organised a three-week international conference for principals. The effects of this conference on the educational work of the Brothers were far-reaching, and will be discussed in subsequent chapters. During Br. Kelly’s term of office it also became common for Brothers to take sabbaticals from teaching. While many of the courses pursued by the Brothers who took sabbaticals concerned personal renewal and development, nevertheless, there was a positive spin-off when they returned to the schools renewed and with a new perspective on education.

2.6 Presentation Involvement in Irish Education
1995: Outline and Statistics

In 1995, there were eight primary schools in the Presentation network. Five of these are parish schools and the remaining three Cork city schools are under the trusteeship of the Brothers. Nine Presentation Brothers were involved in full-time primary school teaching, three of them as principals. A number of ‘retired’ Brothers also did some part-time teaching in the schools and contributed generously of their time in a supportive capacity.

The Brothers are also involved in eight second-level schools. Seven of these are voluntary Catholic secondary schools and the eighth is a community school. Three of these schools are co-educational.

Twenty Presentation Brothers taught at second-level, four of them acting as school principals. Again, a number of retired Brothers contributed in a voluntary capacity to the work of the schools through remedial teaching, secretarial work and extra-curricular work.

The following table illustrates the statistics for the schools in 1995:
### Primary Schools

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<th>Pupils</th>
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<th>Brothers</th>
<th>Sisters</th>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(93%)</td>
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<td>(7%)</td>
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### Secondary Schools

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<th>Brothers</th>
<th>Sisters</th>
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<td>Col. Chríst Ri (Turners Cross)</td>
<td>812</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Birr</td>
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<td>47</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>4878</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(89%)</td>
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<td>(7%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overall 16 schools</td>
<td>7718</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(c90%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(c7%)</td>
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Comparison between the Statistics for Presentation Schools 1960 and 1995

### Primary schools

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<th>Pupils</th>
<th>Lay Teachers</th>
<th>Brothers</th>
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<td>16</td>
<td>4166</td>
<td>30 (28%)</td>
<td>79 (72%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2840</td>
<td>113 (93%)</td>
<td>9 (7%)</td>
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### Secondary schools

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<td>1874</td>
<td>48 (56%)</td>
<td>37 (44%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4878</td>
<td>268 (89%)</td>
<td>20 (7%)</td>
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### Totals

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<th>Pupils</th>
<th>Lay Teachers</th>
<th>Brothers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>6040</td>
<td>78 (40%)</td>
<td>116 (60%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7718</td>
<td>381 (90%)</td>
<td>29 (7%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Allowing for the fact that the Brothers have continued to staff overseas missions, and that some Brothers are involved in educational projects outside the mainline schools system, nevertheless the statistics are dramatic. The overall number of Brothers in the school apostolate fell from 116 in 1960 to 29 in 1995. The fall was particularly sharp in the primary sector from 79 to 9. In the secondary schools, the reduction in the number of Brothers was less dramatic from 37 to 20. Nevertheless, with the increase in student population during the period and the consequent increase in the number of teachers, the number of Brothers as a percentage of overall staff in the secondary schools fell from 44% to 7%. Combining both primary and secondary sectors, we see that the Brothers constituted 60% of staff numbers in 1960, whereas by 1995 this had fallen to 7%. Lay teachers now constituted over 90% of staff in Presentation schools.  

The figures in themselves highlight the impact of change on the Brothers’ work in education during the period under review. In the following chapters, we will examine further the implications of this changed reality for the Brothers’ mission now and in the future.
References and Notes: Chapter 2

3. The Presentation Brothers, in common with other teaching groups would share a certain scepticism towards grandiose plans designed by those perceived to be far from the ‘chalkface’ of the classroom.
4. Throughout the decades of the eighties and nineties a certain division developed within the Presentation Brothers between Brothers deeply committed to continuing in the traditional classroom apostolate and those who left the schools to explore other educational initiatives.
5. The tradition and folklore of the Brothers records a wide variety of social and cultural involvement with the communities which they served. It seems that this would have been more the case in communities located in rural Irish towns. Geographical distance from Cork and the personality of the local superior also seem to have been factors in how seriously edicts from the Brothers' generalate at Mount St. Joseph were implemented.
6. Increased illness and breakdown have affected those in the middle-age bracket who carry a workload which has increased in volume and complexity.
8. In the case of two Presentation secondary schools, the staffs, predominantly lay teachers, initially argued for the retention of the existing management structure of a Brother principal who also acted as school manager.
10. Ibid., 44.
12. This issue surfaced at the Provincial Chapter of 1996. It is, perhaps, an inevitable aspect of the burden of leadership in Religious life in a time of rapid change.


16. Ibid., 123, 124.


19. In 1998, only one of the eight second level schools under the trusteeship of the Presentation Brothers has a Brother principal. Similarly, only one of the eight primary schools has a Brother as head.


22. ‘Joy and Hope’. The document is still known by its Latin title.


24. The Irish Christian Brothers, in contrast, had been notably successful in this regard, particularly in Australia, the United States and India.

25. In the last ten years, the Presentation Brothers are attracting an increasing number of vocations in Ghana, West Africa. A new novitiate named ‘Mount Saint Joseph’ has been opened. From the point of view of congregational membership, it is a sign of hope for the future.


27. Br. Andrew Hickey who has worked as novice director for the period 1986–1998, sees this as a critical challenge for the Brothers.
28. The Presentation tradition of a strong emphasis on the local community contributed towards a situation where Brothers did not think in Congregational terms. As long as there was a number of Brothers in their own community or school, they did not concern themselves with the broader problem.


30. Some Brothers entered the Congregation at an older age. Even those in their twenties were termed ‘late vocations’. In the period under review they would constitute a minority of entrants. By contrast, in the early years of the Brothers, nearly all those who joined Edmund Rice were mature men with experience of the world.

31. Examples of this abound in the folklore and humour of the Institute.

32. The composition for school staffs in 1995 indicates the Brothers constitute 7% and lay teachers c.90%. The remaining 3% is accounted for by Religious Sisters. In Cobh, the Brothers are joint trustees of Coláiste Muire with the Mercy Sisters. In Meánscoil na Toirbhíre, Milltown, the Brothers share trusteeship with the Presentation Sisters. A number of Mercy Sisters also teach on the staff of St. Brendan’s Community School, Birr.
CHAPTER 3

THE PRESENTATION BROTHERS

AND

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
3.1 Religion, Education and Religious Education

Religious Education features on the curriculum of all Presentation Brother schools. At the primary level it involves 30-40 minutes each day of “religion class” as well as much extra time given to the preparation of children for the sacraments of Holy Communion and Confirmation. Since the Irish primary school curriculum, at least in aspiration, purports to be pupil-centred and integrated, it is contended that religion should permeate all aspects of the curriculum and school life. Comment will be made later on changing perceptions regarding the role of religion in education since the new curriculum was introduced to schools in the early 1970s. At second level, given the pressure of the State examination system, the curriculum in the Brothers school is very subject centred. Religious Education is presently a ‘non-exam’ subject, though moves are pending to change this status. However, religious education is allotted three classes per week on the timetable of most schools.

At present, the term “religious education” is in vogue to describe the specifically religious component of the curriculum of the schools. This term is of relatively recent vintage, however, and is still not universally used in common parlance. Other descriptions of the process still abound – religious knowledge, religious instruction, Christian doctrine and catechism, are terms that are frequently employed in this regard. Each term has its own adherents and, indeed, its own strengths or deficiencies from a descriptive point of view. Put in a certain order, the various terms may even indicate a pattern in the evolution of religion and perspectives on religion in Presentation schools. However, the lack of an agreed and universally accepted term to describe the direct, specific and intentionally religious component of the curriculum points to a deeper issue. Since language is both revealing and limiting, a confusion in language or description may indicate an underlying lack of clarity regarding process and objectives. In the matter of religious education, this problem is far wider than the Presentation Brothers and their associates. Nevertheless, for the purposes of this study it will be useful to begin with defining some core terms and then exploring Presentation perspectives on them.

Groome defines religion as “the human quest for the transcendent in which one’s relationship with an ultimate ground of being is brought to consciousness and somehow given expression”. For the Christian, religion is about the journey to God, source of
ultimate meaning, happiness and fulfilment. Christianity is a revealed religion. Christian faith believes that God entered human history in the person of Jesus Christ. The life and teaching, the death and resurrection of Jesus are the critical reference points in binding humanity back to God. Jesus came with a mission to reveal to humanity the Father’s message of love. He founded a community of believers, the church, which by the power of the Holy Spirit continues through history building the Kingdom of justice, love and peace of which Jesus spoke. Christians believe that Jesus rose from the dead and is alive in time and eternity, bringing about salvation and redemption, the triumph of life and good, over death and evil. For many ‘cradle Catholics’, a superficial familiarity with this teaching since childhood, often dulls them to the breath-taking and extraordinary radical claims of Catholic Christian faith. If these claims are true, and for the believer they are, then they must command one’s best attention. Christian faith accepted and internalised has a total command of one’s life. It is worth the pouring out of one’s life. This vision of faith and life has been at the root of the teaching vocation of the Presentation Brothers. The Gospel which Jesus proclaimed has always been received by the church in not only a personal but also a social and communitarian sense. Jesus’ instruction “Go, teach all nations”, echoes down through the centuries: The Good News is meant to be shared with all people and so, from the beginning the church has been both a teaching community and a missionary community. It is against this background then that key terms can be defined.

The first task of the church is evangelisation. Literally, this means to preach the gospel and to lead unbelievers to an initial act of faith. Evangelisation is a permanent feature of the church’s task. Following the initial stage of evangelisation the next teaching task of the church is catechesis. From this comes catechetics – a term often used in Catholic school circles. Catechesis aims at helping believers towards a greater depth and maturity in their faith. It may include instruction since a necessary component of the deepening of faith includes the intellectual or knowledge level. However, catechesis aims not just for an increase in knowledge but also for a better quality of faith.

Of the terms currently used to describe religion class in Presentation schools ‘catechism’ and ‘Christian doctrine’ have a long history. Along with ‘religious knowledge’ and ‘religious instruction’ they perceive the religion class largely in terms of imparting instruction, knowledge or doctrine. Such would have been the emphasis in these classes
at least until the post-Vatican II period. After the Council, new developments in catechetics led to initiatives in catechesis from life experience. In this approach emphasis was placed on the life experiences, views and feelings of the pupils as starting points for a religious dialogue. Though commanding some merit if used in a balanced way, this approach to catechetics was open to abuse. Over reliance on catechesis from experience has often led to a lack of direction in religion classes allied to a failure to deal with the content, tradition and doctrine of Christian faith in a disciplined and intellectually coherent way. Whatever its merits or otherwise, religious education is now the term most commonly used to describe the specifically religious part of the curriculum in Presentation Brother schools. That it has gained currency as a descriptive term is probably because of the impact of developments in catechesis and, more broadly speaking, in education in general. Religious education is seen to be a more comprehensive term than religious instruction or religious knowledge. It can be described as:

a deliberate attending to the transcendent dimension of life by which a conscious relationship to an ultimate ground of being is promoted and enabled to come to expression.... Religious education is a rich term. By its adjective it points to its specificity and by its noun it retains its commonality with all education, an important bond to maintain.7

This definition is a helpful starting point. Further clarity and elucidation are necessary, however, when dealing specifically with Christian religious education. Still further, when dealing with the involvement of the Presentation Brothers in the process, it is clear that religious education finds its context, meaning and purpose within the Catholic Christian faith community and the Edmund Rice tradition. In this context religious education is no neutral programme of religious studies. It is an activity which flows from profound faith conviction. It is a sharing and an unfolding of the Good News in the lives of pupils and it leads to Christian living and social action. Nichols offers this caution:

The idea of religious education has much to recommend it. Its shortcomings are those of the theory of education on which it is built. We have some doubts about the idea of entering into religious experience sympathetically but without commitment. For religion is, after all, different from history or literature. It expresses our deepest convictions. It is probable, as Newman argued, that moral commitment is not a consequence but an integral part of religious understanding and assent.
We come to understand our faith by living it, reflecting on the experience as we go along.\(^8\)

Religion and education, as human phenomena, have at least this much in common— that there is no universally agreed definition of either enterprise. The term education from its roots in the Latin ‘e-ducere’ has always been defined as a ‘leading out’, as helping the individual to develop the full range of his potentialities as a person. Education as part of the human quest for meaning and fulfilment is closely aligned with the religious quest for the transcendent. Certainly, from a Christian perspective one can affirm that all true education is ultimately religious. This is not to deny the specific role of that component of the curriculum which we term religious education. It is, however, to highlight a broader Christian faith perspective which sees all education as involving a transcendental dimension. This is at the core of the Presentation Brother philosophy of education.\(^9\) Whether teaching a religion class, or a mathematics class, or coaching young people on the sportsfield, the Brothers saw themselves as involved in a religious activity. This was very much part of the educational philosophy of Edmund Rice and the early Brothers. Having looked at various terms in current usage, it is to that philosophy now that we turn as a further basis for evaluating the contribution of the Presentation Brothers to religious education over the last thirty years.

3.2 Edmund Rice and Religious Education

From the beginning, Edmund Rice’s involvement in education was an unequivocally Catholic enterprise. Faced with the poverty and degradation of so many Irish Catholics, his motivation in trying to alleviate their suffering was overtly religious. For him, the spiritual component was central to the human person and so had to be central to education. He saw his own Catholic faith as a precious gift and was moved by the tragedy of so many of his fellow Irish Catholics whose faith life could not flourish because of oppression, injustice and ignorance. Edmund Rice identified the education of the young as a way to change things. For him, education was a path to liberation, not only in a material sense but in the full spiritual significance of the term. The ultimate liberation was the liberation from sin and evil and the creation of the conditions whereby people could live the life God intended for them. Edmund Rice saw Christ present and appealing to him in the poor. In this he has much in common with the
founders of many nineteenth century religious congregations established for the apostolate of education. What is perhaps extra in the Edmund Rice charism is that not only did Edmund see Christ in the poor but he saw the tragedy of the poor not seeing Christ in themselves. Here was a people with a noble culture and ancient faith reduced to the status of at best second-class citizens in their own country. Furthermore, Edmund Rice viewed with dismay the danger posed by various Protestant proselytising groups in the Waterford of his time. To view Edmund Rice solely as an educator or a social revolutionary is to miss the point. He was essentially a religious figure and his educational enterprise must be viewed from this perspective. His preoccupation with the spiritual development of young people was a reflection of his own inner life, his commitment to Christ and his profound belief in the truth and value of the Catholic faith.

Religion permeated all aspects of life in the schools founded by Edmund Rice and the early Brothers. Religious instruction had pride of place among the day's lessons and through the children, the Brothers sought to influence the faith of the parents. Prayers were a prominent part of the school day. Traditionally, prayers were said at the beginning and end of the day's lessons as well as when the clock struck on the hour. The whole school day was centred around religion with the time of catechism being the most important part. Significantly, Edmund Rice linked the value and success of the religion class with a change in the children's behaviour. For Brother Rice the instruction and prayers of the classroom had to influence all aspects of life and relationships. The 'fruits' of good religious education, in his view, had to be seen in behaviour modification and change. His was a practical Christianity and the challenge of education was to prepare pupils for living the Christian life in all its fullness. Rushe sees this desired-for change in behaviour as central to the religious and educational philosophy of Br. Rice:

The system devised by Edmund Rice developed so that it embraced a graded educational programme from the lowest primary level to a complete secondary training. It was immensely practical as well as being uncompromisingly religious, and from the earliest days at Mount Sion, the practicality was obvious in the way the boys responded to their schooling. The change in their behaviour and in their capabilities was widely noted....
Edmund Rice’s early experience in the world of trade and commerce served him well in his educational mission. He had wide experience of life and of people. Intuitively he realised the need for an educational system which would take account of different levels of ability, interest and motivation. Though ‘uncompromisingly religious’, he understood the necessity of attending to the basic human needs of the pupils. In the early days of Mount Sion, his foundation school in Waterford, large numbers of children were coming to school each morning hungry and poorly clothed. Among his first initiatives was to erect a bakery and a tailor shop. He employed bakers and tailors to ensure that the children were well fed and clothed. The charity of Edmund Rice to many sectors of Waterford society was legendary. However, in the school context it also had an educational purpose. The religious nature of his educational mission would be undermined if the fine words of Christian teaching were not put into practice in the daily life of the school. It was of little use to speak to hungry children of God’s love if they were not first fed. It was pointless to try to raise the self-esteem and change the behaviour of children who had nothing but rags to wear. Edmund Rice also brought from the world of business something of the master craftsman-apprentice relationship. This was the style of relationship between teachers and pupils which he tried to promote among the early Brothers. It implied a profound respect for each student, a mentoring relationship which coached, affirmed, encouraged the student to reach the fullness of his potential. For Edmund Rice, the personality, values and convictions of the teacher were critical influences on the educational process. In the matter of religious education, the personal faith of the teacher and his ability to share that faith in the loving service of teaching were paramount. His decision to found a community of religious dedicated to the education of the poor was related to his belief in the need for total dedication of life and energy to this mission. Edmund Rice’s legacy to the Presentation Brothers has been a strong one in all the areas discussed above. The Brothers have seen their role in education in strongly religious terms. Religious education has been central to the curriculum of Presentation schools. The Presentation Brother approach to religion has been balanced and practical. The mission of ‘raising up the poor’, or restoring their dignity, of providing them with the practical skills necessary for life and work has been close to the heart of the Brothers. Edmund Rice and the early Brothers believed that their call and their fulfilment lay in total dedication to the school apostolate. They believed that to be human is to be religious and that to be fully human the religious
aspect must be developed as a key feature of personality. Many of these beliefs are reflected in recent church documents on education. They have a contemporary and enduring appeal, especially to those in the Presentation tradition. The church sees the task of a Catholic school as attempting a synthesis of culture and faith and a synthesis of faith and life. This mediated in a privileged way through the life and witness of the teacher:

The extent to which the Christian message is transmitted through education depends to a very great extent on the teachers.... they reveal the Christian message not only by word but also by every gesture of their behaviour.\textsuperscript{14}

Ultimately, the goal of all religious teaching in a Catholic school context is personal commitment to Christ:

The fundamental difference between religious and other forms of education is that its aim is not simply intellectual assent to religious truths but also a total commitment of one's whole being to the person of Christ.\textsuperscript{15}

The personal commitment of the Presentation Brothers to the person of Christ has been for them Good News. Each generation of Brothers has sought to lead their pupils to the discovery of Christ. The classroom has been seen following the founder's example as a privileged location for this discovery learning; thus explaining the strong commitment of the Brothers to the value of classroom teaching as a religious work.

3.3 Religious Education in the Presentation School Tradition
From the days of Edmund Rice most Presentation Brothers have spent their teaching lives in primary schools. These schools were established for the elementary education of poor children and until the economic advances of the 1960s, children from materially poor backgrounds constituted the majority of pupils in many Presentation schools.\textsuperscript{16} Some schools catered for the middle classes and from 1879 onwards the Brothers did develop a network of secondary schools which were fee paying.\textsuperscript{17} These were small in number, however, and do not take from the fact until the 1970s Presentation involvement in education was more significantly a primary school enterprise.
Br. James Angelus Keane, following his election as Superior General in 1931, promoted a policy whereby as many Brothers as possible were given the opportunity to go to teacher training college and qualify as primary teachers. They would then spend their teaching careers in the public primary or national schools in which the Brothers were involved. Many Presentation Brothers who entered the Congregation between 1930 and 1970 were sent to the De La Salle Teacher Training College at Waterford during the early years of their formation. These were the decades of large numbers of vocations and entrants from these years have formed the staffs of Presentation primary schools up to relatively recent times.

In these schools the Brothers devoted great attention to religious education. Religious instruction formed a key element of the day, usually taking place around midday. O’Toole links this practice to the personal influence of the Founder:

In Edmund Rice’s adaptation of the rule of the Presentation Sisters the nature and object of this catechetical half-hour are expressed as follows: From the half-hour after eleven until twelve o’clock the Brother whose turn it is shall deliver spiritual instructions to the children either from the catechism or by way of lecture out of some instruction book, with familiar explanations suited to their capacity and not too sublime for their understandings, in order thus to forward and direct them to true and solid piety.18

Cork city apart, most Presentation primary schools were in small rural towns.19 The primary school and the local parish church were very closely linked and Brothers gave much time to preparing pupils to take part in the liturgy, especially in choirs and church music.

The secondary schools also had their own tradition of religious education. Again, here great attention centred on the formal religion class. However, the competitive nature of secondary schooling and the pressure of State examinations took from the centrality of religious education in these schools. Brothers who themselves taught in both systems attest to the fact that religious education had more importance and impact at primary level:

In the primary schools I felt the teaching of religion to be of supreme importance – that’s our raison d’être. In secondary schools religion teaching was the Cinderella of subjects – first to be dropped for any reason.
In primary school RE was given a central place but in secondary it was not given a high priority in the allocation of resources.

At primary level where Pres. Brothers were at their best, in my opinion, I could identify a 'Pres product'. The religious education permeated the day's work and a faith community seemed to have taken form. Though I tried this at second level, I met with only partial success.  

Formal religion class apart, a religious education took place in Presentation schools in other significant ways. A religious atmosphere was cultivated through symbols, art and attention to religious feasts and devotions. The crucifix was in every classroom and statues of Mary were prominently displayed. The feast of the Presentation of Our Lady, the titular feast of the Congregation on November 21 was celebrated in all the schools and the day itself was a free day. The crucifix and statues of Mary are still prominent symbols in Presentation schools though one might argue that now, as against the past, a specific catechesis on them is needed if they are to speak to post modern Irish youth. Perhaps also significant is the fact that the celebration of the feast of the Presentation has lost prominence in some schools, though it must be added that in others it is celebrated with more enthusiasm and creativity than ever before. Surprisingly, statues and pictures of Edmund Rice did not find their way into most Presentation schools until the 1960s. This was perhaps as a result of the Vatican II instruction to Religious to re-discover the spirit of the Founder. In the post-Vatican II period there was a gradual and increasing attention to Edmund Rice as the founder of the Brothers and as a major influence on the schools. The celebration of the 150th anniversary of his death in 1994 and the beatification of Edmund Rice in 1996 have been occasions for renewed focus on his educational legacy and vision. Along with the crucifix and statues of Our Lady, his image now forms a frequent element of religious art in Presentation schools.

The traditional Presentation Brother approach to religious education was based on two key assumptions. Firstly, it held that each student had a supernatural destiny and secondly, that life found its purpose and fulfilment in obedience to the moral and spiritual demands of the Christian life. The Brothers' teaching then formed part of the salvific mission of the Church. The Brothers saw themselves as co-operating with the spirit of Christ bringing about the salvation of their students. They saw the revealed doctrines of Catholic faith as informing the whole of life and understanding. Truth and human knowledge are in harmony so that:
all knowledge and understanding is touched and transformed by the truths about human beings and God which are taught by faith. The embodiment of this vision is the purpose of Catholic education.... For the Catholic, the restoration and transformation of human nature is achieved by the redeeming work of Christ, the fullness of which comes only through Catholic faith.23

This states well the theological basis for the traditional educational philosophy of the Presentation Brothers. It is a faith inspired and noble vision of life and education. The translation of this into school practice has always proved a difficult challenge. What students learn best is often not what teachers think they teach but what a school culture in fact cultivates. The schools founded by Edmund Rice and the early Brothers had at their centre a respect for the dignity and the eternal destiny of the person. With the expansion of the schools and the move by the Brothers into secondary education, it can be argued that something of the original founding ethos was lost. Schools that began with a mission to subvert the dominant paradigm of society through giving the children of the poor access to education became victims of their own success. The Brothers schools became noted for academic and sporting excellence. Some eventually ended up serving the middle and wealthy classes.

Success at public examinations became the main aim of the schools, particularly at second level, and frequently other important aims of a religious and personal nature were sacrificed to this end. Again, this tendency is not unique to Presentation schools, it has been the story of many religious run voluntary secondary schools in Ireland. Presentation schools have, however, fitted well into this pattern. In Cork City, the three Presentation Secondary Schools – Coláiste Chríost Rí, Coláiste an Spioraid Naoimh and the fee-paying Presentation Brothers College – would be seen as the premier schools for boys in the city. Throughout the last three decades demand for places in these schools has frequently outstripped the available places. This led to the practice of entrance examinations for those applying to enter first year. This allowed the schools to ‘cream off’ the academically bright pupils from the city’s primary schools. The amount of resentment engendered by this practice was substantial. Pupils who didn’t gain access experienced a sense of failure and alienation. Other second-level schools, particularly in the vocational sector, who often received the academically weaker pupils, felt embittered that such a practice should be operated by Religious schools.24 In fairness to the Presentation schools they would have argued that the entrance examination was the
fairest way of choosing pupils for the available places and that at any rate the curriculum offered in the secondary schools had a strong academic bias. This example is used to illustrate the extent to which the quest for success, according to ‘worldly’ criteria, could in fact subvert the religious mission of the schools. Schools, however, reflect society, but is it too much to expect that the schools could have made some attempt to ameliorate the more perverse effects of a highly competitive and class conscious Irish society? Larkin makes the following apt observation:

The all-pervasive nature of competition in our society indicates that it is one of the ways ‘we do things ’round here’. When we talk about the ethos of a school, we usually think about Christian principles guiding the relationships between people in the school. I would suggest that an underlying principle in schools is more likely to be that of competitiveness.25

The competitive nature of Presentation secondary schools from first year right through to Leaving Certificate level was bound to have a detrimental effect on the quality of the religious education on offer. The pressure of the examination system often dictated policies and practices which undermined the integrity of the school’s professed ethos. This appears to be why so many Brothers regard the contribution of the Brothers to primary schools as qualitatively better from a religious perspective.26 It is in this sector that most of the Brothers worked yet the educational prestige of the Congregation has largely accrued from its secondary schools. There has always existed among the primary teaching Brothers a certain antipathy towards their colleagues in the secondary sector. Individual Brothers did from time to time raise a voice of protest concerning secondary school policies, particularly on the vexed issue of the entrance examinations.27 Yet there is no evidence of a prophetic or organised movement among the Brothers in the 70s and 80s to question their educational policies and practices. An anti-intellectual tradition and the urgency of ‘getting on with the work’ did not allow for a more reflective stance. The decade of the 90s brought new challenges and the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the death of Edmund Rice in 1994 allowed critical questions to be raised in a systematic way for the first time.28

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3.4 Religious Education in the Post Vatican II period: Problems, Challenges and Opportunities.

The Second Vatican Council and the era of change it heralded were as big a surprise to the Presentation Brothers as they were to Catholics in general. By 1967 the membership of the Congregation had peaked at close to 300. There were large numbers of young men at various stages of training and formation. In 1967 an extraordinary general chapter was held to implement the decrees of Vatican II as they pertained to religious life. The exodus of large numbers of professed members and the dramatic decline in vocations were still in the future. In the matter of religious education many of the Brothers were attending summer courses in the new catechetics. The novel approaches and the new texts with their emphasis on a God of love were seen as a liberation from the legalistic religion of the past. The late 60s was a time of bright hopes for the Brothers. Among the younger Brothers in particular there was an enthusiasm for the new and a somewhat iconoclastic attitude to anything perceived to belong to the old order of things. Brothers recall the sense of euphoria which pervaded meetings and assemblies at the time. There was a real, if somewhat naïve belief that a new and better future was just around the corner for the Congregation and its educational mission. Nowhere was this more evident than in the matter of religious education. The following questionnaire responses give a flavour of how the Brothers were responding to new developments in catechetics:

The new approach was welcomed by the Brothers. The old ‘fear’ was taken out of it and the R.K. period was looked forward to.

[The new approach] presented religion in a more humane and acceptable guise – with emphasis on responsibility, personal relationships and the love of God. Part of the reason for the unsatisfactory teaching of religion was the image of God projected by the older texts and the legalism it generated.

Personally, I had the opportunity of spending a year in London at Corpus Christi College which was a catechetical centre as I was Assistant Novice Master at the time. I found on my return to Novitiate that my views were regarded as too ‘progressive’. When the (catechetical) centre opened in Dundalk some Brothers were given the chance to go there. In the fifties summer courses were organised to improve our theological knowledge. There was a lot of ‘de fide from Trent’ in the content and Vatican II subsequently brought changes in approach. We were exposed to the catechetical movement through summer courses. Brothers attended courses in the centre near Navan run by the Sisters of Sion.
There was a catechetical section in the 'Renewal Programme' held in the summers of 1964–1970.

The Brothers’ response to new developments in catechetics was uneven. There have been many courses followed over the years, as sponsored and promoted by Major Superiors. But the work in individual schools depended on the enthusiasm of individual people. In some cases it was outstanding and in other cases it left much to be desired.30

The context of the Brothers’ work was to change rapidly and radically, however, with the onset of post-modernity. Throughout the 60s and indeed the 70s the prevalence of religious influences in Irish society and in the Irish school system was widespread. Principals of Catholic voluntary secondary schools were almost exclusively Religious. Religious still formed a sizeable portion of school staffs. The Church had almost exclusive control of primary school management and of the colleges of education. The State deferred totally to Church views and interests in matters of educational philosophy and policy. The Presentation Brothers fitted very well into this system. However, the pressures of post-modernity beginning in the 60s were to evoke a re-organisation of all aspects of life – political, social, economic and religious – around quite different principles to those of modernity. A new emphasis on individual rights and freedoms created a desire for choice, plurality and personal empowerment. On the other hand, post-modernity in its undermining of tradition created a crisis in relation to permanence and stability. What is clear is that the rise of pluralist and secular influences have fundamentally altered some of the historical patterns of the Irish educational system. Increasingly large numbers of students are now indifferent to religion and to religious education. Traditional concepts of authority and obedience no longer hold and the process of change is fundamental, rapid and on-going. In the light of this, the Church’s role in education in the future will be very different to that of even the recent past. This has major implications for the content and process of religious education. The cultural change which has overtaken Ireland in the last twenty years, and with increasing rapidity in the last ten, has led to a paradigm shift in people’s perception of their own lives. Social changes are but the visible and external manifestations of a deeper cultural change which is taking place at the level of values, attitudes and inherited assumptions. Gallagher sees the change as dramatic in its impact on religious belief:

The typical tone of unbelief has moved from a sometimes militant denial of God to a more vague distance from religious faith. Some commentators describe this as the transition from the ‘modern’ with its
trust in reason, human control and technology, to the ‘post-modern’ with its scepticism about large humanist claims and its corresponding mood of unease over any meanings and values.... Religious faith is not so much negated as caused to be unreal .... This cultural unbelief is no longer de Lubac’s ‘drama of atheistic humanism’, but rather an undramatic limbo of disinterest and non-belonging.  

Obviously this situation creates a great challenge and opportunity for the Presentation Brothers and for Catholic education generally. The concept of community has always been at the heart of Catholic schools and of the Edmund Rice tradition of education. This can be a powerful antidote to the excessive individualism and alienation. As a Religious Congregation, the Presentation Brothers bring a particular approach to community. It emphasises being together, learning together, sharing and celebrating together. The Gaelic proverb “Ní haitheantas go haontaíos” – there is no real knowledge until unity – epitomises the communitarian ethos of Presentation education. Religious education also must find new life and energy in a re-appropriation of the traditional Catholic doctrine of the communion of saints. This teaching emphasises that all human beings are connected as children of the Father, as brothers and sisters in Christ, in time and beyond death. This communion is sustained by the dynamic action of the Holy Spirit at work in the Church and in the hearts of all men and women of good will. McClelland sees the doctrine of the communion of saints as essential to the mission of Catholic schools in contemporary society. This doctrine is a challenge to the excesses of individualism and utilitarianism. 

The Church’s insistence on the provision of Catholic schools that have the communion of saints at the heart of their concept of family, community, wholeness and integration, presents a serious challenge to a society whose entire world is delimited by space, time and material objectives and whose educational philosophy is all too often circumscribed by the individualistic, utilitarian and self-expressive modes of secular beings. 

Presentation educators would do well to pay attention to this doctrine and to find new ways of living it and expressing it concretely in the life of the schools. Cultural forces of liberal relativism and self-fulfilment are so easily absorbed from the wider society into school life. The Presentation Brothers need to foster in staffs and students an aggressive critique and discernment of the surrounding culture. Religious education can play a key role in this process, fostering not just individual commitment in faith but also a commitment to a supportive and liberating faith community. Catholic schools seek to
prepare students for life and this involves not merely accepting society as it is but seeking to change it, to align it more completely with gospel values.

Catholic children are not simply to cope with the world while preserving their own spiritual integrity, they are to challenge and change it, by prayer surely, but also by the quality of their own lives, the strength of their beliefs, their wholeness within the communion of saints, and their faith in action.  

Now over thirty years since Vatican II it is time for a sober re-assessment of the role of religious education in Presentation schools. In certain respects a correction of course may be necessary. The commitment and dedication of the Brothers and their lay teacher colleagues is not in doubt. Much good was and is being accomplished by new approaches to religious education, such as catechesis from life experience. Given the pervasive impact of negative cultural forces, however, a re-articulation from the tradition of the Catholic understanding of objective truth, community and mission, is needed. The desire in the recent past to accommodate to the modern world, to seek 'relevance', however well-intentioned, may not ultimately have served well the task of religious education. Despite the religious indifference of society in general, there are signs among post-modern Irish youth of a new search for truth, a renewed interest in the spiritual. Religious education should not in any way tranquillise this urge towards transcendence but should accompany it and vivify it with the gift of faith and the teaching of the gospel.

3.5 Religious Education at the Crossroads. New Initiatives for Presentation Schools.

As we move towards the millennium, religious education is at a crossroads. The social and cultural context outlined earlier create serious obstacles towards education in faith, yet there are also signs of hope. The Presentation Brothers are seriously concerned regarding the state of religious education in their schools. In this section a series of initiatives taken by the Brothers since 1981 will be reviewed to support the religious education process. An attempt will be made to identify what has worked and what has not worked, as well as to indicate current areas of need.
In this, as in so many other areas of need at the present time, the Brothers have to cope with the reality of the lack of personnel. Obviously if a sizeable contingent of young and enthusiastic Brothers was available, well qualified in religious education, then they could have a major impact on the life of the schools. However, such is not the case and all the indications are that this situation is not likely to change, certainly in the Irish context in the short term. There are two responses to the personnel issue. The first is to allocate increased effort and resources to attracting new vocations. As indicated earlier the Presentation Brothers have been creative and proactive in vocation promotion in the last ten years. This has not been without some results. However, the numbers that come are very small and those that stay to final profession fewer still. As well as this, young people coming to the Congregation are attracted to prayer and community life. They seem to desire service in social ministries and work among marginalised people rather than the traditional school apostolate. The Brothers themselves may be partially responsible for this. There has been something of a loss of nerve and a failure to promote the enduring value of teaching as a challenging, fulfilling and religious activity. However, the ultimate solution to the problem of vocations to the Religious life may have to await another cultural shift. At the moment the Presentation Brothers will have to plan for a future of limited professed personnel. In this context the Congregation and especially those in leadership, must ask themselves how best the gift and talents of those Brothers available can be utilised?

In the context of religious education at a crossroads, the second approach to the personnel issue has been to seek to support the efforts of lay teachers in the schools who carry an increasing burden in this area. Lay teachers in the Presentation schools have a long and honoured tradition in religious education. However, principals and catechists who are specialists in religious education find themselves facing an increasingly difficult and complex task. Hargreaves captures well the sense of ‘overload’ and isolation prevalent among teachers today. It is a particularly relevant insight in the case of those involved in religious education.

First, as the pressures of post-modernity are felt, the teacher’s role expands to take on new problems and mandates – though little of the old role is cast aside to make room for these changes. Second, innovations multiply as change accelerates, creating senses of overload among teachers and principals.
Third, with the collapse of moral certainties, old missions and purposes begin to crumble, but there are few obvious substitutes to take their place.\textsuperscript{37}

As well as this, many lay teachers in Presentation secondary schools are teaching religious education classes out of a sense of personal commitment and goodwill but without any specific training in this area. They feel inadequate to the task. Others feel uncomfortable with the fact that religious education has become insufficiently religious with the religion class expected to incorporate large elements of civics and personal and social development. A difficult situation is further compounded by the non-examined status of religious education in Irish second-level schools. Most pupils take seven subjects for the Leaving Certificate and the amount of points gained in the final examination determines access to University and third level colleges. The non-examined status of religious education leads to it being regarded as something of a ‘Cinderella’ subject. Pupils often come to the religion class either indifferent or expecting a break. Teachers find it difficult to engage their interest or attention in a subject they perceive as not relevant to the race for points. This situation will change in the near future as plans are now at an advanced stage to introduce religious studies as an examination subject.

In 1981, the newly-elected Superior General, Br. Jerome Kelly and his leadership team made christian formation in the schools a priority of their administration. This policy has been continued and developed by successive leadership teams since then.\textsuperscript{38} The strategy has been two-pronged, firstly, to support those Brothers involved in religious education and secondly, to support lay teachers involved in the process. In 1985, the Brothers held an international conference of principals in Cork. The emphasis of the conference was on christian formation as the mission of the Presentation school and as the raison d’être for the continued presence of Brothers in a school. In the years that followed most of the schools engaged staffs in a process of reflection and discussion leading towards a school mission statement. Members of the Brothers’ leadership team supported and facilitated staffs in this process. The importance of religious education was highlighted through adequate time-tableing and increased resources.

Throughout the 1980s, Mount St. Joseph, the Brothers’ generalate house in Cork, served as a retreat centre. Numerous workshops and courses were offered to Brothers and
teachers relating to religious education and youth ministry, in general. International speakers and experts were invited to Cork and the retreat centre, under the direction of Br. Matthew Feheney, offered a service to the Church and to Catholic education, extending its influence well beyond the bounds of the Presentation Congregation. The authorities within the Congregation encouraged and facilitated Brothers to take sabbaticals and to update themselves in theology, scripture and catechetics. Mention has already been made of the work of C.F.R.C and later C.L.E.O., also under the direction of Br. Feheney. To some degree this work was taking shape in embryonic form in Mount St. Joseph in the 1980s.

The Retreat Centre offered a full programme of youth retreats to schools in Cork and throughout Munster. The retreat team consisted of Presentation Brothers, two Presentation Sisters and a number of lay people who helped in a part-time capacity. One-day and two-day retreat programmes were offered to young people from confirmation class groups to senior secondary school students. At the time the retreats were innovative and well received by the young people. Religion teachers regarded the retreats as a great support to their work in school. Many of the groups who came to the retreat centre came from socially disadvantaged areas. In terms of the mission of the Presentation Brothers, the Mount St. Joseph Retreat Centre was an excellent service to teachers and young people. However, financially it was never viable and proved to be a constant drain on resources. The centre closed in 1991 and most of the building at Mount St. Joseph was made available as a donation from the Brothers to the S.H.A.R.E. organisation to provide sheltered accommodation for Cork's elderly poor. The closure of the retreat centre left a gap in the youth retreat scene in Cork which has not yet been filled. Only one other Catholic Religious Order operates a retreat centre in the city. Schools frequently complain that they cannot find suitable teams or locations for school retreat experiences. Allowing for the financial non-viability of a large residential retreat centre, it seems fair to ask if the Brothers should have continued to offer a school retreat programme in a more suitable location on a non-residential basis? This need still exists.

Another major initiative in the field of religious education in recent years has been the introduction of a lay chaplaincy service in Presentation secondary schools. In 1995, the Province Leadership Team decided to establish a pilot project in lay chaplaincy in Coláiste Chríost Rí in Cork. For some time the Leadership Team had been aware of
the difficulty many schools were experiencing in getting local clergy to visit the schools. Many priests were already over-stretched with parish duties and had little time for the schools. Others simply lacked the confidence or the skills to deal with senior second level students. There were some excellent individual exceptions but generally the experience with attempting to provide a chaplaincy service was not good. The Brothers also saw chaplaincy in terms of the wider issues of faith development, pastoral care, spiritual direction and not just the sacramental service alone. Allied to this an increasing number of young lay people were graduating with degrees in theology and qualifications of a pastoral nature. These were finding it difficult to secure employment in diocesan or parish structures.

The State does not pay chaplains in voluntary secondary schools in Ireland. Community schools, on the other hand, have had paid chaplains on staff from the beginning. There was no indication, at least in the short-term, that the Department of Education was prepared to make funding available for chaplaincy in voluntary secondary schools. Consequently, the Province Leadership Team was aware that initiating a pilot project in chaplaincy would entail a considerable financial burden for the Congregation. Nevertheless, after consultation with the Brothers and the schools, this was deemed to be a necessary and worthy initiative. Coláiste Chríost Rí in Cork was chosen for the pilot project since it is the largest Presentation secondary school with over 800 students. Scoil Chríost Rí, a sister primary school, also under the trusteeship of the Presentation Brothers is close by with a similar student population. Two lay chaplains were employed on a two-year contract. The Province Leadership Team worked in conjunction with the school principals, boards of management and staffs in establishing the scheme. The young woman and the young man employed both had a background in chaplaincy work. One, a qualified teacher, had spent two years in the Irish emigrant chaplaincy base of a major European city, serving a community of 4,000 largely young Irish students and workers. The other had spent two years on the lay chaplaincy team of a third level college. Obviously, the concept of a lay chaplaincy service, in a school context, was very new to teachers, students and parents. For this reason it was decided that both chaplains would initially work in Coláiste Chríost Rí and through working as a team offer mutual support to each other. The chaplains were asked to work with staff and students and in particular to liaise with religious education teachers and parish
clergy. It was made clear that their role was to support and supplement the existing service of the school’s religious education department.

Now, three years later, this scheme while still developing has made great progress. At the end of the first year one of the chaplains left to take on another pastoral role working in adult religious education. The second chaplain stayed on and so impressed was the school board of management with her work that at the end of the second year they offered her a five-year contract. This service is now largely funded by the school board of management, though the Brothers as Trustees, still make a contribution towards the cost. However, the Brothers’ willingness to fund the pilot project for the initial two years has been rewarded by the school board seeing the value of such a role and agreeing to continue to fund it themselves from school resources. In the last year the Brothers have funded a lay chaplaincy service for three other Presentation secondary schools. Initial indications are that this service is being received very favourably in the schools and the hope is that the schools, as with Coláiste Chríost Rí, will eventually take financial responsibility for the service themselves.

The development of the lay chaplaincy service is an example of the Presentation Brothers playing a creative and practical role as school trustees, particularly in supporting the faith development and religious education efforts of the schools. It also facilitates the increased involvement of lay people in the schools ministry of evangelisation and Christian Formation.

The vocation ministry of the Presentation Brothers has also widened in the last five years to develop a ministry towards young adults in the area of prayer, spirituality and faith development. The focus for these has mainly been in the three Presentation secondary schools in Cork city. The schools are points of contact whereby students are invited to get involved in faith-related groups outside of school. This involvement often extends beyond the secondary school years to their time at university. A number of these faith development groups meet in the Brothers’ houses in Cork during Advent and Lent. A Taizé style Mass for young people takes place regularly in the Brothers’ house at the Mardyke, Cork. A number of young people take part each year in the ‘Give a Year to God’ programme. This is a Christian community experience whereby a number of university students share community with the Brothers and are involved in the
Brothers’ youth ministry in a part-time capacity. The focus is on developing a christian sense of vocation in the young people and the programme has also been a source of some vocations to the Presentation Brothers. Br. Rupert O’Sullivan, Principal of Presentation Brothers College Cork, has recently established the Edmund Rice Religious Education Centre in his school. This consists of classrooms, chaplaincy office, coffee dock and a beautiful oratory. All in all, it is one of the finest religious education resources available in any school in the country.

These examples are given as evidence of creative attempts on the part of the Brothers to respond to the religious education needs of contemporary youth both in a school and a community context. They are seen to be successful in that young people are responding and are taking part in these initiatives. A major challenge for the Brothers is to sustain and develop such initiatives into the future.

3.6 The Future of Religion in Irish Education: Outline for a Presentation Response

The role of religion in Irish education is a subject of major debate at the present time. The context is one of rapid cultural change described above, allied to internal difficulties and scandals which have afflicted the Catholic Church in Ireland since 1992. Anger and hostility towards the Church are now very real factors in Irish society and have been elevated to the status of a political credo by some elements of the secular media. To a degree this is an understandable reaction to the excessive power wielded by the Catholic Church in Irish society until very recent times. Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger in commenting on this phenomenon in a global sense has highlighted something which may be particularly relevant to the Irish experience:

In Ratzinger’s account, the intensity which characterises anger and hostility towards the church generally springs from something other than reasoned arguments. He claims, rather, that it proceeds ‘from the bitterness of a broken heart that may have been disappointed in its high hopes, and now, in the pain of a wronged love, can only see the destruction of its love’. 45

In the context of disappointment and brokenness, the faith community which is the Church must again witness to its belief in the Risen Lord. The virtue of hope is needed at this time in Ireland and also the work of reconciliation needs to be undertaken with...
new urgency. This involves a reconciliation not just in a political sense in the context of community divisions in the north of Ireland, but also at other levels in Irish society.

In the context of Catholic schools and the rights of Catholic students to a full education in the faith, groups like the Presentation Brothers need to assert unambiguously their identity and their mission. In contemporary Ireland the mission of Catholic schools and the task of religious education were never more relevant. As trustees of Presentation Schools, the Brothers need to support Catholic principals, teachers and parents in fulfilling this mission. Pope John Paul II during his visit to Ireland in 1979, predicted that each new generation of young Irish people would be like a new continent to be won for Christ. In this context, Catholic educators would do well to note Newman’s emphasis on imagination:

the crucial battlezone for faith or unbelief lies in the imagination. In his *Grammar of Assent* (Newman) wrote: ‘the heart is commonly reached not through the reason, but through the imagination’, adding with typical understatement ‘no man will be a martyr for a conclusion’.46

Now is the time for imagination as all involved in religious education seek to share in a new way the riches of Catholic faith with young people. At critical times in the past the Presentation Brothers have shown a creativity in response to new needs. They also have a long tradition of collaboration with laity. Both attributes will stand them well in facing these present challenges. Young people need to be helped to see through the deceptions of the surrounding culture. Religious education is vital to helping them appropriate their own Catholic identity as well as the skills of cultural critique which will help them to begin a new evangelisation of society. This is education for true liberation in the Edmund Rice tradition:

The internal ethos of the Catholic school emerges with an external position that is open, welcoming and co-operative, helping to break down what Christopher Dawson once described as ‘the closed, self-centred world of secularist culture’, with which it has to have a meaningful encounter (Dawson 1967, p.150). In so doing, Catholic education is capable of giving human society a new spiritual purpose ‘which transcends the conflicting interests of individual class and race’, because it is, as Edward Hulmes puts it, an invitation ‘into a vision of the love of God’ (Hulmes, op. Cit., p.102).47
References and Notes : Chapter 3

1. The Leaving Certificate Examination takes place at the end of second-level schooling. Each student takes seven subjects. Points gained as a result of this examination determine access to university and third-level colleges.

2. Because religious education is a ‘non-exam’ subject it is often the first to be dropped at times of preparation for the State exams. Time allotted to religious education on the timetable may in fact be given over to other subjects.

3. It is the term in use in all eight second-level schools under the trusteeship of the Presentation Brothers.

4. In the 1960s and 1970s Christian doctrine and religious instruction were the terms more commonly used in the schools.


6. See Presentation Brothers Constitutions, Nos. 47-56.


9. See Constitutions, No. 48, 56, 57.

10. cf. Catherine McAuley, foundress of the Mercy Sisters and Mary Aikenhead, foundress of the Irish Sisters of Charity. Though Nano Nagle, foundress of the Presentation Sisters is an eighteenth century figure, her Sisters in Waterford profoundly influenced Edmund Rice and he took the Presentation Rule for his first community of Brothers.

11. Equally, it would be unfair to view Edmund Rice as anti-Protestant. He was on friendly terms with some of the most prominent members of the Protestant community in Waterford. It was the exploitation of the religious sensibilities of the Catholic poor by proselytising agencies that he opposed.


15. Ibid, p40

16. This is particularly true of the primary (national) schools. Private fee-paying junior schools were attached to Presentation College, Cork, Bray and Glasthule.

17. The Brothers had fee-paying secondary schools in Cork, Cobh, Bray and Glasthule. Cobh, Bray and Glasthule eventually changed status and joined the public system. The only fee-paying school which the Brothers now have in Ireland is Presentation Brothers College, Cork.


19. Miltown and Killarney (Co. Kerry), Birr (Co. Offaly), Letterkenny (Co. Donegal), Carrick-on-Shannon (Co. Leitrim), Enniskillen (Co. Fermanagh), Dungannon (Co. Tyrone), Kinsale and Cobh (Co. Cork).

20. Questionnaire Responses, *Presentation Brothers in Education in Ireland*, see Appendix C, Chapter 5, 222.

21. Even schools from which the Brothers have withdrawn have shown an enthusiasm for maintaining and celebrating diverse aspects of the Presentation tradition, seeing this as part of their heritage and identity.

22. Edmund Rice died at Mount Sion, Waterford on 29 August, 1844. He was beatified by Pope John Paul II at Rome on October 6th 1996.


24. A number of different school types exists at second-level in Ireland. The majority are voluntary secondary schools, mostly run by Catholic religious orders. A second major group are termed vocational schools. These are state-run and work under the auspices of local vocational education committees (VECs). Originally focused on technical subjects their curriculum has broadened in the last twenty years. They were often regarded as the 'poor relations' of the second level system, though this has now changed.

26. See *Questionnaire Responses*, Appendix C, Chapter 5, 221-229.

27. Br. Angelus Fitzpatrick, for many years principal of St. Joseph's National School, Mardyke, Cork, was a noted opponent of the entrance examination policies of the secondary schools.

28. These questions were often raised at a series of educational conferences held as part of the 150th anniversary celebrations.

29. See *Presentation Brothers Register*, Generalate, Mount St. Joseph, Cork


32. See *Constitutions*, 33.


34. Ibid.

35. Many young people from Presentation schools travelled to Rome for the beatification of Edmund Rice. A large contingent of Irish young people were in Paris for World Youth Date with Pope John Paul II in August 1997.

36. This has been a recurring theme in letters of Superiors General, Provincial and Chapter documentation.


38. Br. Stephen O'Gorman was elected Superior General at the General Chapter of 1993 and a new leadership team took office.

39. Munster is a province of Ireland encompassing the counties of Cork, Kerry, Waterford, Limerick, Tipperary and Clare.

40. S.H.A.R.E. (Students Harness Aid for the Relief of the Elderly). The organisation had been founded in 1970 by Br. Jerome Kelly and a group of students from Presentation College, Cork. It now provides sheltered accommodation and back-up services for 230 of Cork's senior citizens in a number of locations around the city.

41. In 1991 Br. Bede Minehane was appointed Provincial of the Irish Province. He remains Provincial at the time of writing and is assisted by four consultors who
form the Province Leadership Team. They are the legal Trustees of all Presentation Brother schools.

42. The majority of students at Mater Dei and All Hallows institutes in Dublin are now lay people.

43. A case was brought to the High Court by the ‘Campaign for the Separation of Church and State’ against the payment by the State of community school chaplains. The campaign claimed this practice contravened the Irish Constitution’s provision against the endowment of religion. The case was lost. It is unclear if an appeal will be made to the Supreme Court.

44. Coláiste an Spioraid Naoimh, Bishopstown, Cork, Presentation Brothers College, Cork and Presentation College, Bray.


CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION BROTHERS

AND

THE CONTEMPORARY EDUCATIONAL SCENE
4.1 Articulating a Presentation Philosophy of Education

The Presentation Brothers' involvement in education flows from the Brothers' commitment to following Christ according to the spirit and pattern of Edmund Rice. The Brothers are first and foremost Religious who engage in education from a specifically Catholic faith perspective. They feel called by God to a life of holiness and to the Christian formation of young people in the Edmund Rice tradition. Articulating a Presentation philosophy of education, then, is predicated on an understanding of the Religious life of the Brothers. Before attending to issues of educational philosophy *per se* it is necessary to attend to certain foundational religious questions. For example, what is the meaning of Religious life today? What is its identity and purpose? What do the Presentation Brothers bring, specifically as Religious to the contemporary educational scene? These questions are of concern not just to the Brothers, but ultimately to all who collaborate with them or who benefit from their educational work. Though major change and development will continue to take place, understanding the charism of the founder and the role of the Brothers are critical to the identity of the Presentation presence in education. In this regard Dilanni points to the primacy of the transcendental dimension of the Religious life.

A Christian religious person not only acts morally but also sees the world in a new way – that it is dependent for its very existence on a transcendent reality, and that this makes all the difference. Because it is focused upon the transcendent, the Christian vision has specific ethical implications different from Enlightenment theories which place the human person or freedom at the center of the moral endeavour. For the Christian the primary response to the world is not that of owner and promethean creator but of humble and obedient creature, not an entrepreneurial relishing of power and freedom but a Marian gratitude before God for all that God has wrought. Out of this Christian gratitude is born the imperative to love God and reverence God's creation, the willingness to allow God to express the divine mercy through us, especially toward the weak and abandoned. This Christian gratitude and its ethical implications are nourished and deepened through a close union with God in prayer.

It is this fundamental vision, it seems to me, which should be at the heart of the life of every consecrated Religious.¹

It is precisely here that we can locate the unique contribution of the Presentation Brothers to their network of schools and to contemporary education in general. The prophetic role of the Brothers lies in the fact that by their life commitment and
institutional structures they point to the transcendent. Their community life and values give concrete and existential expression to this. The present author contends that Dilanni has captured well the kernel of Religious life. Traditionally, the Presentation Brothers have asserted the primacy of their Religious life against cultural stereotypes which often limited their role to that of teachers. Though the two are entwined, the Brothers believe in the primacy of their Religious vocation. The teaching vocation flows from this. Dilanni also stresses the need to attend to the charism and institutions of foundation, if Religious are really to appropriate the founder’s vision for the contemporary world. Speaking of founders, he says:

It was precisely because they founded institutions, ways of life, that they were able to gather people to selflessly dedicate their entire being. They were not poets flush with metaphor, nor theologians spinning a system, nor solely saints living a personal holy life; they were and are what we call them – founders. Theologians are believed, poets are read, but founders are followed.

One implication of this is that a founder’s charism cannot be understood independently from the institution he or she founded. The charism of the foundations is not a mere set of ideas, a free-floating ethos that each person is free to live out in his or her own way. Abstracted from its corporate and structural aspect, the charism’s meaning is partly lost. In fact, the original rules and structures may be a privileged locus to study its meaning.

For the Presentation Brothers, this implies, a fidelity to the core gospel insights of Edmund Rice. It implies on-going study and discernment regarding the founder’s values and choices. As well as pointing to the transcendent dimension, the Brothers also bring the Edmund Rice vision and manner of response to the contemporary educational scene.

Yet the Presentation Brothers face major challenges if they are to continue to play a role in Irish education in the twenty-first century. In 1996, almost 8000 young Irish people attended Presentation schools. The schools have a reputation for academic and sporting excellence. Good discipline and examination results ensure the confidence of parents and the wider community. Religion in general, and religious education programmes in particular, still have a prominent place in the life of Presentation schools. However, the number of Presentation Brothers involved in classroom teaching and even in administrative posts continues to decrease. This is in line with national trends
reflecting the falling numbers of Religious in education. In 1969/’70, 2300 Religious taught in secondary schools and constituted one-third of the teaching force. By 1992/’93, just over 1000 Religious remained in secondary schools constituting at this stage less than 10% of the teaching force. Moreover, 36% of these were within ten years of retirement and only 6% were under 35 years of age. It is clear that the Irish region of the Presentation Brothers will be smaller in numerical terms in the future and this, among other change factors, will call for new strategies if the vision and value system discussed above are to be kept to the fore in the schools.

For almost two centuries a Catholic and Edmundian philosophy of education underpinned the Brothers’ work. It is clear that this philosophy was lived and worked on in the schools yet it was rarely attended to in written form. The work of the schools was so urgent and all-encompassing that the systematic articulation of educational philosophy never found its proper place. A critical task facing the Presentation Brothers today, then is to own their educational tradition and to articulate and renew the Presentation philosophy of education appropriate to the Ireland of the twenty-first century.

Change in Irish society and rapid change within the educational system itself, calls for a new clarity and accountability. The Brothers have something of value to offer to the future of Irish education, thus the task of articulating a Presentation philosophy of education cannot be neglected. This is a task which the Brothers do not undertake alone. The philosophy of partnership is vital to the process. In recent years the Brothers have promoted the concept of a ‘Presentation Family’. This involves not just professed Brothers, but lay teachers, associates, parents and young people. These groups, too, must be involved in the process of articulating a Presentation philosophy of education.

A number of factors combine to make this a particularly opportune time to undertake this task. Firstly, the renewal of Religious life called for by Vatican II has entered a deeper and more serious phase. The era of large numbers departing Religious life has ended. Though the number of new entrants is small, it seems that the renewal has entered a phase where core issues are being attended to and this offers hope for the future. Certainly in the case of the Presentation Brothers, the renewal efforts of leadership teams over the last fifteen years are now beginning to bear fruit. There is a
new stability, good morale and confidence about the future, albeit an acceptance of a very different future. The programme of renewal launched by Br. Jerome Kelly and his leadership team in 1981 has continued and developed under Br. Stephen O'Gorman and a new team since 1993. Years of study, discussion, conferences and assemblies have brought the Brothers to a heightened level of awareness regarding issues affecting their life and ministry. Major changes have taken place at the level of action but even more importantly at the level of attitude and mentality. A ‘critical mass’ situation has been reached where it can be said that more Presentation Brothers than ever before are now open to fundamental and radical change.6

A second factor helpful to the philosophical task has been the re-discovery by the Brothers of the relevance and importance of Edmund Rice. Vatican II had encouraged Religious to renew themselves according to the spirit of their founders and in response to the ‘signs of the times’. This launched the Presentation Brothers on a path of re-discovering Edmund Rice. Discovery rather than re-discovery is perhaps a more appropriate term, as many Brothers trained in pre-Vatican II times attest to the fact that there was little or no mention of Edmund Rice during their formation days. To a lesser or greater extent the neglect of the founder was a feature of many active apostolic congregations founded in the nineteenth century, the focus being on the work rather than on a person. The relationship of the Presentation Brothers with Edmund Rice was further complicated by the ‘split’ with the Christian Brothers. In their own turn, however, the relationship of the Christian Brothers to Edmund was equally complex and not always benign.7 The year 1994 was a major help in looking again at Edmund’s educational vision. During that year both Presentation and Christian Brothers along with the wider Edmund Rice Family celebrated the 150th anniversary of his death.8 Not least among an extensive programme of celebrations were a variety of educational conferences, lectures and publications. All this contributed towards a new awareness among the Brothers and their co-workers of the founding story and vision. Thus a combination of factors make this a particularly apt time to articulate a renewed Presentation philosophy of education.
4.2 Issues of Control, Service, Influence

Critics of the Catholic Church in Ireland frequently refer to the Church's 'control' of education. The Church responds by rejecting the term 'control' in favour of 'service'. It sees its role in education as one of service to the community. Whichever label one prefers, it is clear that at the very least, the Church has a major presence and considerable influence in the educational system. The decline in the numbers of priests and Religious involved in education in recent years, has been off-set by an increasingly articulate Catholic laity. Teachers and parents who believe in Catholic education are playing a prominent role at all levels of the Catholic school system as teachers, as principals, as representatives on Boards of Management. The vast majority of principals in secondary schools under the trusteeship of Religious Orders are now lay people. It is clear that the professionalism and commitment of Catholic teachers and parents will ensure the future of Catholic schools. The schools will continue to exist as long as there is a demand from the wider Catholic community for them.

The Presentation Brothers, certainly, would see their role in education as one of service. Three phases can be delineated in the Brothers' involvement in the schools. The first phase, pre-1960, was characterised by a situation where the principal and almost the entire teaching staff of each school were Presentation Brothers. The second phase from the 1960s until the 1980s was a situation where the principal and a few staff members were Brothers, but increasingly the majority of staffs was made up of lay teachers. The third phase during the 1990s, has seen the appointment of lay principals to Presentation schools. Individual Brothers continue on staffs, sometimes in the role of principal, but the Brothers now constitute a small percentage of the teaching force in Presentation schools. Indeed, some schools have no Brother at all on the staff. The Presentation Brothers, however, are still the legal trustees of the schools and a major part of the work of the province leadership team of the Brothers involves fulfilling the responsibilities of trusteeship. Thus a trend can be discerned in the Brothers' involvement in the schools over the past thirty years. It can be characterised as a movement from the front line teaching role to administration and now to management and trusteeship.

In the area of trusteeship the Brothers can continue to play a critical role over the next ten years. The Brothers hold the trust of the founding vision. They can play a role in
holding this vision before boards of management, staffs and school communities. The Brothers are inheritors of a valuable tradition and have over the years garnered much educational wisdom and experience. As trustees, they play a role of support and service and also help to focus school communities on critical issues of philosophy and direction.

In the last ten years the Presentation Brothers have played an important role in CORI (Conference of Religious of Ireland). The Educational Commission of CORI sees the exercise of trusteeship as an important strategy to:

influence educational policy, process, structure, with a view to promoting genuine Christian education that is concerned with the harmonious development of persons and the transformation of society.\(^9\)

CORI has recently initiated a major debate on the nature and future of trusteeship. The Presentation Brothers, as part of this, are now reflecting on how they can pro-actively exercise their role as trustees so that a Catholic/Presentation philosophy of education continues to be a major influence in the schools. Hence the importance of clearly articulating the distinctive principles and values of Presentation religious and educational philosophy.

The Brothers are being challenged to act pro-actively as trustees. This involves engaging with other partners in the Presentation Family in not only articulating but also monitoring the implementation of Presentation philosophy in the schools. Such a process constitutes a major part of the work of the new education office. This office was set up in 1997 by the Province Leadership Team under the direction of Br. Denis Minehane. Its principal role is to assist the congregation in fulfilling the responsibilities of trusteeship of the schools.

The legal role of trustees is to ensure as far as possible that the school remains true to the original founding intention. Trustees have to:

a) articulate clearly the principles and values of a distinctive educational philosophy consistent with the Congregation’s charism and with the founding intention of the school;

b) engage pro-actively with the school to promote that philosophy and monitor the extent to which it is being implemented, and
c) intervene in situations where there is a serious departure from that philosophy.¹⁰

Until recent times with the majority of staffs composed of Brothers it was a straightforward matter for the Brothers to exercise their trust in relation to influencing school ethos. With many members of the Congregation present on a staff, the Brothers ensured by the witness of their lives and by sheer numerical presence that Presentation values were kept to the fore. However, The Education Commission of CORI has highlighted the fact that even the capacity of Religious to act as trustees will decline in years to come and has signalled the need for Religious to plan for the evolution of new forms of trusteeship. However, certain problems arise in this regard. Firstly, at the moment there are few readily identifiable groups of people available to take on the considerable legal and managerial responsibilities of trustees. Secondly, exercising a mode of trusteeship without the presence of Congregational members in the schools is still largely uncharted territory.

The exercise of an expanded and pro-active trusteeship, however, calls for an investment of personnel and resources. Either Brothers will have to be freed for this important work or else the Institute will need to finance and employ more lay people to undertake it over the next few years. As well as trustee responsibilities, the Presentation Education Office could concern itself with research and development and also with the evaluation of programmes, goals and objectives. Such a role could be a valuable resource and support service to the schools. The Congregation has both the duty and the responsibility to play a major role in the area of trusteeship. Even a small group of Brothers imbued with a clear philosophy and equipped with appropriate strategies and in collaboration with lay colleagues can have a major influence in shaping education into the future.

Edmund Rice and the early Brothers saw education as a means of liberating the Catholics of their time from the ill-effects of poverty and oppression. They identified an urgent social need and inspired by faith and gospel values responded in a radical and creative way. Presentation schools, along with those of other Religious congregations became a central feature of Irish education. The contribution of Religious to the development of Irish education after 1922 was immense.
Tussing (1978) showed that the contribution of religious congregations was one of the main reasons why the Ireland of the 1970s 'by a long chalk the poorest country in the EEC, [could] afford such a highly developed [education] system'. (p.54). The contribution, according to Tussing, was in the form of actual cash ("they have built most of the Secondary Schools from their own resources") (p. 57) and in the form of their own services.11

Religious were also prominent in providing for the expansion of second level places which occurred in the 1960s and the 1970s. In the case of the Presentation Brothers two new secondary schools were founded in Cork viz. Coláiste Chríost Rí in Turners Cross and Coláiste an Spioraid Naoimh in Bishopstown. New buildings or extensions were provided at Bray and Glasthule, while the Brothers entered into new arrangements for second level schooling at Birr, Milltown and Cobh.12 In line with the vision of Catholic education which emerged in the aftermath of Vatican II, parents and lay teachers began to be more involved in the running of the schools. Boards of Management were established based on Articles of Management agreed between trustees, teachers unions and the government. The boards were charged with running the schools according to the philosophy of the trustees. Increasingly throughout the 1980s more and more lay people were appointed principals in voluntary secondary schools under the trusteeship of religious Congregations. This pattern was also followed in the case of Presentation Brothers' schools.

The transition to participative management structures and lay principalships has generally been very smooth in Presentation schools. A number of factors contributed. Firstly, there was a long tradition of friendship and trust between the Congregation in general, individual Brothers and the lay teachers in the schools. Secondly, because the Presentation network of schools is not large, the Brothers were able to play a very prominent role in the first round of boards of management, thus reassuring parents and teachers that the Congregation was not deserting the schools. Thirdly, great care was taken in the first appointments of lay principals. In not a few cases those candidates who emerged from the selection process were highly respected and long standing members of staffs imbued with the Presentation vision and tradition.13

With growing pluralism in Irish society, government policy is committed to supporting a diversity of school types. In this context, Catholic schools need a new clarity around
issues of philosophy and ethos. In this regard trustees play a central and critical role. However, it is also clear that religious congregations alone will not be able to fulfil the role of trusteeship indefinitely. The age profile of most Congregations, few vocations and the movement to new or alternative educational ministries all combine to bring this situation about. Therefore Religious need to work towards new models of trusteeship in order to fulfil an increasingly critical role and function which up to the present time they have carried out alone. This is an urgent problem for Congregations with large numbers of schools under their trusteeship. For example, the Irish Christian Brothers with over eighty second-level schools alone find the burden of trusteeship very difficult. Setting up boards of management, supporting principals, providing in-service training, finding trustee nominees to serve on the boards – are proving difficult challenges for a Congregation with diminishing personnel. In the case of the Presentation Brothers, with eight second-level and three primary schools, the problem is not so acute.

Irrespective of the personnel issue, it can be argued that new forms of trusteeship are needed. A form of trusteeship based on partnership and involving other elements of the Catholic community would better reflect a post-Vatican II vision of Catholic education rather than leaving the task to the Religious alone. The trusteeship of Catholic schools should in fact be the responsibility of the entire Catholic community. Religious have a role to play but can no longer be expected to carry the challenge alone.

Moving to new forms of trusteeship for Religious schools has to take account of wider issues of change within Irish education. With a falling birth-rate, second-level schooling will face extensive rationalisation in the next ten years. Many schools will amalgamate, some will face closure. Allied to this, the growing pluralism in Irish society referred to above will inevitably increase the demand for alternatives to Catholic schools. The situation of falling numbers has in recent years led to competition between schools for pupils. This has had a damaging effect on school communities and on education in general. It is hardly a positive situation for Catholic schools. In the midst of all of this change, trusteeship has until very recently been taken for granted. In opening a debate on the future of trusteeship, one moves into unchartered territory. It is an area neglected until very recently even by those within the education community.
The Conference of Religious of Ireland has proposed a number of options regarding the future of trusteeship. These can be broadly categorised under the headings of:

a) Rationalisation

b) Transitional Arrangements, and

c) Total Transfer.

The rationalisation option could involve closure or amalgamation. Both options can be fraught with difficulty. Careful negotiations are necessary with local communities and interest groups. The amalgamation option does afford the Congregation the opportunity to share responsibilities of trusteeship with another group, for example, another Religious Congregation, thus maximising the use of diminishing resources. Each Congregation then becomes a joint trustee rather than sole trustee of the school.

Transitional arrangements may also lead to other forms of shared trusteeship. For example, a Congregation might invite the local diocese to join it in trusteeship. A change of status might also be considered for the school whereby the transition is made, for example, from being a voluntary secondary school to being a community school. In this case a religious congregation might invite the local vocational education committee (VEC) to join it in the trusteeship of the school.

A total transfer of trusteeship is also an option proposed. This might involve the diocese or the local Vocational Education Committee taking sole responsibility for the trusteeship of the school. In the latter case the school then loses its voluntary Catholic status.

However necessary to face these realities, the CORI proposals seem to be based on the assumption that ultimately Congregations need to consider the total transfer of the trusteeship of their schools. On the positive side, this may be predicated on a vision of Religious life which sees the need for Religious to move into new areas of ministry. For Congregations with a tradition in education the needs of people on the margins and the need for alternative educational initiatives in this regard are important. Interpreted in a more negative fashion, the CORI proposals could be predicated on the ultimate demise of Religious Congregations. They seem, at one level, to exhibit a failure in faith and a lack of hope concerning the future involvement of Religious in education. The present writer does not dispute the need for new forms of trusteeship and for Religious to face
the reality of fewer personnel. However, given the resilience of Religious life in the past, it is surely possible to contend that Religious will continue to have a role, albeit it a changed one, in Irish education into the future. The CORI proposals seem to ignore new developments in Religious life and new forms of Congregational membership. Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh strikes a more positive note in his critique of the CORI proposals. Focusing not on diminishing resources, he formulates the challenge in more positive terms:

What is the most appropriate way in which members of Religious Congregations ... can best serve the educational needs of the Irish Catholic community of faith, in particular, and of Irish society in general, at a time of profound and complex change in that society and also at a time of great change in the history of religious witness and specifically Catholic witness in the world?\textsuperscript{14}

The particular response of the Presentation Brothers to this question will be influenced by a number of factors. The relatively small number of schools in the Presentation network will not severely inhibit the capacity of the Congregation to fulfil its trusteeship role for many years to come. The fact that the Congregation is attracting some new professed membership and the involvement of lay people through the Associate Movement augers well for continued Congregational involvement in the educational mission. However the Presentation Brothers and the wider Presentation Family need to engage in a systematic analysis of each school. Questions need to be asked regarding the future viability of the schools, given current demographic trends. In the light of the Edmund Rice tradition, priority will have to be given to the needs of disadvantaged pupils in any future planning. This may be a source of tension as some of the Brothers’ educational partners who are often unclear on the philosophy and role of trustees. Religious Congregations, internally, may have arrived at a radical and enabling vision for their future role in education. The prophetic role of Religious and the idea of standing for justice and the marginalised may make sense on paper. However, if this vision is not communicated to the wider public, many people will hold to a rather dated image of a Religious presence in education which they now see as no longer relevant. The CORI document notes the following point well made by Pádraig Hogan:

In order for people to be in a position to take on responsibility for the work currently being done by Religious, it will be necessary that it is clear what Religious actually stand for. In his paper Pádraig Hogan suggests that the necessary level of clarity may not exist. Indeed, he
argues that there are serious misperceptions on the part of the public (especially parents) about what Congregations stand for.\textsuperscript{15}

This communication of a radical enabling vision to the wider public constitutes an on-going challenge for the Presentation Brothers. What is clear is that the Brothers can continue to exert a major influence on their schools through a positive and pro-active exercise of trusteeship. However, new models of trusteeship need to evolve to reflect and meet the challenge of change within society, education and the Presentation Family.

4.3 Identifying the Core Issues

The challenge of articulating a clear Catholic and Presentation philosophy of education will be critical to the future of the Presentation Brothers in education. This task must be undertaken in a systematic way \textit{ab initio} since it has not been a feature of the Presentation tradition to date. A significant shift has taken place in the self-understanding of Irish society. Interdependence is a key feature of the new Ireland. As a result change in one aspect of society inevitably has consequences right through society. There is also a change in the relationship between society and religion. The homogeneous religious and Catholic world view which permeated Irish society up to the 1960s is now a thing of the past. Irish people vary greatly in terms of their religious views and level of religious practice. Catholicism or even Christianity is no longer the dominant source of identity. Religious practice is still high in European terms, but this is no longer seen as essential to success within society. Technical rationalism, self-fulfilment and material advancement have replaced Christian values in many areas of Irish life. Dunne speaks of:

\begin{quote}
... the tendency to treat all significant issues of our lives as problems that can be objectified and for which the appropriate experts can devise the most efficient and economic solutions.\textsuperscript{16}
\end{quote}

This tendency ultimately separates the individual from the community. The breakdown of a sense of community in both rural and urban Ireland has often been the downside of the economic progress of the last thirty years. The attendant culture of individualism has deeply affected the educational system. Even the great debate on equality of educational opportunity has largely degenerated into a debate on equality of access to compete with others for self-advancement. Obviously, such fundamental and far-
reaching changes in the very nature of a society pose major challenges to the identity and role of the school. However, the Catholic school, if it is to be true to its mission, cannot uncritically adopt all the values of the new society. The issue then is the need to take a pro-active approach to change, to endeavour to shape the future and in the process develop new modalities of interaction between schools, society and culture. The role of the Catholic school in the new pluralist Ireland is to be a centre of educational excellence where Christian values are lived and worked at. In a spirit of partnership with others in society the Catholic school of the future can play a major role in promoting social solidarity, in building community and in acting as a block to the excesses of technical rationalism and materialism. Essentially, the Catholic school exists to point to the transcendent dimension of life and to initiate young people into a personal faith relationship with Jesus Christ.

If the Presentation Brothers actively promote reflection on these deeper questions in their school communities over the next decade, then they could make a valuable contribution not only to Catholic education but to Irish society in general. In tandem with this must go a process of evaluation. Evaluation of school effectiveness in promoting values and objectives has been much neglected within the Irish Catholic school system. A process of critical reflection and evaluation may lead to tension within the Presentation system and certainly in the relationship between the Presentation school system and the State.

The mission of the Church in any age is evangelisation, that is, to announce the gospel and to build up the community of faith. Each Religious institute brings its own charism to bear on this task and from this derives the institute’s ministry or group of ministries. While new times require new and creative responses, it is clear that any refoundation of ministry faithful to the charism depends on an accurate understanding of Edmund Rice’s original intention. This is not to give power to history over the present but rather to identify what is at the core of the charism as against its various historical expressions. The educational needs of young people today demand that the Brothers in collaboration with all drawn to the vision of Edmund Rice refound a ministry that is in keeping with a reformulation of Rice’s original mission. It is significant that in the popular parlance of his own day Edmund Rice was frequently associated with the work of justice and
liberation. Phrases such as 'he raised up the poor', 'he raised them to the status of men' abound.

This understanding of Edmund Rice links to a major issue in the contemporary Church. In 1971, the Synod of Bishops, meeting in Rome, affirmed that the work of justice was a constitutive element of the spread of the gospel. On this point Wilson notes:

Whatever the understanding of Edmund's charism may have been in the past was culturally bound in its own time and place ... In a time when the questions of justice are again the test of Judeo-Christian love, the pattern of reflection and response seen in Edmund's life is important to his followers. If the Brothers and those drawn to the charism of Edmund Rice seek to refound his mission and ministry, would they not do well to return to its source? The ability to see the oppressive nature of wealth, to realise that class distinctions inevitably arise from the unjust or inordinate acquisition of wealth, is an important insight to be gained from Edmund's life. The desire to live on equal terms with others may well have practical applications in the area of material wealth. Edmund in his day and age gave a most heroic example of relinquishment and of what today would be termed "solidarity with the poor".

Edmund Rice had great devotion to the bible. He read the scriptures daily and on the flyleaf of his own bible he noted favourite or important texts. Many of these refer to issues of justice, integrity or right relationships. Reflection on the scriptures and on the appalling condition of the young people of his time challenged Rice to respond to the challenge of justice. A deep spiritual conversion took place in his life. Particularly, in the years after the death of his young wife he came to see that the poor needed more than handouts. He felt drawn to share more than his wealth with them but to share his very life with them. In Christian terms, following Christ in the work of justice and restoring human dignity lay at the core of Rice's vocation. The choice of education as his strategy is also indicative of the depth of Rice's vision and commitment. Education is no 'band-aid' solution. It does not offer 'the quick fix' and it can take generations for its impact to be seen. Yet Rice was far-seeing, patient and never wavered from his chosen strategy despite numerous disappointments and set-backs. Presentation Brothers and their associates in education today can take encouragement from this inheritance. The challenge is to re-fashion Presentation educational philosophy and praxis taking account of this understanding of Edmund Rice, of the Church's focus on justice and of the needs of the young people of our time. The Presentation tradition has been strong on the dignity of all, with special concern for the weakest in society. The education
system in contemporary Ireland needs to see models of education as liberation. Our young people need to know Christ. Our society needs to see schools where gospel values of love, justice, truth and equality are not just preached but lived and practised in the daily life of the schools. For Presentation Brothers and their associates to move towards this vision of education may demand in their own lives, something of the degree of conversion that we see in the founding story of Edmund Rice. In order to embrace the new vision of life which had formed in his reflection and prayer, Edmund Rice had to embrace a theology of relinquishment. This involved leaving his own house and comfortable lifestyle and moving to the margins. It called for a deep change of mentality and attitude. At a time in his life when most men yearn for consolidation and stability, Rice was challenged to embrace a totally new world view. In Irish education today a similar degree of conversion may be necessary to help post-modern Irish youth discover the riches of Christ and to come to know in their lives the depths of love and hope it offers.

4.4 Continuing the Presentation Charism in Education

The core group of professed Brothers has a key role to play as enablers, as people who empower leadership and movement in the wider Presentation Family. While we view positively partnership, diversity and new forms of membership, there will always be a need for a group of professed Brothers at the heart of the Presentation Family. Hence the importance for the Presentation Brothers and their Associates to encourage and promote vocations to the Religious life in new and creative ways. It is at this point that the present study would diverge from other studies of Religious Orders in similar circumstances. What is often postulated for the Religious life is extinction or at best the steady management of decline. Phrases like ‘handing over to the laity’ though well intentioned can betray a paternalistic mindset. The present author contends that both Religious and lay people have a valuable role to play in the future of Catholic education. A smaller number of Religious is accepted as a matter of fact and this, indeed, signifies a changed role. In the case of the Presentation Brothers, however, the core group of Brothers provides stability and continuity ensuring the transfer of the charism and the validation of its authentic expression from one generation to the next within the Presentation Family. The collective loss of nerve which has gripped many Religious in education needs to be addressed in all its complexity. What is called for is a radically
new understanding of the vocation of the Christian teacher. This does not imply that all Presentation Brothers should be teachers but it does imply a re-appropriation among the Brothers of an enthusiasm for the teaching ministry whether in formal or non-formal settings.

In the light of this debate which impinges not just on the future of Religious schools, but on the future of Religious life itself, it is significant how views on vocations have changed over recent years. Perhaps the crisis had to reach a certain level for a new appreciation of the Brothers' vocation to emerge. Within the Presentation Family, at the moment, some of those who most enthusiastically promote and support Religious vocations are lay teachers and Associates. They have been engaged by the new vision emerging from the Congregation and they wish to ensure that the Brothers have an active role well into the future. What is taking place among the Presentation Brothers can be categorised as nothing less than a paradigm shift.

A paradigm can be defined as:

a set of rules and regulations (written or unwritten) that does two things: (1) it establishes or defines boundaries; and (2) it tells you how to behave inside the boundaries in order to be successful.

The traditional paradigm of religious life involved highly structured community life, a shared apostolate and regular participation in prayer and rituals. In the case of teaching Orders there was also a strong commitment to the content and methods of Catholic education and to the value of schooling. This was certainly the paradigm out of which the Presentation Brothers lived their lives until Vatican II. De Thomasis contends that even prior to the Council most teaching Religious were working out of a failed paradigm of Religious life. The form of Religious life they lived was shaped in function of a different world. The need for a radical change was often concealed by the still large number of entrants up to 1970. He contends:

We were attempting to order our lives by an outmoded paradigm. The myths and metaphors at the core of our thought were not translatable into a lexicon that could speak to the problems and challenges we found in our community and classrooms every day. The model of community life was also drawn from another time. We had replaced meaningful, useful rituals with superficial patterns of behaviour that isolated us from authentic community experience. Our paradigm failed us, and we, in time, failed one another.
He goes on to argue that the turbulence of the times do not allow for smooth limited paradigm shifts but rather that violent paradigm shifts are the order of the day in all aspects of human affairs. Vatican II's emphasis on the laity and the attractiveness of the lay apostolate created a situation, unforeseen by the Council itself whereby Religious Orders suffered a dramatic loss of commitment as well as the onset of a deep and prolonged vocations crisis. The Council initiated a major paradigm shift in the self-understanding of the Church and of Religious life. Endorsement of the lay vocation and the lay apostolate took away from a fundamental distinction between lay and Religious and initiated an identity crisis for many Religious, both corporately and individually. The paradigm shift referred to among the Presentation Brothers has by the 1990s reached the stage of a new clarity regarding identity and mission. This search for identity began in a serious way in 1981 under Br. Jerome Kelly and a new leadership team. Equally it can be argued that the decade of the 70s was a time of drift for the Brothers. The full import of the Council's theology began to be felt in Ireland. Large numbers left Religious life and those who stayed seemed to have no answers for the surrounding confusion and loss of meaning.

Paradigm theory postulates the irreversibility of the paradigm shift. A new paradigm must be forged which questions and sometimes discards large elements of the ideology of the previous paradigm. This is particularly difficult for Catholic Religious Orders where customs and traditions are deeply rooted. It has been particularly difficult for Religious Orders of teachers whose entire training and experience has cast them in the role of people who have the answers. One can argue that it is even still more difficult for men (and for Irishmen!) to live with the ambiguity of not being in control and of the constant need for institutional adaptation. Nowhere has this difficulty been more evident than in debate around the issue of 'the traditional apostolate'. For the Presentation Brothers this has manifested itself in the form of a debate between those who adhere to the school apostolate as against those who advocate more diversified educational ministries, in particular catering for the needs of the poor and marginalised. Neither side disputes the value and need of educating the poor, however one defines the term. The debate largely centres on a question of strategy: Is the school still the best
strategy to fulfil the apostolic mission of the Congregation? Even the term 'traditional apostolate', however, is not as simple a term as in former times.

In the distant past, those in need 'stayed put'; their conditions rarely changed, the knowledge and skill of the religious person was relatively simple and stable, and the values and expectations of church and society did not vary in any significant way. In other words, the solutions to the problems of the needy were discoverable and could be forged into well-defined apostolates. Religious men and women truly knew what was best for their clients, and more importantly, they knew what needed to be done to improve the lives of those they served.  

Given the magnitude and rapidity of change, the Presentation Brothers will continue to struggle with these questions for some time to come. Part of the paradigm shift affecting the Brothers must involve a transformation in their attitude to change itself. Since the majority of the Brothers were trained in function of a more static world and church, such a transformation is by no means easy. It calls for a pro-active stance which views the process of change as an opportunity to shape the future. Equally the Brothers along with other groups in Irish society are called to move away from an insular focus and to begin to think in global terms. Ireland is increasingly conscious of its place in the new Europe. The society of the future will be an information society. In this society the means of production will not be industry or capital but rather the intelligence and information in people's heads. Power will be in the hands of those who own and command information. Irish education must prepare our young people to take their place at all levels in this new society. The global village society of the future will ensure the instantaneous sharing of knowledge and information through increasingly sophisticated means of communication. Technology in itself, however, does not guarantee genuine human progress and those involved in education must continue to promote reflection on values and ethical questions. Luyckx sees a search for spirituality as being at the core of the movement towards a new Europe.

Modern life has admirably used the potential of intellectual thought, but it has almost erased the collective path towards depth and spiritual meaning of life. Even worse, it blocks the access to deeper meaning because this path is not rational. One feels more and more today a latent search for spirituality, what is really new is that this demand is not any more confined to the private, it is coming up also more and more in the public sphere.
The Presentation Brothers can respond to this latent search for spirituality. The Brothers have a long tradition in this area. They have over two centuries evolved a solid spirituality which has stood the test of time. In terms of its ethical and educational dimensions it has something to offer to society today. As the education system comes under pressure from utilitarian demand and industrial power blocs within society, there remains a challenge to keep the person, and the destiny of the person at the centre of the system. In educational debate in Ireland there has frequently been a failure to deal with fundamental issues of philosophy and values. Rare indeed are those who have spoken on the spiritual dimension of education. Yet it still remains at the core of the debate. Again Luyckx affirms:

The best formation one could provide today is possibly of a general and humanistic kind. But one should also dare to insist on a truly spiritual dimension. In order to function correctly the human brain must have a clear vision of the meaning of life and be able to live it from within. We need to re-invent "humanities" for the information society. This could be a challenge to religious teaching orders today.23

4.5 New Partnerships and Possibilities

Another feature of the challenge of change facing the Brothers has been a radically new view of membership of the Congregation. In particular, this has come about through the development of what is termed ‘The Associate Movement’. Associates are lay people who feel drawn to a closer involvement in the vision, spirituality and ministry of the Presentation Brothers. They are often colleagues, teachers or co-workers who are searching for a more meaningful spirituality and find a faith community of support in the Brothers and fellow Associates.

Traditionally only professed Brothers or novices were regarded as members of the Congregation. Permanent juridical membership is granted to a Brother at the time of final profession. Thus it took many years and a very definite permanent commitment before one became a fully fledged member of the Presentation Brothers.

The relationship of the Brothers with lay teachers, colleagues and parents has already been discussed. In general terms, this is a positive, caring, respectful and mutually enriching relationship. As such it constitutes a valid and valued part of the Presentation
tradition. Until recent times, however, the particular structure of vowed community life lived by the Brothers allowed for only limited forms of partnership in mission. The paradigm shift in ecclesiology initiated by the Second Vatican Council along with change in education provide new possibilities for partnership between Religious and laity in the task of Catholic education. Partnership in mission, however, does not capture the full extent of the vision underpinning the Associate Movement. What is envisaged is lay secular Christians, single and married, being incorporated into the life as well as the mission of the Presentation Congregation. This postulates a new type of membership of the Congregation. It is based on a deeper insight into the charism of Edmund Rice. The charism is a gift of the Holy Spirit to certain individuals or groups for the building up of the faith community. The Presentation Brothers and the Christian Brothers have been stewards of the Edmundian charism and provide a structure of continuity to ensure the growth of the charism among God's people. The charism was never limited to the Brothers. The Associate Movement seeks to recognise the legitimate vocation of single and married Christian people who feel called to live out their Christian vocation according to the charism of Edmund Rice. It seeks to incorporate them more closely into the Edmundian family and to offer them a structure of support for the living out of their vocation.

Since many of the Associates of the Presentation Brothers now and in the future will be teachers, this movement is potentially very significant for education in Presentation schools. An analysis of the origin and development of this new form of membership of the Presentation Congregation has major relevance to the future role of the Brothers in education. Given the small number of professed Brothers and the potentially far greater number of Associates, it is clear that the continuance of the Presentation charism in education may depend significantly on the formation and development of Associates and co-workers. In this regard, the Brothers have a key role to play. In turn, the challenge posed by the phenomenon of an Associate Movement will influence the apostolic direction which the core group of Brothers takes in the future. The existence of such a movement poses challenges and questions for both groups. It also offers new opportunities for growth. It may yet turn out to be one of the most significant development in the life of the Presentation Brothers since Vatican II.
The origins of the Presentation Associate Movement lie in a resolution passed at the 1987 General Chapter of the Brothers. The resolution called on each region of the Congregation to establish associate groups. The spur for this initiative came from the experience of Religious in other parts of the world, particularly in the United States. In the American context, Religious had been experimenting for some years with various forms of associate membership and affiliate programmes. The Presentation Brothers initially established associate groups in the West Indies. This was followed by England and by 1990 the movement had reached Ireland. The strategy proposed was that each community of the Brothers would establish an associate group in its local area. Membership was by personal invitation. In each community, a Brother took responsibility for contacting potential associates. In most cases these were people who were already closely involved in the life and ministry of the Brothers. Inevitably many were teachers in Presentation schools.

The focus of the Associate Movement was firstly on the spiritual development of the members. Regular meetings were held in which Brothers and associates prayed and shared faith together. Much time was spent on the study of scripture and on the life and vision of Edmund Rice. Membership is open to men and women, single people and married people, young and old. The Brothers were careful to stress the primacy of the spiritual development of the Associates. In the early years at least the focus was not on ministry. Neither did the Brothers establish the Associate Movement with a view to fostering vocations to the Brotherhood. The fact that membership was open to women and to married people made this clear. Interestingly however, as some groups developed the focus did move to questions of ministry and many Associates, seeing value in the Brotherhood, became enthusiastic supporters of fostering vocations to the professed Congregation.

Associate groups were often founded around friendship with a Brother or a local community. From 1990 onwards the movement developed mainly around the Brothers communities in Cork, though it has since spread to other parts of the country. With the support of the Congregational Leadership Teams and the enthusiasm of a number of Brothers, the movement has gone from strength to strength. The Associate Movement now exercises a major influence on the Brothers’ work in education. Most of the lay principals and many key members of staffs are members of Associate groups. Such
membership as well as being a support to them in their own personal and faith journeys also involves them in on-going reflection on the Presentation vision and philosophy of education.

Not all the Brothers responded enthusiastically to the idea of the Associate Movement. Some saw the Associates as an intrusion into the life of the professed community. Others unfairly characterised the Associates as having all the benefits of professed membership of the Congregation without any of the responsibilities. Most Brothers, however, saw the development of associate groups as a 'sign of the times', as an action of the Holy Spirit. The Associate Movement was seen as developing further the concept of a 'Presentation Family' and as offering new life to the Congregation. The commitment and generosity shown by so many Associates soon allayed the fears of Brothers who had fears and reservations. The thrust of the movement has been theologically sound in that it is based on a respect for all the vocations within the Presentation Family. The Associates do not see themselves as replacing the professed membership. Indeed the emphasis has been on Religious, married and single people working together for the mutual upbuilding of all vocations.

The study of the life of Edmund Rice undertaken by all Associates has inevitably led to questions of mission and ministry. For the many teachers involved in the movement the Associate group offers them a context for their own faith journey and the experience of a supportive faith community. Such a supportive milieu is not available to them in other areas of their lives and is certainly not available in many parish communities at the present time. Teachers who are Associates assert that their membership of the movement positively influences their work in Presentation schools. They internalise and assimilate in a deeper way the Edmund Rice vision. The Brothers too are enriched by the sharing, commitment and support of the Associates. In particular, the role of women Associates has been pivotal in many groups. Women bring a feminine perspective to all issues affecting the Presentation Family and the work of the schools. They now constitute an increasing percentage of the staffs in the Presentation schools. Margaret O'Driscoll and Anne Cleary have represented the Congregation at national and international levels on committees which worked towards the beatification of Edmund Rice. Since 1996 Margaret O'Driscoll has worked full-time on behalf of the Congregation in the development of the Associate Movement.
In the early years each group of Associates developed in its own particular way according to local circumstances and influences. However, as the movement has developed new questions are presenting themselves. The task of articulating what it means to be an Associate of the Presentation Congregation is on-going. The issue of structures and an explicit form of commitment still need to be looked at in more detail. As new members join, a programme of formation also needs to be put in place. Such programmes, however, need to take account of the different needs of the Associates. Some are looking for a supportive faith-community, a place to pray and share, while others are looking for a deeper incorporation into the life and vision of the Congregation. Some Associates are in fact looking for a form of co-membership which might involve living in community with professed Brothers. In grappling with these issues it is clear that we are moving into a new paradigm. However it unfolds, the Associate Movement will continue to have a major impact on the educational mission of the Brothers. Associates will play a major role on school staffs, on boards of management and as school principals. The Presentation and Edmund Rice vision will continue to evolve in the schools through the presence of Associates. This is not to argue that teachers who are not Associates will not play their part in the development of this vision but rather that the Associate Movement, offers one privileged strategy for influencing in a deep way the lives of one group of lay teachers and of the schools.

Professor Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh in response to a CORI position paper on the future role of Religious as trustees makes an interesting point in the light of the development of the Presentation Associate Movement:

As to vocations, I might just say this, that perhaps the projections here are prudent, and certainly in terms of the age-profile of the Congregations they seem sound and sensible. But it probably would be unwise to project this trend too far into the future. It might be a bit too deterministic. It is, I think, not outside the bounds of possibility, certainly, that in future years there may be some new developments of a more flexible and fluid kind, some new candidates for Christian ministry and Religious Congregations for a period in their lives rather than for a life-time commitment. The resource question may not be as fixed and deterministic as the projections make out now; but they seem sound and prudent at least for the next decade.24

Ó Tuathaigh is perceptive in pointing to the fact that new forms of membership or of association with Congregations may emerge and that this will have impact on the Religious presence in education. Though it has been clearly stated that the Presentation
Brothers do not view the Associate Movement primarily in terms of new professed vocations, nevertheless over time some new candidates will inevitably emerge from these groups. However the majority of Associates, who are teachers, and certainly those who move towards a form of co-membership would seem to fit well into the scenario outlined by Ó Tuathaigh. The Associate Movement offers a moment of great grace and great opportunity to the Presentation Brothers. It is clearly an area of growth and new life. It is a model for laity and Religious collaborating in mission. The fact that it has evolved in such a positive way to date is a tribute to the vision and commitment of both Brothers and Associates. The future development of the movement will require resources and personnel. The continued and active support of the Congregational Leadership Teams will be critical. The Brothers see the development of Associates as part of the educational mission of the Congregation, constituting as it does a significant apostolate in the area of adult religious education and faith formation. The Associates, in turn, make clear in their own statements their commitment to the mission of the Brothers in the Christian education of youth.

The mission of the Presentation Brothers is Christian formation, primarily of youth and in particular of the poor and disadvantaged. As Presentation Associates, we are challenged by the vision of Edmund Rice and the mission of the Presentation Brothers. We seek to respond to this challenge in our daily lives and for our world today ...

We seek to engage young people in a critical reflection on faith issues and we support them in developing leadership skills.

Another initiative affecting the Brothers' work in education has been the attention given in recent years to supporting lay principals and members of Boards of Management. The Brothers have also focused in a new and sustained way on the on-going professional development of teachers. In the case of principals and board members the Province Leadership Teams have regularly organised seminars and in-service days for them. Principals meetings, in particular, serve as a means of mutual support and of sharing good practice between different Presentation schools. School principals carry a very heavy burden today and the Brothers have been very conscious of offering support and encouragement, particularly to lay principals who do not have the community tradition and support often available to Religious principals.
4.6 Challenges for the future of the Presentation School

At one level it is clear that Presentation Brothers’ schools face the future with confidence and optimism. Generally speaking the schools, both primary and second-level, are highly regarded in their local communities. They are seen as centres of academic and sporting excellence. The schools are led by highly committed principals and staffs. Based on a solid tradition they are seen as open to development and change. Examination results are very good and the schools retain a high level of parental confidence and support. The transition to lay leadership and the inclusion of parents and teachers on boards of management have been positive experiences. While at a surface level the future seems bright, on deeper analysis certain problems are apparent which give cause for concern. The competitive nature of schooling, particularly at second-level with its emphasis on ‘points’ for entry to third level, has seriously damaged the schools’ capacity to build community. The race for points allied to the influence of market forces has made schools into highly individualistic competitive places where the weak, however one characterises them, can suffer disadvantage. Catholic schools and Presentation schools are not immune from this process. Indeed the very ‘success’ of Presentation schools in market terms may be inhibiting the implementation of the basic vision on which the schools were founded. A document from the Sacred Congregation of Catholic Education makes the following point:

> Education is not given for the purpose of gaining power but as an aid towards a fuller understanding of and communion with, man, events and things. Knowledge is not to be considered as a means of material prosperity and success but as a call to serve and be responsible for others. 

Education as a call to communion and growth has been central to the Presentation tradition since the time of Edmund Rice. This has expressed itself in a special way in the service and empowerment of the poor. Today, poverty is found in the schools in many forms be it material, emotional or spiritual. The capacity of Presentation schools to continue to respond to this need may be hampered by the dominance of market forces.

The influence of market forces on education in Ireland has been very pronounced in recent years. ‘Education for a Changing World’, a government Green Paper on education published in 1992, placed great emphasis on educating for work and creating an enterprise culture. The subsequent White Paper on education ‘Charting our
Education Future', though not as stark in reducing education to purely economic goals, nevertheless failed to deal in any serious way with basic philosophical questions pertaining to education. Key questions concerning the meaning and goal of life and what kind of education constitutes the best preparation for life are not dealt with. In the White Paper the issue of ethos merits three paragraphs out of a two hundred and thirty page document and these are couched in very general terms. Unfortunately in the Irish context 'ethos' is often seen as a Catholic issue or pertaining to the agenda of a particular Church. There exists at the moment in certain sections of Irish society, particularly the media, a strain of hostility to the Catholic Church. It may be a sign of increased materialism or a reaction to a perceived authoritarianism of the Church in the past. Often it expresses itself in an almost adolescent style anger which views with suspicion any effort to promote Catholic identity even if this is done in the most balanced and moderate terms. Catholic schools are so enmeshed with the State system that their capacity to assert a particular identity or to promote an alternative set of values is often limited. Pressures on students and teachers associated with State examinations, parental worries concerning access to third level and employment issues, all combine to marginalise the religious dimension of Catholic schools. This situation must be a cause of major concern to the Presentation Brothers and all committed to the Presentation tradition in education. If Catholic schools are in a situation of goal displacement, then this situation must be named and confronted.

School communities, staffs, students and parents must come to a new level of awareness of the essential role of Catholic and Presentation education today. On-going reflection and dialogue need to involve all the partners and constituent elements of the Presentation Family. Presentation Brothers can play a critical role in facilitating the dialogue and thereby render great service to the future of Catholic education.

One Presentation Brother who has written on the future of Catholic schools in the Irish context is Br. J. Matthew Feheney, Director of the Christian Leadership in Education Office (CLEO), Cork. Br. Feheney writes on the issue of Catholic schools in general, but given his personal experience and interests, we may take it that his comments have a particular application to Presentation schools. He foresees a future, indeed a present reality in many instances, where the schools will be almost exclusively administered by lay men and women. This begs the question as to how these people are being prepared
to assume a leadership role in Catholic schools? Br. Feheney’s response is to highlight the need to devise appropriate structures for the future and secondly to cater to the need for suitable staff training and development. The policy recommendations of the FIRE Report (1973) have largely dominated the strategy of trustees over the last twenty five years. Commissioned by the CMRS the report examined the future involvement of Religious in Irish education and recommended, among other things, the establishment of participative management structures involving teachers and parents. Br. Feheney sees the ‘enlightened leadership’ of CMRS as now continuing through the Education Commission of the re-named CORI. He broadly endorses the policy of CORI regarding the future of trusteeship. Br. Feheney notes that:

... trustees are not considering abandoning their Catholic schools, or transferring them to the State or one of the Vocational Education Committees, but are actively involved in devising ways in which, despite the absence of a physical presence, they will be able to exercise the role of trustees ‘pro-actively in schools so that their Congregations’ religious and educational philosophy is a significant source of influence in the schools’. (CORI, 1996, xi)  

Feheney goes on to note the positive results of studies concerning the effectiveness of Catholic schools in the United States, Australia and Britain. This has led to a renewed interest in Catholic education. He foresees such a movement as also affecting Ireland in the near future:

Moreover, this interest in Catholic schools on the part of professional educationists is not due to any inherent interest in the Catholic religion, but is due to the remarkable success, as proved by empirical research, of these schools in meeting new educational challenges, especially those resulting from the unhelpful social and economic changes taking place in the world. There seems to be no good reason why Catholic schools in Ireland should not be able to render a service comparable to that rendered by their counterparts in the inner cities of the U.S.A. To do this, however, Irish Catholic schools will not only have to organise themselves to meet the challenges ahead, but they will also have to achieve congruence between their words and their deeds. They will really have to do what they say (and have long said) they purport to do. And this brings us to the training and development of personnel.

Feheney’s contribution through the work of CLEO, to preparing future leaders in Catholic schools, is outlined in Chapter Five. However, the above quotation is evidence of his thinking on the issue of a positive future for Catholic schools in Ireland. Given Br. Feheney’s status as one of the leading educational thinkers among the Presentation
Brothers, it clearly points to a wider confidence among the Brothers in their future role and mission. In facing the future, the Brothers will need to pay particular attention to a number of issues. Firstly, partnership with teachers, parents and students will be central to the renewal of Catholic education. In this regard there is much of merit in the Presentation tradition. It will require on-going development. Secondly, Presentation schools will need a vigour and an enthusiasm about living gospel values, if they are to resist and challenge the pressures of materialism and consumerism. Thirdly, there is no truly Catholic education without a sound doctrinal basis. Presentation schools exist to promote knowledge and love of Jesus Christ, God made man. This faith position is at the heart of all Catholic schooling and has profound implications for how the young are educated. In the task of Catholic education, humanistic values alone, however important, are not enough. As Dilanni notes:

Yes, Christ is at work in the world wherever human good is being done, and we have to recognise and foster such work wherever we find it. We must also be aware, however, that to be a Catholic Christian it does not suffice to foster humanistic values. Besides demanding that we be moral root and branch, Catholicism demands belief in many strange things, like the Incarnation, the need for redemption, the Resurrection, the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist, the role of Mary, and the like. As James Hitchcock has insisted, the idea of dogma is essential to Catholicism and dogma is important precisely because it protects us from the “almost fanatical drive which each epoch manifests to re-mold all of reality to suit its own specifications”.

Personal faith in Christ has been central to the lives of generations of Presentation Brothers. Witnessing to this faith must be a key element in shaping Presentation education into the future. Union with God, through Jesus, is central to all of life. In witnessing to this, the Brothers can be truly prophetic for:

... which is more counter-cultural – to say, we must strive to save planet earth, or to say we truly believe that the dead are with God because Jesus resurrected from the dead, and that this makes all the difference?
References and Notes : Chapter 4


2. Ibid., xvii.


5. ‘Presentation Family’ is a term in use among the Brothers since 1994. It highlights the fact that the charism and mission of Edmund Rice are not limited to the Brothers alone. They include co-workers, Associates, parents and young people. In the last four years the term Presentation Family has found its way into official documents of the Brothers. Some argue that the choice of the term ‘family’ is inappropriate in this context. ‘Community’ and ‘Movement’ are sometimes offered as alternatives. Yet ‘Presentation Family’ as a term describing a new collaboration among the Brothers and their Associates remains in popular use at the moment.

6. Summer workshops, involving Brothers and Associates in 1995, 1996, 1997 and 1998 have been significant in contributing towards this movement.

7. Edmund Rice suffered much opposition from within the Christian Brothers in the 1830s. His successor as Superior General, Br. Michael Paul Riordan (not to be confused with Br. Michael Augustine Riordan of the Presentation Brothers) seems to have promoted and strengthened a French Lasallian influence in the Irish Christian Brothers’ Congregation.

8. Here we employ a broader term ‘Edmund Rice Family’ to connote the Christian Brothers, Presentation Brothers and their lay Associates and co-workers. In this sense the Presentation Brothers form a distinctive branch of the Edmund Rice Family. However, in a wider sense again, the term ‘Presentation Family’ is used to designate the professed Brothers, Sisters and lay Associates of three Congregations,
viz. the Presentation Sisters, the Presentation Brothers and the Christian Brothers. More accurately, drawing on the names of the two founders, Nano Nagle and Edmund Rice, this should be termed the ‘Nagle-Rice Family’. A certain confusion and imprecision over language, perhaps in itself, indicates the rapidity of change affecting the three Religious Congregations involved.


10. Ibid., 3.


12. In Birr, the Brothers, in collaboration with the Mercy Sisters and the County Offaly Vocational Education Committee, established a new Community school. In Milltown (Co. Kerry) a new co-educational voluntary secondary school was established in collaboration with Presentation Sisters, while in Cobh a similar arrangement was followed in an amalgamation with the Mercy Convent Secondary School.

13. The appointment of Parthalán Ó Céilleachair as principal in Coláiste an Spioraid Naoimh, Bishopstown and Cathal Ó Corcora in Coláiste Chríost Rí, Turners Cross, are cases in point.


15. Ibid., 17.


18. The Vocation Commission which advises and assists the Vocation Director in his work includes lay Associates as well as Brothers.


21. Ibid., 52.


23. Ibid., 14.


28. Ibid., 211.


30. Ibid., 11.
CHAPTER 5

AN EVALUATION OF THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE PRESENTATION BROTHERS TO IRISH EDUCATION
5.1 Defining the Task

In this chapter we are concerned with evaluating the contribution of the Presentation Brothers to education in Ireland from 1960 to the present day. Education is concerned with helping individuals achieve their full potential as human beings. Learning experiences are designed to facilitate this growth, this movement towards potentiality. An educational process is effective to the extent that there is agreement between what it sets out to achieve, its objectives, and what it accomplishes, its outcomes. In this regard a process of evaluation would assess the degree of congruence between objectives and outcomes.

The task here is to assess the contribution of the Presentation Brothers as a corporate body in Irish education, during the period under review. A problem arises as to what would constitute a set of relevant and valid criteria for this process? Earlier in this work we highlighted the fact that on account of their historical development and the urgency of the work of the schools, the Brothers did not clearly articulate their philosophy of education. Indeed it is only in the last fifteen years that this process has begun in any coherent way. Congregational and school mission statements along with pastoral planning and explicitly stated objectives are relatively new phenomena. If the Brothers had clearly articulated their educational philosophy and defined objectives, then evaluation would be a straightforward task. An evaluative process would then determine the extent to which the Brothers implemented their philosophy and attained their objectives. However, given the implicit nature of the Brothers' philosophy and objectives, the evaluator is forced to proceed with caution since one may apply criteria which are neither valid nor appropriate. The religious motivation underlying the Brothers' involvement in education further complicates the issue. The Catholic Christian belief in the transcendental destiny of the human person forms and transforms the way young people are educated. Yet clearly aspects of this transcendental dimension remain outside the ambit of scientific evaluation.

The forgoing argument is not advanced either to indicate the lack of worth or indeed the impossibility of an evaluative process in this context. In highlighting the difficulty and the complexity of the issues involved it registers a necessary caution and humility before embarking on the task. Evaluation clearly cannot be reduced to passing judgements
with the benefit of hindsight on the actions of people in the past. The challenge is to evaluate the contribution of the Presentation Brothers as a corporate body in Irish education. Evaluation, in the best sense will also orient towards the future. It will advance some learning and give some pointers for future action. Broadly speaking in the context of the Brothers, we will attempt both a summative evaluation and a formative evaluation. The aim of summative evaluation is to find out whether the final effects of what is being evaluated are those which were originally intended. Given the nature and extent of the Brothers’ involvement in education in 1998, is this what those who began the post-Vatican II renewal of the Congregation in 1967 intended it to be? More recently still, in 1981, a new Superior General and Council began a systematic renewal programme. Have the educational goals articulated in those years been accomplished? Secondly, elements of a formative evaluation will also be attempted. Here the aim of the assessment is to find ways of improving the quality of what is being evaluated. Evaluation in the fullest sense must also deal with the issues of community and tradition. The Presentation Brothers receive their mandate and their educational mission from the Catholic Church. To what extent has the educational contribution of the Brothers been faithful to the *magisterium* and to Catholic teaching? The Brothers are part of the Edmund Rice tradition of education. Have they in the last forty years been faithful to that tradition and how has the vision of Edmund Rice influenced educational practice?

Before turning to these and other questions which will constitute the core of the evaluation, two further points need to be made. Firstly, the present writer, as a Presentation Brother, occupies a special position in terms of understanding the internal ‘mindset’ of the Brothers. This can be of assistance in terms of coming to an accurate assessment of the Brothers’ educational contribution. On the other hand, over reliance on an internal perspective may pose a danger to objectivity. Therefore, it will be necessary to try to assume the role of the cultural stranger in evaluating the group’s work. However, complete objectivity is never possible and it is acknowledged that the bias of the researcher will be present to some degree in the interpretation of the data. Secondly, analysing a corporate contribution to education inevitably implies generalisation. There is a strong tradition of respect for the individual or for the local community in the Presentation Brothers’ story. Individual Brothers, particularly
Principals, often shaped local school ethos in quite decisive ways. There were quite significant variations in effectiveness from place to place and generalisations, though at times necessary, may be unjust to some.

5.2 Key Questions

Nevertheless the Presentation Brothers as a corporate body have been involved in Irish education over the last forty years. They have been responsible through their schools for the education of thousands of young Irish people at a time of great and rapid change in Irish society. An evaluation of this contribution to young people and society is both worthwhile and valid.

The evaluation which follows will assess the positive features as well as the deficiencies of the contribution. In this context a response to the following key questions will be outlined:

1) What was the extent of the Presentation Brothers’ involvement in Irish education?
2) Did the Brothers contribute to national policy on education?
3) The Congregation was founded for the education of the poor. Have the Brothers of recent decades and of this generation been faithful to the vision of Edmund Rice?
4) How effective were the Brothers’ schools as Catholic schools? What was distinctive or special about Presentation schools?
5) In what ways might the Brothers have made a greater contribution to education?
6) How would those who initiated the renewal of 1967 and 1981 view the situation of the Brothers in education today?
7) What learnings arise for the Presentation Brothers now and in the future from grappling with all of these questions?
5.3 Positive Features of the Contribution

During the period from 1960 to date the Brothers have been involved in sixteen primary schools. Three of these were private ‘junior schools’ and four were national schools under the trusteeship of the Brothers. The remaining schools were schools in which Brothers taught but until the advent of school boards, these schools were managed by the local clergy. Fourteen of the schools were in the Republic of Ireland and two were in Northern Ireland. Four of the national schools were provided by the Brothers without State assistance. On average, Presentation primary schools had an enrolment of about four thousand boys each year. Visitation books and inspectors' reports record the fact that in general these schools were very well run. The Brothers met the expectations of parents and the wider public regarding good elementary education. There was an emphasis on the ‘3Rs’ – reading, writing and arithmetic. Preparation of children for the sacraments was an important part of school life, there was good discipline and a generous commitment of time and resources to extra-curricular activities. This was a definite commitment to Irish education. However, with the possible exception of the enormous commitment of many Brothers to coaching games and sports, the same needs were being addressed by other national schools with exclusively lay staffs. The question as to whether being in a Presentation school per se made any unique and special contribution to the educational experience of a pupil will be examined later.

In national terms the Presentation Brothers are a small group. Throughout the decades under review the Irish Christian Brothers and the De La Salle Brothers being much larger groups, would have had more impact at national level. The failure of the Presentation Brothers in the last century and in the early decades of this century to establish a network of schools in Dublin is worth noting. The effect of this was to give the Presentation Brothers a ‘Cork’ or ‘southern based’ view of reality rather than a broader national perspective on issues. Not being in the capital geographically, not being close to the centre of political power seems to have invaded the mental attitude of the Presentation Brothers as well. Local statements of school principals apart, the Presentation Brothers corporately never made their views known on national educational policy. The spirituality of Religious life up to recent times would also have inhibited advocacy and entry into educational debate of a political nature. This has now changed in that the Presentation Brothers, through CORI, play an active role in shaping
national educational policy. Br. Bede Minehane, the present Province Leader, has served on both the Executive and Education Commission of CORI, as did Br. Jerome Kelly, the Superior General up to 1993. Generally speaking, however, the Presentation Brothers throughout the 1960s and 1970s were a reactive group in educational terms. Change might come from government, from the hierarchy or from the teachers’ unions, but the ordinary teaching Brothers were content to ‘keep going’ in the classroom and to adapt to new situations of change as best they could. During most of this period, the Brothers conducted four private junior schools which were outside the State system. No systematic attempt was made in these schools to develop alternative methods or curricula. They were often staffed by young, untrained Brothers or by Brothers who, for one reason or another, could not teach in the national school system. Their main purpose was to act as feeder schools for the larger secondary schools to which they were attached.

The Presentation Brothers generally have been very good teachers and very committed to the work ethic. In the congregational ‘mindset’ to be ‘a good Brother’ meant being a good teacher. Dedication and hard work were expected both in school and in extra-curricular activities. The Brothers gave very generous service in this regard. In many of the rural primary schools the Brothers developed ‘secondary tops’. This offered a basic secondary school curriculum to students at the end of 6th class primary school. These ‘secondary top’ programmes often developed into full scale secondary schools. This was a very definite contribution to education at the time. In the absence of the Brothers, quality secondary education would not have been possible for students in small country towns. Wealthier people had traditionally sent their sons to boarding school. However, for the ordinary and indeed economically disadvantaged people, the local Brothers’ school offered them access to an education that otherwise would not have been available. Before the advent of ‘free’ secondary education in 1967, the fees charged in the Brothers’ secondary schools were very small and those who could not afford to pay were charged nothing at all.

In 1965, the Brothers were involved in thirteen secondary schools. Only three dated from before 1921. Six had been established since 1945. The Brothers bore the entire cost of providing these schools. It is true that during the period under review and even at present the secondary school curriculum has a largely academic bias. The system is
dominated by the examination and points system. The Brothers' schools in Cork city, because of the demand for places, operated a selective entry policy which was divisive. Yet, generally, the Brothers' secondary schools greatly enhanced the career and vocational prospects of students. Even students from relatively poor backgrounds were helped to gain access to careers and professions which in the absence of the Brothers' schools and the extraordinary commitment of the Brothers would hardly have been possible for them.

The Brothers also made a valuable contribution to education in the Third World through their overseas missions. An examination of this aspect of the Brothers' apostolate is outside the scope of this work. Suffice to say that Brothers going overseas and returning to the schools in Ireland brought back a richness of experience to the home region. Some of the Brothers who served in the West Indian mission in particular, later returned to assume leadership roles in the Congregation's work in Ireland. Brothers Jerome Kelly, Bartholomew Browne and Matthew Feheney would fit into this category. The educational work of the Brothers on the missions merits a full study in itself. Frequent changes of personnel, however, did ensure that returning missionaries had a broadening impact on the work of the schools at home. Given the very limited resources available to them, the achievements of the missionary Brothers could at times be quite spectacular. The poet, Derek Walcott, a past-pupil of the Brothers' school in the small island of St. Lucia, later went on to win the Nobel Prize for Literature. He attributes his love for literature to the Presentation Brothers. Speaking of the arrival of the Brothers in St. Lucia he said:

It was like fresh air when the Irish Presentation Brothers came. There was intellectual freedom. They were open for debate. You could argue with them. At that level literature does change things.... I think when they came to the Caribbean, certainly to St. Lucia, they found parallels between the Irish condition and the colonial condition and they understood that pretty fast. So they identified with individuality and self-expression. They didn't do anything anti-British, but they weren't bigoted or restricted in how they taught.
5.4 Past-Pupils

At this juncture it is opportune to deal with a question raised earlier as to what features if any, were unique or special to students’ educational experience in Presentation Brother schools? To deal with this question we will examine the writings of a number of significant past-pupils. Presentation past-students are well represented in the literary, economic, political and social life of Ireland. As products of Presentation Brothers’ schools, these past-pupils, particularly those who have written on the topic, offer important insights on the Brothers’ contribution to Irish education.

Serving the student should be the ideal of any educational system or structure. Education is about relationships, the impact of human beings on each other in a shared pursuit of knowledge, development of potential and appropriation of values. Firstly, it must be said that the prevailing image of Brothers in general in modern Irish writing is not a good one. Brothers of all Congregations are often categorised together with the largest group – the Irish Christian Brothers. Depending on one’s point of view, the Christian Brothers system of education is portrayed or caricatured as narrowly Catholic, nationalist and authoritarian. It also has connotations of harshness, repression of creativity and the imagination and the frequent use of physical punishment. It is not the role of this study to investigate the validity or otherwise of these claims. However, it is significant that in popular writing and in the media these images and stereotypes tend to dominate debate. The hugely positive aspects of Christian Brother education are often left unarticulated. To a degree this impacts on all Catholic Religious groups and certainly Brothers’ groups in education. By contrast the writings of Presentation past-pupils generally portray a very different picture and do not support the popular perception of a Brothers’ education referred to above.

The contemporary Irish novelist, John McGahern, attended the Presentation Brothers secondary school in Carrick-on-Shannon, Co. Leitrim in the early 1950s. Later on, as a young teacher in Dublin, McGahern had personal reason to feel the power of an authoritarian Church. Yet in his recollections of his schooldays in Carrick, he seems to set the Presentation Brothers apart from the general Church atmosphere of the time:
Was the atmosphere of the school religious? Looking back, I do not think it was, certainly not oppressively so. Generally, it was a narrow, restrictive, inward-looking time, dominated by a dark Church that emphasised sin, guilt, death and domination.

This atmosphere was all about us, like the damp and the wet weather. My feeling is that the wise Brothers thought this sufficient. They did not feel that they had to haul any more low grade coal from Arigna to the eternal fire. The atmosphere of the school was casual, hard-working, cheerful....

McGahern also highlights the notion that there was little physical punishment in the school and in articulating a strong tribute to the Presentation Brothers employs the religious terminology of grace:

At a time when corporal punishment was widespread in the home and school, there was little in Carrick-on-Shannon. The personalities of Brothers Placid and Damien contributed to this....

I look back on those five years as the beginning of an adventure that has not stopped. Each day I cycled towards Carrick was an anticipation of delights. The fear and drudgery of school disappeared: without realising it, through the pleasures of the mind, I was beginning to know and to love the world. The Brothers took me in, set me down, and gave me tools. I look back on my time there with nothing but gratitude, as years of luck and privilege, and, above all, of grace, actual grace.

This liberal tradition of education encompassing as it does an openness, a passion for truth and a respect for the dignity of the individual seems to have been carried within the Presentation Brothers from generation to generation. The kind of atmosphere and milieu attested to by Walcott and McGahern in very different cultural situations in the 1950s is also highlighted by Cecil Hurwitz who, as a young Jewish boy, attended Presentation College Cork in the 1930s. Hurwitz’s comments are interesting in the light of a contemporary debate regarding how the educational system can contribute towards peace and reconciliation in Ireland.

In the 1930s, ecumenism was not a word in common usage. The Presentation Brothers were ecumenists long before that word became fashionable. I owe them a great debt of gratitude, because, in later life, I became very much involved in the ecumenical movement, when I spearheaded the promotion of prayer for peace and reconciliation in Ireland. Another plus, where the Pres. Brothers and their lay teachers were concerned, was their insistence that the religious beliefs of minority pupils be safeguarded and protected....

In Northern Ireland, where there is so much bigotry, they could learn and invaluable lesson from the Presentation Brothers.
The author and academic Alan Titley was a product of a newer Presentation school – Coláiste Chríost Rí – in the 1960s. As with McGahern he employs the language of 'luck', 'fortune', 'grace' in describing his educational experience with the Presentation Brothers:

Luck in education does not and did not fall unbidden from the sky. It comes about because someone, somewhere, decided to do something, somehow. The education that the Presentation Brothers give and have given has come about because Edmund Rice decided that it should be so. It could have been otherwise. It could have been that it never was. That he did was grace, or fortune, or luck, but it can never be said that it was not good, nor great, nor for the betterment of many generations of Irish children.11

Again, as with McGahern, Titley is at pains to debunk the notion of a régime of excessive corporal punishment in his school:

In the folklore of modern Ireland an education by 'the Brothers' was supposed to be synonymous with bigotry and narrow-mindedness and paranoia. It was meant to be closed and final, definitive and propagandistic. Experience has taught me that this has always been a parody and parody is often the bile of humour.12

The image of Presentation Brothers then emerging from the writings of past-pupils is laudatory. It would seem that at least for these individuals and likely for many others, the Brothers' contribution to their education was positive, significant and emancipatory. This is not to deny the failure of individual Brothers or indeed systemic failure at times. The comments quoted are diverse in time, place and character. Yet they all contain the common threads of respect, dignity and care. This was especially evident for pupils who were in need. Fergal Keane, now a journalist of world renown recalls his days as a troubled teenager in Presentation College, Cork in the 1970s:

In those early days of secondary school I was a far-from-perfect pupil. I talked too much in class, I went on the 'hop', I never seemed to have my homework done on time... Yet, to his credit, Br. Jerome saw all this for what it was: the struggle of a confused teenager trying to find out who he was. He took a personal interest in my progress, encouraging me....13

Keane captures the essentials of the 'Pres' spirit in describing the 'civilised' atmosphere of the school:

What I also cherish is what I will call the 'civilised' atmosphere. Pres. was never a place of fear and terror.... The official disapproval of
physical violence helped to create and nurture an atmosphere of mutual respect.\textsuperscript{14}

As with Walcott and McGahern, Keane remembers in particular the atmosphere of free and critical inquiry, the love of learning encouraged by the Brothers:

Perhaps most importantly, we were encouraged to think and to question. Anybody who thinks the Jesuits have the monopoly on the skills of argument and debate has clearly never experienced the Presentation Brothers in full flight.\textsuperscript{15}

The weight of evidence then, from the writings of significant past-pupils would suggest that certain features were special to the educational experience of students in Presentation schools. A respect for the dignity of the individual, a strong sense of community and the encouragement of critical inquiry are features of the pupils' experience that are mentioned repeatedly. The creation of a milieu in which such qualities could flourish constitutes a significant educational contribution on the part of the Presentation Brothers. This is not to deny that some students had negative experiences in Presentation schools. However, the largely positive picture emerging from the literary works of past-pupils points to a solid educational experience based on gospel values of love, freedom, justice and respect. It is a legacy of which the Presentation Brothers can be justifiably proud.

5.5 Significant Individual Contributions

An evaluation of the contribution of the Presentation Brothers to education will largely be a corporate evaluation. However, a group is composed of its individual members and the talents and gifts of individual members can significantly shape and influence corporate achievement. This section will examine the role of four Brothers as educational leaders and innovators. Each has been chosen because he made a significant contribution to the mission of the Presentation Brothers in education. Each achieved a level of excellence in his chosen area of speciality and each is representative of a different aspect of the Brothers' presence in education.
**Brother Jerome Kelly** has been awarded an honorary doctorate by the National University of Ireland for his contribution to education. In 1994, he was also accorded the rare honour of being made a freeman of Cork City. Br. Kelly, as a young Brother, trained as a primary teacher at the De La Salle Teacher Training College in Waterford. He taught for some years at Greenmount National School in Cork. In 1954, he went to the recently established West Indian mission. Here he served as Headmaster of Presentation College, San Fernando, Trinidad and later as Provincial of the West Indian Province. In 1969, he was elected to the General Council of the Congregation and returned to Ireland to assume the Principalship of Presentation Brothers College, Cork. He quickly gained a national reputation as an educational innovator, promoting new efforts in the area of media studies and parental involvement in education. He founded the S.H.A.R.E. organisation to promote a Christian social consciousness among young people and encouraged his senior students to respond to the problems of poverty, isolation and loneliness among the elderly. For over twenty five years the organisation has been a major success in terms of addressing this issue and also in promoting solidarity between generations. From 1981 to 1993, Br. Kelly was Superior General of the Presentation Brothers and perhaps more than any other single individual has influenced and shaped the Brothers involvement in education.

**Br. Matthew Feheney** has had a brilliant academic career. His contribution to the Presentation Brothers in education has been in the West Indies, in England and in Ireland. He served as principal of Presentation College, Chaguanas, Trinidad. He was a member of the Presentation Brothers General Council from 1981-1993. As a scholar and respected author he has made a major contribution towards developing critical reflection on educational matters among the Brothers. In the context of this study, his role in promoting the professional development of Catholic teachers, principally through the work of CFRC and now CLEO will be examined. Br. Feheney has also played a significant role in the development of the Presentation Associate Movement and in exploring new possibilities for the continuance of the Presentation charism in education.
**Br. Denis Minehane** has spent practically all his teaching career in Birr, Co. Offaly. Assigned to what was then a small town in Ireland’s midlands in 1961, he was soon appointed principal of Presentation College. At this stage the school was a small secondary school for boys. Br. Minehane oversaw the growth and development of the school in the ensuing years. He also actively supported the establishment of a community school in Birr through the amalgamation of three small second-level schools. In 1979 he was appointed principal of the new purpose-built St. Brendan’s Community School. Over the next decades he has continued to play a major role at national level in the community school movement and in educational circles generally. He retired from the principalship of St. Brendan’s Community School in 1997 and is at present Director of the Presentation Brothers Education Office.

**Br. Stephen O’Gorman** was elected Superior General of the Presentation Brothers in 1993. Previous to that he served in the Brothers’ mission in Peru and was Provincial of the Irish Province from 1987-1990. Br. O’Gorman is charged with giving leadership to the educational mission of the Brothers at a very critical time. His early formation and educational experience is typical of many Presentation Brothers. He, too, trained as a primary school teacher at the De La Salle Training College, Waterford and subsequently taught in both primary and secondary schools before moving to administrative and leadership roles. As Principal of St. Joseph’s national School, Cobh, he made a major contribution to young people, to staff development and to the life of the local community, generally. As Irish Provincial and now as Superior General, he has been faced with managing the Congregation’s educational mission in a time of rapid and turbulent change.

Brothers Kelly, Feheney, Minehane and O’Gorman have each made significant contributions to the corporate presence of the Brothers in education. They represent different dimensions of the Brothers’ educational contribution and they illustrate the effect and influence of significant individuals on the educational project of the group.

**Br. Jerome Kelly** returned to Ireland from the West Indies in 1969. As well as being a member of the General Council of the Congregation, he was also appointed headmaster of Presentation Brothers College, Cork. The Ireland of the 1970s was very different in spirit and character to the country he had left in the early 1950s. The transition from a
rather insular, rural based society to a modern open industrial economy was in full swing. Consequently, a period of great change was also underway in the educational field. Presentation Brothers College, Cork had an established reputation for the best part of a century in the academic and sporting arenas. However, by 1970, it was a school deeply unsure of its future. Housed in old and inadequate buildings, lacking the broad range of facilities to provide a modern curriculum, it was a school, to a large extent resting on past glories. Since the advent of free secondary education in 1967, questions had been raised about the desirability or indeed the viability of continuing as a private fee-paying school outside of the State system. Presentation Brothers College, Cork was to a large extent the ‘flagship’ school of the Presentation Brothers. Until recent years the Principal has always been a member of the General Council of the Congregation. Known commonly as 'Pres' the school has historically been a source of financial help to the less well off schools and for the Brothers' missions. Nevertheless an 'anti-Pres' element has always existed within the Presentation Brothers. Some Brothers saw the school as elitist, while others resented the over-identification of the school with the General Council of the Congregation. Certainly by 1970, a number of factors, both internal and external, combined to make the future of 'Pres' look very uncertain.

A feature of the Presentation Brothers' contribution to education during the period 1960-1998 has been the capacity of the Congregation to provide Brothers of high ability as Principals and school managers. Br. Kelly is a very good example of this. He took Presentation College, Cork from its knees and in a few short years restored it to the status of one of the premier boys schools in Ireland. This was achieved by personal enthusiasm, dedication and innovative leadership. Teachers, students and parents responded to his articulation of a new vision for the school. Br. Kelly displayed a great ability to take a leadership role in change. Firmly rooted in a Catholic Christian vision of life, he nevertheless excelled in that characteristic Presentation quality of being able to embrace and shape change. He held to the wisdom of traditional values in education. Good discipline and excellent academic standards are the prerequisites of a good school. He provided all this, however, and more. In a time when such things were still novel and rare, Br. Kelly enthusiastically promoted staff development and parental involvement in education. He was among the first school principals in Ireland to
establish a T.V. studio in his school and to introduce media studies to the curriculum. The key to his success was to combine the best of a traditional Presentation education with a creative response to contemporary educational needs. He had a great commitment to the faith dimension of the school community and even as Principal continued to take religious education classes with the senior students himself.

The S.H.A.R.E. organisation, identified in the public mind with the Presentation Brothers, has largely been the brainchild of Br. Kelly. It constitutes a major contribution to education through the involvement of senior students from twenty-six second-level schools in Cork to Christian social action. Br. Kelly, in the best Edmund Rice tradition, understood Christianity in practical terms. He saw the interconnectedness of school and society. What is discussed in the religious education class must be practised in daily living. In 1970, the centre city area around Presentation College, Cork was heavily populated by elderly people. Many lived in conditions of isolation, poverty and neglect. State and voluntary services were not adequate to the multi-dimensional needs of the elderly poor. The students of Presentation College came from relatively well-off backgrounds and Br. Kelly challenged them to respond to the needs of the elderly poor in their own city. Thus was born the S.H.A.R.E. organisation, which over the last twenty-five years has changed the face of services for the elderly in Cork. S.H.A.R.E. now provides high quality sheltered housing accommodation at more than twelve locations throughout the city. Students in the organisation are now drawn from most of Cork’s second-level schools as well as from Presentation College. The young people fund-raise and manage the organisation themselves. As well as the building programme, the human side of S.H.A.R.E. is, perhaps, even more significant. The young people are encouraged to visit, befriend and learn from the elderly. In an age when young people often reject institutional religion and isolate themselves from community and tradition, S.H.A.R.E. has been a vehicle to keep them connected. It gives practical expression through doing, to their searching and questioning Christian faith. Involvement in S.H.A.R.E. has enriched greatly the lives of thousands of young people and has contributed immensely towards an education for living the Christian life. The success of S.H.A.R.E. is due to many factors – the wisdom of the old, the enthusiasm of the young, the generosity of the people of Cork. Not least among these factors would be, however, the vision, influence and guidance of Br. Kelly.
On his election as Superior General in 1981, Br. Kelly along with a new leadership team, set about the renewal of the Congregation. He was re-elected to a second term as Superior General in 1987 and continued in this office until 1993. A Superior General can have major influence in shaping the Congregation and its mission. His role, under the Presentation Constitutions, is to some degree that of a figure-head, since day-to-day administration is left to Provincials and Regional Leaders in their local areas. Nevertheless, the personality of the Superior General can often impact upon the group in quite profound ways. Br. Kelly brought energy, commitment and dynamism to his role at a very difficult time for leadership in Religious life. He exuded confidence and optimism as he endeavoured to move the group forward and breathe new life into situations and people that had grown lax and stale. In educational terms he promoted and personally contributed towards an extensive programme of staff development in Presentation schools. He actively encouraged study, critical reflection and the process of defining mission statements. He gave particular support and personal encouragement to those involved in religious education.

Br. Kelly repeatedly argued for the important role of the Catholic school, particularly when family life was under so much threat. He believed, and here he was drawing upon personal experience, that it was possible to have an excellent school, meeting ‘market’ demands and at the same time keep the Catholic character of the school central. He endeavoured to outline a new agenda for Presentation schools:

The new programme would have an in-built structure to cater for the development of the total person. It would be anchored to a philosophy which is committed to the gospel message – the gospel message has to do with humanising people and the world in which they live, with bringing Christ and His saving love into every facet of their daily lives. In this programme, pupils would be accepted for who they are and not for what they achieve. The school would be a place where people feel at ease, while relating to one another and to adults in an open, respectful and trusting atmosphere. There would be development of the intellect, of course, and there would an honoured place for academic excellence. But this intellectual development would be within the context of the development of the whole person. There would be a place for culture and aesthetics. School would be, above all, a place where the pupils’ ability to communicate is improved and perfected, not left to chance or impeded. It would be a place where young people are helped to understand, accept and respect their own sexuality; where the major challenge of relating to others would be fully catered for. It would be a
place where parents would feel welcome; they would be involved in the school and in the educational process.\textsuperscript{28}

The above quotation epitomises Br. Kelly's vision of Catholic Christian education. In the Edmund Rice and Presentation tradition, it is both idealistic and pragmatic. He believes that such an education has much to offer to society and to young people today. As a leader and as a visionary, Br. Kelly’s influence on the educational contribution of the Presentation Brothers has been immense.

\textit{Br. Matthew Feheney's} contribution has been of a different type, but no less significant. His pioneering work in the Mount St. Joseph Retreat Centre throughout the decade of the 1980s has already been mentioned. As a member of the General Council between 1981 and 1993 he was a close associate of Br. Kelly, providing an intellectual underpinning to many of the initiatives taking place throughout the Congregation. His academic and scholarly background gave his views a status and respect among the Brothers and in his writings and leadership role he challenged the group to face the reality of educational change and to respond pro-actively. For a number of years he headed the Christian Formation Resource Centre (CFRC) established by the Southern Network of Major Superiors of Religious Orders to support the work of voluntary Catholic Secondary schools in Cork, Kerry and Limerick. CFRC provided a variety of innovative programmes to help principals, boards and school communities in the task of evangelisation. Br. Feheney is a committed believer in the value of the Catholic school. His influence has extended well beyond the schools of the Presentation Brothers. He believes that Catholic secondary schools under the trusteeship of Religious Orders must own their tradition and identity. He believes also that new ways must be found to ensure the continuation of the charisms of the Orders in Irish education.\textsuperscript{29} To this end, he has development programmes of professional development for Catholic teachers, particularly lay people, and he encouraged and facilitated wide research in the area of Catholic education. He sees the task of preparing future leaders for Catholic schools as essential to the mission of the Presentation Brothers at the present time.

In 1997, Brother Feheney, with the support of the Congregation, founded the Christian Leadership in Education Office (CLEO). CLEO operates as a collaborative partner of the University of Hull and provides post-graduate courses leading to the Advanced
Diploma in Applied Education Studies (ADAES), Masters Degree (M.Ed) and Doctorate (PhD). Through advanced training and research, CLEO seeks to promote Catholic Christian leadership in education. The aims of CLEO are as follows:

1) To prepare and develop leaders for Christian schools.

2) By means of post-graduate courses and programmes, that are informed by the values of the Gospel and the Christian tradition of education, to offer in-service training for teachers that meets actual and practical needs while, at the same time, maintaining the highest standards.

3) To build a sense of Christian community among students and faculty.30

CLEO also offers great hope for the professional development of future leaders of Catholic schools. It is a worthy and important element of the Presentation Brothers' contribution to education at the present time. Br. Feheney has been an innovator in educational terms. His capacity to see the broader picture and to take the longer view has greatly enhanced the educational work of the Brothers and others involved in Catholic education. His strategic research and his translation of ideas into practice leaves many teachers, including the present author, in his debt. It is significant that the idea of partnership and of collaboration between Religious and laity has been central to Br. Feheney's educational vision. In this regard, he has played a leading role in the development of the Presentation Associate Movement.31

He also made a major contribution to the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the death of Edmund Rice in 1994.32 In that year he organised a conference on education and the family at University College Cork. He was also a central figure in the work leading towards the beatification of Edmund Rice in 1996, acting as the Vatican appointed Vice-Postulator for the cause. His familiarity with the Edmund Rice story and the Presentation tradition have significantly influenced his approach to contemporary educational challenges and problems. Br. Feheney's deep commitment to the enduring value of Catholic schools was evident in a recent article where he brought the perspective of history to bear on contemporary challenges.

And it was the English bishops, in a period of great poverty and hardship for the Catholic Community after the restoration of the hierarchy in 1850, who penned one of the most moving and unequivocal appeals on record on behalf of Catholic schools:
Do not rest until you see this want supplied; prefer the establishment of good schools to every other work. Indeed, whenever there may seem to be an opening for a new mission, we should prefer the erection of a school, so arranged, as to serve temporarily as a chapel, to that of a Church without one. (Bishops, 1997, 117)33

His final comment on the above statement gives a clear indication of his own values and priorities. ‘This is a statement that all trustees, principals and Boards of Management of Catholic schools could, with benefit, re-read and ponder’.34

Br. Denis Minehane is strongly identified with education in Birr, Co. Offaly. Birr is a town in Ireland’s midlands. Br. Minehan was Principal of the Brothers’ school – Presentation College – from his arrival in the town in 1961. When Presentation College was subsumed into St. Brendan’s Community School in 1979, he was again appointed Principal of the new and larger school and served as Principal until 1997. Br. Minehane’s career mirrors the great changes which took place in Irish second-level education over three decades. From being Principal of a small Religious secondary school for boys in 1961, he found himself principal in 1979 of what was a totally new type of school in Irish educational terms.35 In 1961, the staff of Presentation College consisted of five teachers – three Brothers and two lay teachers. By 1980, there were still three Presentation Brothers on the staff of the new community school – but now among a staff of over sixty teachers.

Br. Minehane has played a major role in education in Birr and in the community school movement at national level. A dynamic and highly effective Principal, in his own career he demonstrates in an outstanding way the capacity of the Presentation Brothers to adapt to new educational realities. To understand fully the role he played in widening the educational vision of the Presentation Brothers, it is necessary to understand the genesis and development of the community school movement.

After the introduction of free education and free school transport in the late 1960s, the numbers attending second level schools increased dramatically. In Presentation College, Birr, pupil numbers doubled between 1967 and 1969. Birr at this time was served by three second-level schools – Presentation College, The Mercy Convent School and a Vocational school. The situation would have been similar in many small and medium-
sized Irish towns. Many school buildings were old and lacked the facilities to deliver a broadly-based curriculum. In this context in 1971, the Department of Education put forward the 'Community School' idea. What was envisaged was the amalgamation of existing small schools of different types and the provision of new and broadly based facilities to meet modern educational needs. Facilities to deliver a curriculum in languages, the sciences, woodwork, metalwork, were badly in need and the Department saw the larger and newer Community School as avoiding the duplication of costly facilities in a local area. In June, 1971, the Department of Education published a list of five towns as offering ideal locations for the development of a Community School. Birr was one of these and the Department officials organised a meeting with the people of the town. Initially the reaction to the idea was hostile. Each of the three local schools to be amalgamated had its own tradition and interests. The value of a choice in school types was argued for. Fears were expressed, particularly from the Catholic schools regarding increased State encroachment in education and the status of religious education in the new Community School. Despite the opposition of locals, Br. Minehane was even at the time aware that the status quo could not continue. He gives a graphic description of the pressures of school life in the early 1970s:

Inwardly, however, I knew that we could not continue with what we had. The prefabs, the cramped space, the shortage of equipment - all were strained by the growing numbers we had to serve. The Department’s point could not be ignored. To upgrade buildings and facilities for three schools in Birr would mean a trebling of some resources and a complete lack of others. For the Principal of a Religious Order school such as Presentation College, there were considerable problems during the sixties and seventies. Insufficient toilet facilities, disintegrating prefabs, inadequate budget, all placed a strain on time and energy that should have been more productively used.... The Principal ran the school, had full teaching hours, i.e. 29 class contact hours per week, took games, did all the secretarial work, made repairs and even cleaned toilets. There was no Principal’s allowance, no recognition for work-load, and no Vice-Principal or post holders to share it. 36

The above description would be typical of the workload carried by many Presentation Brothers, especially school principals, over many decades. In our present age of economic prosperity and increased resourcing of education, the personal sacrifice and extraordinary commitment of generations of Brothers and lay teachers should not be forgotten. They gave totally of themselves for the good of young people, often
achieving quite amazing results under very difficult conditions. Secretarial, maintenance services and facilities taken for granted in schools today were largely not available even twenty years ago. Many teachers also gave of their time freely to extracurricular activities and the Presentation Brothers were to the fore in this regard.

Br. Minehane’s analysis of the educational situation in Birr soon convinced him that the Community School option as proposed by the Department of Education was the best way forward. This was a brave decision as it involved a high degree of risk and a clear step into the unknown. The philosophy of the Community School was that all the children of an area, of different abilities and backgrounds would be educated together. The curriculum would be broad, embracing both academic and technical subjects, thus combining the traditional curricula of both secondary and vocational schools. The trustees of the new school would be drawn from the trustees of the three amalgamated schools, i.e. the Presentation Brothers, the Mercy Sisters and the County Offaly Vocational Education Committee. Though the school would be multi-denominational, it would give an honoured place and make adequate provision for the various religious traditions within the school. Over a number of years, the Presentation Brothers, the Sisters of Mercy and the local Vocational Educational Committee began to work together on the idea of founding the new Community School. Teachers groups and parents were part of the process from the beginning. Though the case was argued largely on pragmatic grounds, certain key aspects of the Community School philosophy had a personal appeal for Br. Minehane. The word ‘community’ contained in the title of the new school linked well with the Presentation tradition. The fact that all the children of the area would be educated together with special provisions and resources made available to combat disadvantage was attractive. Br. Minehane saw the Community School ideal as expressing in a contemporary way many elements of the Edmund Rice philosophy of education.

In 1979 Br. Minehane, with the support of his religious superiors, applied for and was successful in his application to become Principal of the new St. Brendan’s Community School. It was an inspired choice. Between 1979 and 1997 he led the school community to new heights of excellence. St. Brendan’s Birr has become one of the foremost second-level schools in the country. High academic standards and prowess on the sporting field have been combined with solid achievement in terms of personal
development and the education of the whole person. Br. Minehane succeeded very quickly in uniting three staffs into one and in giving an honoured place to three valued traditions in the new reality. His record in Presentation College ensured that he started from a baseline of confidence and good will. He succeeded in motivating and affirming the diverse talents and contributions of teachers, students and parents.

Religious education has always had a special place on the Community School curriculum. The presence of Brothers and Sisters on the staff as well as a team of committed catechists has ensured this. A full-time chaplaincy post has always been available to the school as a paid position. The school has also earned the confidence of other Christian denominations as the following comment from a local Church of Ireland clergyman indicates:

It is now ten years since the opening of our school, and I would like to put on record, the appreciation of the Church of Ireland community in general, and myself in particular for the truly ecumenical spirit that exists in the ethos of the school.... I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all concerned with the school in the excellent reputation it has earned in these past ten years, under the wise leadership of Br. Denis.... They say that a nation or a community can be judged by the treatment of its minorities. If this be the acid test of Birr Community School, then it passes with flying colours.37

Not every Community School has been as successful as St. Brendan’s Birr. Its success on diverse fronts is in no small measure a tribute to the vision, energy and commitment of Br. Minehane. He retired from the principalship of St. Brendan’s in 1997, in order to take up a post as Director of the Presentation Brothers Education Office. The Province Leadership Team established the Education Office as a service to all Presentation schools. Its brief is to fulfil the Brothers’ role as trustees in a pro-active way and to offer a back-up service and support to Principals and school communities. Br. Minehane brings to his new post a wealth of experience and expertise which can now be shared in a wider way within the Presentation network of schools.

Br. Stephen O’Gorman was an outstanding teacher. Much, though not all of his career was spent in the primary sector, culminating with his principalship of St. Joseph’s Primary School, Cobh, County Cork.38 He left this post in 1987 on his appointment as Provincial of the Irish Province of the Congregation. Br. O’Gorman’s formation and school career has mirrored that of many Presentation Brothers of his generation. He
brought to primary school teaching extraordinary commitment and dedication. For him, as for his confrères, teaching was a vocation and a religious work. He developed great rapport with students and was able to bring the best out of them. Religious education was central to all his teaching. In this regard, he was truly an educator, rather than merely an instructor, modelling for and encouraging his students towards personal commitment and practical action. As with so many primary school teachers, Br. O'Gorman had an enthusiasm for and a commitment to the Irish language and Gaelic games. He saw this as part of the rich cultural heritage of the Irish people and as a way of initiating young people into a sense of identity and self-worth.

As Principal of St. Joseph’s, Cobh in the 1980s, he developed the role of principal in a number of significant ways. Firstly, he gave great attention to the pastoral care of staff. At this time, many of his staff were young lay teachers beginning their careers. He gave encouragement and support to them, consciously building a sense of team spirit and community among the teachers. Br. O’Gorman believed that if a happy and caring spirit prevailed among the staff then it would affect the entire school community. These qualities have stood the test of time in St. Joseph’s, Cobh and have been part of his enduring legacy to the school. Secondly, Br. O’Gorman was among the first Presentation Brother principals to actively encourage involvement of parents in the school in a systematic way. Though traditionally Brothers may have had friendly relations with parents in an informal way, they were generally wary of direct parental involvement in the life of the school. Br. O’Gorman took seriously the issue of parental involvement in education and devoted great time and energy in including parents in the educational process. True to the Edmund Rice tradition, he also had a special concern for pupils suffering any kind of disadvantage. Quietly and unobtrusively, practical help was offered in a variety of ways. Br. O’Gorman also had a strong sense of the link between the school and the local community. His strong involvement with the Gaelic Athletic Association in coaching teams of young footballers and hurlers ensured that he was seen in a wider role than that of school principal. The rapport developed with people and the spirit emerging through such involvement with the wider community did, however, rebound to the advantage of the school.

In 1987, Br. O’Gorman was appointed Provincial of the Irish Province. He was at the height of his popularity in school and it was difficult for him to leave a post in which he
was so happy. His new post found him operating in a much broader context. However, the skills of leadership he had developed as a school principal he now employed in a different way. He was a good listener and very caring towards people. He was a team builder who could encourage the gifts of others. He was sufficiently balanced and self-aware to own both his own strengths and limitations. As Provincial, he quickly gained the trust and confidence of the Brothers and school communities. In 1990, when it was widely believed that he would serve another three years as Provincial, he volunteered for the Brothers' mission in Lima, Peru. It underlined his personal commitment to the education of the poor but his departure from the Irish scene was a shock to the Brothers at the time. Br. Jerome Kelly, then Superior General, in a letter to the Brothers, spoke in the following terms of Br. O’Gorman’s move:

It is an important endorsement of the preferential option for the poor made by the 1987 General Chapter. By example, rather than word, he has shown that the preferential option can be a source of inspiration and dynamism.... The sacrifices involved are real. They are real for Brother Stephen and, indeed, they are real too for the Irish Province which will be deprived of his outstanding qualities as leader.39

However, Br. O’Gorman was not to be gone from the Irish scene for long. At the General Chapter of 1993, he was elected to the office of Superior General. His short term in Peru had widened his educational experiences and deepened his appreciation of the educational needs of disadvantaged young people. For the last five years, Br. O’Gorman has led the Congregation through times of great upheaval and challenge. To a large degree he has succeeded in bringing the Brothers, teachers and Associates with him in the task of renewal. The task is on-going and it is too soon to make a definitive assessment of Br. O’Gorman’s period as leader of the Congregation. In terms of change, his strategy has been to steer a middle course, encouraging the new, while also managing to keep on board the bulk of the membership. This is no mean feat in times of rapid change. His personal authenticity has gained the respect of teachers and as a leader he is highly considered and respected throughout the Presentation network of schools.

In terms of the Presentation Brothers’ contribution to education Brothers Kelly, Feheney, Minehane and O’Gorman are figures that stand out in the story of the last four decades. Working in very different contexts, each in his own way made a significant
contribution to education and shaped in a hugely positive way the corporate contribution of the Presentation Brothers as a Religious Congregation. They are men of exceptional personal talent but in another sense they are typical of the group which produced them. They brought to their work in education the philosophy, values and spirit of Presentation Brothers training and formation. It is clear that they played to the strengths of this formation and added their own unique contribution to the Presentation story in education. Other Brothers could have been chosen, but an attempt has been made in these four accounts to touch on different aspects of the Presentation contribution to education and to highlight the impact of a variety of significant individuals on the life and direction of the group.

5.6 The Role of Sport

Presentation Brothers contributed to the education of their students, not just through delivery of the main curriculum but in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Music, drama and debating have been strong features of many Presentation schools, but by far the dominant extra-curricular activity in all Presentation schools has been sport. Sport, and especially team games, have played a central role in education in the schools. Traditional Presentation Brother philosophy saw sports and team games as vital to a well-rounded education. They develop qualities of co-operation, honesty, loyalty, as well as physical and mental health. For the Brothers, team games had an educational purpose. They were seen to foster school spirit, a sense of community and the ability to relate to others. Team sports were seen as a preparation for life and pupils were challenged to give of their best and to achieve a level of excellence. The Presentation Brothers of the last four decades have given a vast amount of time as well as great energy and dedication to promoting sport among young people. This was given generously and freely and constitutes a genuinely positive contribution to the total education of youth.

It is significant that two of the Brothers we mentioned earlier – Br. Denis Minehane and Br. Stephen O’Gorman, were both deeply committed to the promotion of gaelic games. Indeed the Presentation Brothers community in Birr is strongly identified with the resurgence of the game of hurling in Offaly. Recent Offaly successes at All-Ireland
senior level have been attributed to the extensive and intensive coaching of young people over many years. This movement is largely attributed to the Presentation Brothers in Birr. The commitment and dedication of Brothers Vincent Costin, Cronan Loughrey and Denis Minehane, among others, have borne fruit magnificently. What is significant is that winning trophies did not constitute an end in itself. For these Brothers sport was as much a part of education as classroom teaching and they saw both as religious works.\(^{40}\) The hours given to young people on the sportsfield after school were a concrete expression of a commitment to the young and to their total education as human beings and as children of God.

Br. Colm Taft is another Presentation Brother who combined the role of dedicated teacher with outstanding sports coach. Br. Taft spent most of his teaching career in Coláiste Chríost Rí in Cork. This school has a proud tradition in gaelic games, especially football and Br. Taft was legendary for his talents as a coach. The following words, from the homily preached at his funeral Mass in 1995, capture something of the man:

He brought to the classroom immense dedication and remarkable skills. Colm’s life is a reminder to us of the exalted vocation that teaching is, and that we must never lose sight of teaching as a vocation. The presence of so many young people, students and past students, and the depth of emotion and feeling which is being expressed here today is evidence of the genuine love and respect in which Colm was held by his students....

Colm’s record as a football coach, and indeed an athletics coach was legendary. (He) was totally dedicated. He worked day and night for the good of young people.... He gave and didn’t count the cost.\(^{41}\)

What Br. Taft achieved to an exceptional degree has been true in various ways of so many other Presentation Brothers. However, in educational terms, there could be a negative side to the story of sport in the schools. No doubt, at times there could be an over-emphasis on competition and the adoption of a “winning at all costs” philosophy. Equally, minority sports and other extra-curricular activities could be neglected. At present, of the eight second-level schools in which the Brothers are involved, five play gaelic games (gaelic football, and/or hurling) and three play rugby. Soccer is also played in one of the schools which plays gaelic games. Most of the primary schools
play gaelic games. Rugby has traditionally been associated with private fee-paying schools, while gaelic games are associated with the national schools.

The choice of gaelic games as the official school games by some of the schools had political and nationalistic connotations. It arose out of a specific cultural context when, after independence in 1922, the new Irish government encouraged the promotion of 'national games'. Scoil Chriost Rí, the largest primary or national school under the trusteeship of the Brothers is located in the suburb of Turner's Cross on Cork's southside. It was founded in 1938 to facilitate the educational advancement of the children of the new urban working class. It espoused a gaelic philosophy from the beginning, promoting strongly the Irish language and gaelic games. The school has been very successful, both academically and in terms of its sporting achievements. Gaelic games had a central role in the life of the school, creating a distinctive school spirit and promoting a pride in cultural identity. This policy was continued into second-level schooling when Coláiste Chriost Rí was established to provide secondary education for the same clientele. The games were utilised to engender in pupils a sense of self-worth and a belief in striving for excellence. The Gaelic Athletic Association has publicly recognised the contribution of the Presentation Brothers in this regard:

The association of the Presentation Brothers with the G.A.A. has unfortunately been taken for granted over the years, but there can be no doubt that the G.A.A. could never repay both the Christian and Presentation Brothers for their magnificent support down through the years and the position of strength that the G.A.A. holds today is due in no small way to these Religious Orders.42

Rugby is the traditional game of three Presentation Colleges at Cork, Bray and Glasthule. Past pupils of these schools have represented Ireland at international level. Though numerically few, Presentation schools have played a major role in Irish schools rugby. One Presentation school, Coláiste an Spioraid Naoimh (Bishopstown) plays soccer as well as gaelic games and has won All-Ireland titles in colleges soccer. The diversity of sporting codes points to the flexibility within the Presentation tradition of education. In Ireland, where even the choice of sport historically had political connotations, and where the schools of some Religious Orders adopted one code exclusively, the Presentation Brothers showed an ability to adapt and work with local realities.
5.7 Politics and Education

Political socialisation is the process whereby individuals develop their basic political identification or point of view. School influence can be an important factor in such a process of political socialisation. An educational system which is founded on a philosophy or vision of life has political implications. Early impressions are lasting and though the family may be the central agent of political socialisation, school and educational influences follow a close second. The Irish Christian Brothers’ system of education has been strongly identified with the politics of Irish nationalism. This involved a distinctive view of Irish history and the promotion of the Irish language and gaelic games. Many of the former revolutionaries who became leaders in the independent Irish State were past pupils of the Christian Brothers. Since they spring from the same roots in the Edmund Rice tradition, it is appropriate to examine the question as to what political undertones, if any, existed and continue to exist in a Presentation Brothers’ education. Did the Presentation Brothers have a distinctive approach to the teaching of history, the Irish language and cultural issues generally? If so, how did this dimension impact on their contribution to the education of young people?

The Presentation Brothers never had a corporate political philosophy. However, since the majority of the Brothers came from a rural background, the culture from which they came would have been generally sympathetic towards Irish nationalism and supportive of the Irish language and gaelic games. There is no evidence to suggest that the Presentation Brothers adopted any corporate approach to the teaching of history. Unlike the Christian Brothers, the Presentation Brothers did not publish their own textbooks for their schools. In the case of the Presentation Brothers, the teaching of history and the shades of nationalism contained therein very much depended on the personality and views of the individual Brothers. The Presentation Brothers have never been associated in the public mind with the aggressively nationalist ‘Irish Ireland’ philosophy attributed to the Christian Brothers. Presentation Brothers who lived through the struggle for independence, were like most young people of that time, supportive of that struggle. They passed on to successive generations of Brothers a pride in Irish cultural identity. However, in the Presentation tradition of education, nationalism was tempered by
tolerance and balance. Brothers recall that the Irish language played a prominent role in their own education and formation:

When in primary school with the Brothers, we were taught Irish but it was not 'beaten' into us.... In Coláiste Muire we did all our subjects through Irish and were encouraged to speak Irish around the house, on the football field, etc. When I was a novice we were encouraged to speak Irish as a 'gift to Our Lady'. This caused a certain tension among us as all were not as keen on the language as others. We were not convinced that Mary was particularly keen on Irish.44

Humour apart, it is clear that given the family background and early formation of most Brothers, the political views they held were broadly speaking those of the Irish Catholic nationalist community. A constant feature of the Presentation tradition of education has been a respect for the individual and a tolerance of diversity. There is no great evidence either in the writings of past pupils or the oral tradition of the Brothers of a virulent nationalism in the schools. The work of a few individuals excepted, most Presentation Brothers brought to their classrooms a healthy patriotism and a balanced approach to Irish history and culture. As one Brother writes:

... the balanced attitude of the Presentation Brothers within themselves toward history, and especially Irish history, would have permeated the school and its classrooms, and it is this balanced approach that will be the distinctive stamp of the teaching and of the influence of Presentation schools on their students.45

Past pupils of the Brothers who have entered the world of politics certainly do not come from the one mould. They represent a wide variety of political viewpoints and parties. A present-day Irish member of the Dáil (the Irish parliament), speaking of his time as a pupil in Scoil Chriost Rí, captured well the positive political dimension of a Presentation education:

The year before Chriost Rí took its first pupils also saw the endorsement by the people of Ireland of the Irish Constitution – Bunreacht na hÉireann – which was one of the significant milestones in the development of the new State. The new school shared a characteristic of the new Constitution in that both were products of their time and firmly rooted in an ethos of traditional Christian values, respect for fundamental human rights, and a sense of patriotism and national pride. Both have shared over the past fifty years a capacity to evolve in response to the changing needs of the society in which we live and their ability to do so speaks well of the sound foundations on which they have built.46
5.8 Missed Opportunities

So far, our analysis of the contribution of the Presentation Brothers to education has been largely positive in nature. However, there is a negative side to the story. The Brothers' contribution was deficient in certain areas. Had these issues been addressed, no doubt what was largely a positive contribution could have been all the greater.

Firstly, there was a lack of attention to the issue of educational philosophy. This remained largely unarticulated, certainly in a corporate sense. In the years following Vatican II, debate among the Brothers focused mainly on the inner nature of Religious life. There was a failure to attend to a contemporary philosophy of Catholic education. Consequently, the Brothers as a group made no significant contribution to debate on national educational policy. This has been rectified in the last fifteen years through the involvement of Presentation Brothers in CORI. Both the education and justice offices of CORI have been very pro-active in this area. The renewed focus on Edmund Rice has also challenged the Brothers in terms of re-appropriating in a contemporary way their philosophy of foundation. Unfortunately, a failure to attend to basic philosophical questions has been a significant factor in contributing towards a loss of nerve among many Brothers concerning the value of their work. This obviously has had a negative impact on vocations and is proving extremely difficult to reverse.

Secondly, another area of deficiency concerns the issue of qualifications and scholarship. The Brothers have, since the 1930s, been very good on the issue of basic professional qualifications. It was considered essential that every Brother would secure a basic qualification. However, for the vast majority, this is where the story stopped. Leadership within the Brothers encouraged summer and other short-term courses but only rarely were Brothers released from other commitments to pursue advanced degrees. The work of the schools was considered a priority and even when there was plenty of personnel it was very difficult for Brothers to secure 'time off' for further study. This has changed quite dramatically in the last twenty years with an active encouragement of sabbaticals. However, for a group involved in education, the milieu of the group still remains somewhat wary of the value of advanced qualifications and scholarship. The origin of this seems to be twofold. Firstly, it refers back to a time when because of a lack of finance, the Brothers couldn't afford to release personnel from the schools.
Secondly, the traditional Presentation Brother view of education is practical and pragmatic. It is argued that extra qualifications do not necessarily lead to more effective teaching. In this view it is experience in the classroom that is all-important. Nevertheless, given that the Brothers achieved a great amount with largely minimal qualifications, it seems fair to assume that with more attention to study and scholarship their contribution to education could have been even greater.

A third area of deficiency was the failure on the part of the Brothers to invest sufficient responsibility in lay teachers and parents. This has happened quite extensively in recent years with the appointment of lay principals and the establishment of Boards of Management with parental representation. The question remains, however, could it have happened sooner? With some strategic planning, moves in this direction should have happened far sooner since the Presentation Brothers generally enjoyed good relations with teachers and parents. The moves which have taken place in recent years towards more participative management structures are seen to be of necessity as a result of the fall in the number of Brothers. In hindsight one can see this as an area of major deficiency for a group of Catholic educators, yet in this regard the Brothers were following the conventional wisdom and practice of their time.

As a group of Catholic educators, the Brothers' failure to offer training to their members in theology and scripture was a further deficiency. While most Brothers trained as teachers or held degrees in the arts or sciences, few had formal training in theology or scripture. Access to these disciplines was mostly confined to personal reading, summer courses or sabbaticals. Brothers who failed to make a personal effort to keep themselves up-to-date in these matters relied most on what they had garnered in novitiate days. The net effect of this policy was to leave the Brothers ill-equipped to cope with fundamental questions of philosophy and theology which lie at the heart of Catholic education. The Brothers were dependent on a theology largely composed and written by clerics, and in the absence of formal training, they lacked the confidence and the skills to enter this arena. This also may partially explain the struggle the Brothers have concerning the articulation of a corporate identity. The failure by Brothers to advance a theology of Brotherhood undermined confidence and self-esteem. It seems clear that this factor contributed both to departures from the Brotherhood and to the failure to attract new members. Had the insights of theology and scripture been more readily available to the
membership, it is clear that the Brothers would have been affirmed in their vocation and their educational effectiveness enhanced. The Brothers prized highly the ‘doing’ to the neglect of ‘being’. While, of course, it is impossible to separate the two, the academic study of theology would have encouraged a much-needed milieu of reflection on Congregational strategy and mission. The unexamined life is not worth living and in too many respects the task orientation of the schools led to a failure to deal with deeper questions. Giving priority to the urgent over the important is, perhaps, a criticism that can be levelled at teachers, in general. However, particularly in the matter of theological education, one could legitimately have looked for more from a group such as the Presentation Brothers. This is a need which still cries out for increased attention, particularly as it pertains to newer and future membership. The Brothers need to be able to articulate very clearly from both a theological and an educational perspective, their presence and role in contemporary society.

A final missed opportunity concerns the geographical spread of the Presentation Brothers. The failure to establish a more prominent presence in Dublin, at a time when personnel was available, seems to have limited the thinking of the Brothers to a Cork or rural perspective. Dublin, as the capital of Ireland, is also the centre of political and educational power. Presentation College, Glasthule was founded in 1902 but it never developed into a large school and even today is quite modest in size. Had the Presentation Brothers, say in the early sixties, taken on the challenge of a large new Dublin school, this would have certainly lifted the morale of the group. A greater presence in Dublin would have meant an increased access to educational and cultural activities as well as the incentive to contribute to the formulation of educational policy at a national level. Leadership in the Brothers in the sixties seemed quite content to maintain and manage, the network of existing schools. Maintaining the status quo through the stormy period immediately following Vatican II seemed to block the evolution of more long-term educational goals, and certainly the new opportunities offered by the growth of Dublin seem not to have entered into the thinking of the Presentation Brothers. Lack of finance would certainly have been a consideration as the resources of the Congregation were always over-stretched. However, it seems a pity that more imaginative projects were not initiated at a time when there was a plentiful
supply of young and talented personnel. However, hindsight is easy and, no doubt, the leadership of the Brothers acted according to their best lights at the time.

5.9 Conclusions and Recommendations

The Brothers who initiated the post-Vatican II renewal of the Congregation in 1967, could not have foreseen the world of 1998. A deeper phase of the renewal was initiated from 1981 onwards, but even then few could have predicted the change in society, church and education which would be part of the Irish experience over the next fifteen years. It seems fair to assume that the Brothers of thirty years ago would have envisaged the renewal bringing increased membership and a greater number of Presentation schools. In 1967, the membership of the Congregation peaked at close to 300. The majority were young and active, many being students in formation. Today, the membership of the Congregation is less than half that number, and the active membership in schools is less still. With vocations very few in number the future for the Presentation Brothers as an educational body seems limited. The following comment was penned concerning another religious Congregation, but some would argue it could be applied to the Presentation Brothers:

Owing to their present dispersal in ones and twos or threes among large staffs of lay teachers, and with the gradual disappearance of such religious insignia as religious names, religious titles and religious dress, the Brothers are perceived by their pupils and by the general public as little different from the secular teachers with whom they share the work of the school. Their muted presence says little that would induce young persons to throw in their lot with them in the expectation of finding among them a dimension of life quite other than that of their secular teachers. That precise identity which characterised the Brothers and their schools in the infancy of the Institute needs to be reasserted today.49

Has the renewal then led to disastrous outcomes never intended by the initiators of the process? Are we witnessing the demise of the Presentation Brothers as an effective educational group? Some of the deficiencies highlighted already and some of the comments quoted above should not be taken as the whole picture. As outlined earlier, the past four decades have also witnessed solid achievement and exciting new developments in the life of the Congregation, even in the last ten years. These offer the possibilities of a new future for the Presentation Brothers. Inevitably, in a time of rapid change, there are phases of confusion and disintegration. Historically, Edmund Rice
founded the Congregation as a response to the educational needs of poor young people. He saw religious education as central to this process. The Brothers have contributed hugely towards the attainment of Edmund Rice's ideals. The needs of youth are greater today than ever, and new responses are needed which require total commitment and dedication. Hence the relevance of groups such as the Presentation Brothers. The Congregation is now at a particular stage in its life-cycle. Historians of Religious life attest to the fact that when the surrounding culture changes, some Religious Orders do go out of existence. Others, however, enter a re-founding phase. This is characterised by a re-appropriation of the spirit of the founder and a new response to urgent societal needs. This and previous chapters have highlighted sufficient evidence to make a case for the fact that such a movement is taking place among the Presentation Brothers. It remains to be seen whether the re-founding will be successful. The Presentation tradition of avoiding the paralysis of rigid positions would seem now to be an advantage. In the nineteenth century, the Presentation Brothers, unlike the Christian Brothers, co-operated with the National Board. After the Intermediate Education Act of 1878, the Brothers made the move into secondary education. After 1922, another generation of Brothers actively took on the educational challenges of the new State. The Brothers today, face a great challenge in the task of re-foundation.

Corporately and individually, the contribution of the Brothers continues to be of value. To contribute to the education of even one human being is of immense significance. During the period under review and to date, the Brothers conduct excellent schools. They have the confidence of parents. They have a positive commitment to extra-curricular work. This generation of Brothers has given exceptional loyalty to the task of Catholic education in a time of rapid change. The Brothers have contributed to the spiritual, moral and intellectual development of thousands of young people. The contribution was, however, at times flawed. In recent years, society has come to a deeper awareness of the evil of the physical and sexual abuse of children. No doubt, a number of young people in the past were hurt in Presentation schools. The writings of past-pupils as we have seen generally attest to a positive atmosphere. However, at times, a small number of Brothers or lay teachers betrayed the noble ideals of the Edmund Rice tradition. In the past five years, the Brothers, along with other groups in education have been pro-active in implementing a new child protection code in all
schools and in seeking to aid the healing of those hurt in the past. This work is on-going and hopefully will ensure the eradication of child-abuse from schools or that, if an instance does occur, it is dealt with seriously and rapidly according to best procedure. The evil perpetrated by a few individuals, however, should not be allowed to obscure the noble and generous efforts of the many. Professor J.J. Lee’s tribute to Irish teachers generally could deservedly be applied to the vast majority of Brothers:

When the history of the Irish people finally comes to be written, the saga – for saga it was – of those teachers who struggled to inspire their pupils with a sense of their own potential will deserved belated homage.\(^5^0\)

The Brothers are above all people of faith. That faith is needed all the more now as they face the future. As we move into the new millennium change in education and society will continue to be dramatic. Great challenges appear on the horizon which may seem beyond the capacity and resources of the group. It is a time to hold fast to the Christian virtues of faith and hope. It is a time for the heroism of love. Church history teaches again and again of the effect of the committed few. The Holy Spirit can most powerfully act when Christians are conscious of their human limitations.

The Brothers may well feel that they have fished all night and caught nothing. In the faith of Edmund, let them push out into the deep and pay out their nets for, when to human eyes there seems little hope for any catch at all, it is precisely then that the Lord fills the nets even to breaking point. They must of course exercise the virtues and duties of prudence and discernment, but in so doing, let theirs be the wisdom of Gamaliel who, in the face of something that was for him and his fellows both new and disturbing, advised that ‘if this plan or this undertaking is of men, it will fail; but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them’.\(^5^1\)

In the strength of their tradition, the Presentation Brothers move into the future and seek to develop their mission in education in new ways that are truly of service to the young people of our time.

At the conclusion of this study which has examined change at many levels among the Brothers, it is appropriate to raise the question of progress. What progress has taken place in the life and ministry of the Presentation Brothers during the past forty years? It is clear that much change has taken place but change and progress are not always synonymous. Progress implies moving towards a vision or a goal. For the Brothers that goal is living the Religious life in the mission of Catholic education according to the
spirit of Edmund Rice. A widespread view in Irish society holds that the mission of the Brothers is over. The popular perception is that of falling numbers of Religious in the schools and few, if any, vocations. Secularists view this development positively, while even those more favourably disposed towards the Brothers hold that State agencies and lay people are now doing in mainline education what the Brothers did in the past. Both viewpoints, ultimately predict the demise of the Brothers, seeing their role as irrelevant to the Ireland of the twenty-first century.\textsuperscript{52}

However, this study has shown, how superficial this analysis is, at least in the case of the Presentation Brothers. The growth in the Associate Movement, the involvement of young people, the transition to new management structures, the alternative educational ministries towards people at the margins – all point to significant new life in the Congregation and the wider Presentation Family. Change has been managed effectively and there is a pro-active approach to educational planning among the Brothers and their lay Associates. The present author believes that the Presentation Brothers of today are in a more positive state in terms of identity and mission than the Brothers of twenty years ago. Numbers are smaller, but there is a deeper clarity and commitment to the core values of Religious life and the educational mission of Edmund Rice.

From a faith perspective, significant progress has taken place. Merkle cautions against Religious unconsciously adopting a view of progress culturally conditioned by secular society:

Exactly what “salvation” do we pursue as religious? Is our vision of the future one of a prosperous corporation, held in esteem, filled with competent members who operate according to the success measurements of their profession? While competency and well-managed communities are important values, are they our ultimate ones?

If a cultural view of progress alone is our yardstick of success as Religious, it is understandable that we feel a sense of hopelessness and anomie as we age, have fewer people enter, and experience the diminishment of institutions and ministries....

To what extent does the cultural view of progress influence this morality? By what criteria do we measure the life or death of Religious life? The cultural view of progress must not be our measure of success. But how do we think counter-culturally about our lives and our future?\textsuperscript{53}
This study contends that a counter-cultural role holds the possibility of new life for the Presentation Brothers. However, this counter-cultural role lies precisely in the re-appropriation and re-assertion of the mystical and specifically religious dimension of their life and commitment. The dominant paradigm of secular society will benefit from the challenge offered by the presence of those who espouse a radically different world view. The Catholic community, particularly the young, need such witnesses to faith, Brothers who will accompany them on their spiritual journey. This is a truly educational task, in the full significance of the term. Attending to the mystical dimension of the Brothers’ life is a key recommendation in this study. Along with continuing the movement towards serving the educational needs of young people who suffer poverty or disadvantage, it will significantly influence the movement towards refoundation already underway among the Presentation Brothers. Dilanni clearly sees the primacy of a sense of corporate religious ‘adventure’ as a key to new life:

Passion will not return to religious life nor will young people join until congregations retrieve the sense of a corporate and religious adventure that impelled our founders to sacrifice and heroism. Reflecting on the yearnings of the young, Paul Claudel said that more than pleasure, they desire heroism. This seemed borne out in the huge rallies with Pope John Paul II in 1993 in Denver, Colorado. It is time to re-claim the art of life-long commitment to a group and through it to challenge the young to come to the aid of the Church at a time of crisis. This will be achieved by moving beyond concepts of sociology and business management, to a stage in the renewal that is at once a veritable reform seeking its inspiration at the city walls of Avila and in the mystical accents of The Ascent of Mount Carmel. A lifestyle that is bourgeois, a religious life that has been content with a superficial aggiornamento and is too eager to incorporate the values of the society that surrounds it, no longer raises questions and cannot exercise a critical function.\(^5^4\)

Dilanni emphasises that the Christian religion must be explicitly about God and our relationship with God. From a union with God in prayer comes the light on how we relate to each other. In the case of a life devoted to religion in a special way, it must be lived primarily in view of this relationship with God both in ideal and structure:

Such a life steeped in prayer, dialogue about the faith, and community devotion… Will produce something we may have lost, a solid number of holy men and women whose life has a deep center. If this is so, I am sure that young people will again be attracted to religious life, not so much because it is relevant or more interesting than the world, but for the
simple reason that religious life so construed and so lived is what it
purports to be – religious.55

Such an agenda for the future offers a great challenge to the Presentation Brothers. It
offers the possibility of new life. It will form the basis of a renewal of their educational
mission. The Brothers thank God for all the good that has happened in the past and for
the signs of hope at the present time. Clearly the next ten years will be a time of critical
choice. The cries of those closest to the heart of Edmund Rice still fill our world today.
Few in number, the Brothers may, at times, feel daunted by the greatness of the
challenge. They can take heart from Newman’s advice:

It is, indeed, a general characteristic of the course of his providence to
make the few the channels of his blessings to the many.... It is plain that
every great change is effected by the few, not by the many; by the
resolute, undaunted zealous few. One or two people, with small outward
pretensions, but with their hearts in their work, these do great things.
They are prepared, not by sudden excitement, or by vague general belief
of the truth of their cause, but by deeply impressed, often repeated
instructions; and since it stands to reason that it is easier to teach a few
than a great number, it is plain that such people will always be few.56
References and Notes : Chapter 5

1. The original Presentation Rule and the Presentation Brothers Constitutions (1889–1967) spoke of the aims of the Institute as the personal sanctification of the members and the instruction of poor boys ‘in the principles of religion and Christian piety’. There is no elaboration on a philosophy of education.

2. These initiatives were part of the renewal programme initiated by Br. Jerome Kelly, Superior General, and the new General Council following the General Chapter of 1981. An international conference of Superiors took place in 1984 and a conference of School Principals in 1986.

3. A corporate evaluation of the Presentation Brothers in education during the period under review has not previously been attempted. A strong sense of the local community and/or school, though largely a positive feature of the Presentation tradition, has to some extent hindered the development of corporate identity among the Brothers.

4. In 1967 an extraordinary General Chapter of the Brothers was held to implement the directives of Vatican II.

5. The private junior schools were attached to Presentation Colleges in Cork, Glasthule and Bray. The four national schools under the trusteeship of the Brothers were South Monastery, Greenmount, Scoil Chriost Rí and St. Joseph’s, all in Cork City.

6. The Irish Christian Brothers would be eight times greater numerically than the Presentation Brothers.


9. Ibid., 135.


12. Ibid., 148.


15. Ibid., 186.

16. De La Salle Teacher Training College, Waterford was the training college utilised by the Presentation Brothers from the late 1920s until its closure in 1972. Thereafter Presentation Brothers went to the Christian Brothers Training College, Marino, Dublin. The records of De La Salle attest to the consistent level of high marks obtained by Presentation Brothers over the years. The Brothers themselves attribute this partially to the fact that most had one or two years experience of teaching in the Cork schools before going to Waterford.

17. The mission was founded in 1947. The Brothers went to the West Indies at the request of Archbishop Finbarr Ryan of Port of Spain, an Irish Dominican.

18. S.H.A.R.E. – Schoolboys Harness Aid for the Relief of the Elderly. In the last ten years S.H.A.R.E. has expanded to include girls' schools and the co-educational schools. Hence “schoolboys” has been replaced by “students”.

19. In 1993, at the opening of Árd Iosaef, Cork (a building donated by the Presentation Brothers), Mary Robinson, President of Ireland, paid particular tribute to S.H.A.R.E. and to its founder Br. Jerome Kelly.

20. Br. Kelly succeeded Br. Felim O'Regan, who was Superior General from 1969–1981. Br. O’Regan’s focus had been on the implementation of Vatican II pertaining...
to the internal religious and community life of the Brothers. Most of his educational experience had been in England and he did not engage in a prominent way in the Irish educational scene.

21. Br. Feheney is the author of several books and a frequent contributor to educational journals. He has also edited some significant works including *A Time of Grace – School Memories: Edmund Rice and the Presentation Tradition of Education.* (Dublin: Veritas, 1996).

22. C.F.R.C. = Christian Formation Resource Centre  
C.L.E.O. = Christian Leadership in Education Office

23. Presentation College, the Mercy Convent Secondary School and Birr Vocational School.

24. The General Council of the Congregation was known colloquially among the Brothers as “The Régime”. The headmaster of Presentation College, Cork, had always been a member of “The Régime”.

25. In these days when some educators speak of strategic marketing for schools, it can be said that Br. Kelly was well before his time in appreciating the public relations dimension of the school community.

26. The area is traditionally known as ‘the Marsh’.

27. The new leadership team that assisted Br. Kelly consisted of Br. Bartholomew Browne, Br. Simon Sullivan, Br. Matthew Feheney and Br. Terence Hurley. All had extensive experience as school principals.


32. Br. Feheney represented the Presentation Brothers on an international committee which co-ordinated the celebrations surrounding the anniversary. The committee included representatives from the Christian Brothers’ provinces in Ireland and England.


34. Ibid.

35. The Community School concept, initially promoted for pragmatic and financial reasons by the Department of Education involves a large school serving all the second-level pupils of a locality. In the case of the Birr school, it is established by a Deed of Trustee. The Presentation Brothers, the Sisters of Mercy and the County Offaly Vocational Education Committee are joint trustees of the school.


38. Br. O’Gorman also taught in the South Monastery, Birr, Greenmount and Coláiste Thérése.


44. *Questionnaire Responses,* Appendix C, 230, 24.

45. Ibid., 28.


47. A school of thought already referred to initiated by Br. James Angelus Keane, Superior General, 1931–1945.

48. An article of an “in-house” Brothers newsletter in 1960 declared that if every Brother brought in a new member to the Congregation every five years, membership would reach 4000 by 1980! The writer appears not to have allowed for any departures, or even deaths, let alone the changes which would sweep Irish society and Church in the ensuing decades.


52. In October 1996, the Irish media gave extensive coverage to the beatification of Edmund Rice. Most of this coverage concerned the Christian Brothers and the issue of falling numbers of vocations. There was very little evidence of a deeper attempt to understand the role of the Brothers, even in its historical context. The media coverage largely portrayed the Brothers as a group of teachers. Little attempt was made to deal with them as contemporary Religious.


55. Ibid., 15.

MISSION STATEMENT

We, Presentation Brothers, faithful to the spirit and charism of our Founder, Edmund Ignatius Rice, trusting to God’s providence and relying on the protection of Our Lady, declare our mission to be Christian formation, primarily of youth and in particular of the poor and disadvantaged.

We desire to unite with people of good will to transform the world – by fidelity to Gospel values – and by a serious commitment to the ministry of justice and peace.
Section 1: The Presentation Brother School

1.1 The Catholic Church has received the mission of proclaiming and establishing the Kingdom of God among all peoples. The specific mission entrusted to the Congregation of Presentation Brothers by the Church is that of Christian formation, especially of youth. It is for this purpose that the Presentation Brother School exists.

1.2 Inspired by the vision of Edmund Rice, the Presentation Brother School:
   • gives priority to education in a living faith whereby students grow to appreciate the life and mission of Jesus Christ with a view to being committed to the world as He was;
   • has a special concern for the poor and under-privileged;
   • is challenged to develop a curriculum which promotes the harmonious growth of the whole person.

1.3 The Presentation Brother School works at forming a community composed of students, teachers, parents, management and other staff. This community:
   • seeks to live by Gospel values;
   • recognises the dignity of each individual;
   • contributes to the building up of the local community;
   • works for peace and justice in society.

Section 2: The Student

2.1 The central purpose of the school community is the religious, moral, intellectual, physical and social education of the student. This community seeks to create the atmosphere of Christian care and concern in which the student can grow to maturity.

2.2 The school is committed to:
   • respecting the dignity of the student with his/her background, tradition and beliefs; valuing the potential of each and encouraging the strong to support the weak;
• enabling the student to develop a healthy self-image and to form positive relationships with others;
• encouraging in the student a sense of creativity and of collaboration with others;
• promoting the student's appreciation of his/her cultural heritage;
• preparing the student through academic and technical training for his/her vocational role in life;
• providing opportunities for the student to experience God in the wonder of creation, in worship and in service to others;
• developing a critical sense in the student, helping him/her to challenge the forces that threaten human life;
• providing a disciplined atmosphere in which the student is encouraged to grow in freedom and to take increasing responsibility for his/her own education and for the life of the school community.

Section 3: The Teacher

3.1 The Principal and teaching staff have a central role in implementing the philosophy of the Presentation Brother School.

3.2 Teachers are encouraged to:
• embody this philosophy in their professional relationships with the students, with each other and with all members of the school community;
• participate in the varied aspects of school life; religious, social, cultural and academic;
• avail of suitable opportunities to further their professional and personal development;
• place their professional expertise at the service of the students;
• co-operate with other educational agencies in developing, implementing and evaluating curricula which respond to the needs of the students and correspond to the philosophy of the school.
Section 4: The Parents

4.1 The primary right and obligation to educate young people belongs to their parents. In choosing a Presentation Brother School, parents subscribe to this philosophy.

4.2 Parents are encouraged to exercise their right and obligation by:

- giving the school their trust and co-operation;
- ensuring that their children respect, obey and co-operate with the teachers;
- supporting the varied activities of school life;
- taking responsibility in collaboration with others in the school community for the quality of education and for the character of the school.

Section 5: Management

5.1 The Presentation Brother School is the responsibility of the Trustees of the Congregation of Presentation Brothers who seek to protect and further the apostolic purpose of the Congregation. The Trustees delegate the management of the school to a local management authority. In accepting the role of management, the local management authority acknowledges the apostolic purpose of the Congregation and the responsibility entrusted to it by the Trustees. The day-to-day management is delegated to the Principal.

5.2 In the appropriate exercise of their authority, those responsible for the school ensure that:

- the philosophy of the Presentation Brother School is adhered to;
- professional standards of education and management obtain in the school;
- appointments and promotions of all staff are made impartially and in the best interests of the school;
- suitable co-operation in educational matters is maintained and developed with the State and with its civil and municipal authorities.

This statement of philosophy declares the apostolic purpose of the Congregation of Presentation Brothers and enunciates the principles informing education in the Presentation Brother School.
CHAPTER 5 : APPENDIX C

Presentation Brothers in Education in Ireland 1960–1998

Questionnaire

A questionnaire was sent to thirty Brothers in the Ireland-England Province. This sample corresponds to about 30% of the Brothers of the province. Twenty-two questionnaires were returned, corresponding to 73% of the sample. A cross-section of Brothers in terms of age, geographical spread and experience of different aspects of education was chosen. The questionnaire contained forty questions covering a comprehensive range of issues pertaining to the Presentation Brothers' involvement in education in Ireland 1960–1998. In a covering letter accompanying the questionnaire it was explained that this was part of an information gathering exercise related to a doctoral thesis project. Brothers were encouraged to respond to whichever questions they found relevant and to ignore those which were outside their experience or sphere of activity. Answers could be detailed or brief, depending on individual preference. This strategy gave freedom to many Brothers, particularly senior members of the Congregation, to respond at their own pace, and in their own manner and style. The responses are included here as an appendix to the present work since they give a unique insight into the views of a representative group of Presentation Brothers on the Congregation's involvement in education during the last four decades. The responses served as a backdrop to the work of the thesis, indicating a range of views on various questions and offering avenues for further research and investigation. The principal advantage of this questionnaire was its flexible and non-threatening character. This allowed the author to access the views of a representative group of Brothers, particularly senior Brothers, who would be unwilling to be part of other research methods. The responses have a historical value. The style of the answers is free-flowing, colloquial and indeed, sometimes includes a degree of humour! The document, in effect, constitutes ‘Presentation Brothers speaking’ on their experience in education over the last four decades. All the responses to each question are listed. Identical ideas or responses are listed only once.
1. What role did private primary schools play in the Presentation Brothers tradition in primary education?

- I never had any contact with them. It seemed to me that there was an ambivalence about them. (a) Pandering to the snob element; (b) Feeder schools for our secondary schools. I had no regrets with their demise.

- As a source of supply to the post primary.
  As a means of employing untrained Brothers.
  To supply a kind of elitist education for the rich.
  Useful to see the aptitude of novices to handle class-work

- A divisive force – considered elitist. Pupils who attended got into private secondary school before N.S. pupils, which was discrimination.

- Our private schools had smaller numbers and no Department officials. This probably helped to create a more friendly atmosphere and the end result was a great loyalty to the school and Brothers.

- There is no doubt but these schools were genuinely established in response to a real need in their time. The Brothers, both in authority and those directly involved turned a blind eye to the socially divisive nature of such schools. Only Pres. Cork, Bray and Glasthule survived beyond 1960. I have no first-hand knowledge of Pres. Cork. I taught in Bray Secondary 1967-'74 and Glasthule in 1974-'85. Both had thriving Junior Schools. There was good parental support and involvement. The teachers, lay and Brothers, were by-and-large enthusiastic and a strong sense of belonging existed and loyalty survives. Many Brothers found work and fulfilment in these schools. I'm sure there were others who regretted their stay there. In Bray and Glasthule the fees charged were not sufficient to remunerate adequately the teaching staff let alone meet capital expenditure.

- An important role in creating a Pres. spirit or ethos which transferred with the classes to the Senior School. P.B.C. Cork and Glasthule catered for the children of professional or middle class, while P.B.C. Bray Junior School catered for all except perhaps the children of the unemployed. That students of the Senior Pres Schools remained faithful to the faith was due to the good Christian training received in our private primary schools. Also transferred a set of values and personal discipline.

- Private primary schools seem to have played a major role. We had such schools in Cork, Bray, Glasthule, Cobh and Reading. They were in existence since the foundation of these schools. Cobh ran side by side with the ordinary National School. Br. Alban taught there. They provided an opportunity for those not qualified to teach in the national schools.
• It enabled the pupil to live a full life as a pupil. It equipped him to avail himself of further education to lead a useful life as an adult in society.

• The qualifications of some of the Brothers who taught in these left much to be desired, yet the standard of education seemed to be quite good.

• As they were not under State control, they could be staffed by untrained or young Brothers in training and also Brothers retiring. Because they rarely had qualified experienced staff, they didn’t offer anything extra over and above the national schools.

• They dealt with children who, generally speaking, had the greater opportunity for 2nd and 3rd level education. This enhanced their importance.

• A very minor role. Not greatly favoured by many Brothers, especially those who never taught in them.

• They provided an alternative to the State Schools and a chance for Brothers and lay teachers who did not qualify or did not like the national school system to use their teaching abilities.

• Many would see them as a concession to snobbery – but they created a cadre of people with good values and loyalty to the Brothers which was life-long.

• I feel that the quality of the teaching left a lot to be desired. Apart from a brief period in the 1960s when we were probably at our strongest numerically, we did not ever adequately staff the private primary schools in my time. Maybe in latter years, when we did not have young Brothers, that we employed more qualified lay staff.

• Having a feeder school would be the normal business way of guaranteeing success, in numbers at least. I presume that that approach influenced policy and procedure later in Bray and Glasthule foundations. The fact that they could operate independently of the State, especially at primary level, was an attraction, especially in an era when many of the Brothers did not have State qualifications. My understanding was that a large percentage of the Brothers, for various reasons, did not wish to work in them, while on the other hand, the Brothers who had retired from the state system, were happy to work in them even for half days.

2. Was your own experience of formation and teacher training an adequate preparation for work in the schools?

• No, but it was not too bad either. My preparation consisted of a year in the South Mon. 1952-'53, teaching Senior Infants in the morning in close contact with Br. Leopold. The afternoon was spent teaching 7th class Maths. They were just one year younger than me. 1953-'54 was spent teaching 3rd class in St. Joseph’s. Got very little help from anyone but learned a lot by trial and error. I was happy at the end of that year that I wanted to be a teacher. Then went to U.C.C. to study Science – with little or no background. It was really tough going for three years – ending with a 1st Hons in Chemistry and went the following day to Chrlost Rf to teach full time while doing the H.Dip – as well as Games Master. Learned less in H.Dip than in practice.
• My short reply is definitely ‘no’. I went from a raw country boy of a national school to Douglas and was compelled to do Leaving Cert in three years as did some others. That was OK for the really clever, but I was not one of these. My secondary education was sadly incomplete and I suffered from this right through my teaching career and I feel that my pupils also suffered on account of this.

• I think we got a good training for that time 1940-’50. By and large, the standard was high in our schools. Remember it was a time when we hadn’t any equipment or financial help from the Department of Education.

• By the standards of the time I regard my own initial formation as sufficient. The weakness was the inadequate provision for continuing training.

• All reference during my formation was to primary schools (we had few secondary schools then). For primary teaching we were well prepared before going to Training College. Preparation for secondary teaching was to be proved inadequate when the changes hit us in the 1960s and 1970s. H.Dip training OK for unchanging times. The psychology of the adolescent was not understood – resulting in discipline problems when schools got big and class numbers large. Religious education began to get more difficult.

• I was unlucky that I was sent to the Training College right after novitiate. Most Brothers had some teaching experience before their training. I think that experience really stood to them. We were rushed through every phase of our education. Over all though, I think we were reasonably well prepared for our work in the schools.

• Just about. Much of our early education was too rushed - three or four years to Leaving Cert; into school as a senior novice in my case. Little preparation in dealing with parents, lay staff and priests. Many opportunities in later years to improve qualifications.

• I feel there was too much emphasis on results and numbers and very little on the fact that all children are complex human beings, that each child is an individual and deserved to be valued for himself.

• Yes. The two years before training were invaluable for me if not for the pupils. Theory made much more sense as a result.

• Adequate - just about. But much was lacking! On a re-think, I would have to say our training was very inadequate and limiting.

• Br. Pascal did a magnificent job (2nd year novitiate) 1957-’58. There should have been close monitoring of progress, classroom practice, etc - direction in a professional, charitable, helpful way so that pupils would not suffer from badly planned, badly structured teaching. It should have been done by a “free-man”. The same should have applied in secondary schools. Br. Dominic was a great help with Geography.

One year Leaving Cert was poor preparation for “leaders” in education. People were not educated according to their strengths. Having specialised in subject A, they found themselves teaching X, Y and Z.

• It had many deficiencies. The imparting of knowledge was, more or less, considered to be the main function of the teacher, which perhaps explains the
limitations of the Teacher Training Colleges approach. A serious flaw was the lack of a more detailed study of child psychology and of equal importance, the lack of basic philosophy with selected areas given special attention, e.g. Philosophy of Education, etc. etc.

• Probably adequate at that time (not now). It was as good if not better than most comparable Institutes.

• No. For secondary schools, at any rate, very little was done (a) to prepare one for the day-to-day dealing with teenage pupils and the pitfalls one encounters (b) to develop a broad humanist attitude and (c) to handle disciplinary situations.

• I taught for one year in the South Monastery N.S. before going to U.C.C. We had some theory given us and some experience in sitting in with experienced teachers before being given responsibility for a class. While doing the H.Dip Ed. I taught full time in Pres. College Cork. Summer hols in the Gaeltacht improved our (my) knowledge of Irish and subsequent summer courses in Music, Catechetics, Science, Counselling, helped to broaden one’s horizons.

• We got a very good preparation for teaching in the Novitiate from Br. James O’Connor. He made a particular effort to inspire us to teach Religion. The only other teacher training I got was the H.Dip. (U.C.C.) which was barely satisfactory.

• I did not believe that it was at the time. Now, I wonder if any system can prepare anyone adequately. There is no substitute for learning from experience. Perhaps, the greatest lack I experienced was the lack of sympathetic advice and help during the early years in teaching.

• My experience of formation and teacher training was adequate. We got great help from the Master of Novices and his Assistants in the Novitiate in preparing for working in the primary schools here in town. They guided us in writing reports and evaluating them and in reviewing procedure and came to the schools when we were teaching, to help us further, and also linked with the Principal of the school to do similarly. They also gave us lectures on the Catholic Education dimension and were down-to-earth people and they strengthened that message with their own life-styles and their own convictions and the people in my life were very credible when expounding on school and forming men. The teacher training was first class. The teachers in De la Salle at that time all had, to my knowledge, Masters Degrees, very good religious. I wouldn't fault De la Salle in any way and there was a lot to be admired in what they stood for and they lifted our horizons and enthused us in deepening our appreciation of Catholic education. In fact, the professors of education, on the one hand and religious education on the other, were outstanding people and could take their right place in any Catholic institute of education.
3. What impact did the advent of the New Curriculum have on the Brothers’ work in primary schools?

- It gave more latitude to teachers to reduce the time spent on the old tread-mill system to more child-friendly one and it gave more leeway in following the timetable, which had to be followed to the minute. It introduced some more subjects which the children found to their liking and it encouraged things like Art, Crafts, Science and Nature Study. It also gave time for games and walks and visits for urban children to farms and places of interest.

- Education became pupil centred – study of the environment became important which led to flowers, shrubs, trees being planted around houses and in towns and cities and in the countryside. It led to a more interesting countryside. Teachers went for inservice and updated themselves which benefited the pupils. It brought parents into the educational role.

- Any Brother who was successful in the old system hadn’t any problem with the new curriculum. But they probably found a drop in the standard throughout the school. General knowledge improved and perhaps made school days happier and less rigid.

- The new curriculum brought new interest into the schools. New subjects like art and crafts and environmental subjects and P.E. and games. The new approach to teaching Irish was interesting - the ‘deilbhíni’ and the filmstrips; though overall the standard of Irish began to drop. The regular drill of the Cúrsaí A, B, C was missed. Of course there was less time spent at it also.

- In most cases, the Brothers welcomed the introduction of the New Curriculum in the schools. It gave a broader type of education - no longer the 3Rs. I opened/set up a special Computer Room in Cobh as early as 1991 - one of the first.

- I think it had a very liberating effect. It gave the individual teacher an opportunity to experiment and it made school life more pleasant for pupils. It also provided the pupils with a variety of reading material to ensure the extension of his horizons and the enrichment of his personality.

- The new curriculum brought a new integration to the work in the primary schools generally and this affected the Brothers’ approach at the time – especially in the R.E. field.

- In 1951 some effort was made by the Department of Education to acknowledge the need for a child centred approach in infant classes. The 1971 curriculum was the major advance since the Education Act and Syllabus. Unfortunately, lack of inservice training, lack of necessary aids/equipment etc. significantly affected its full adaptation and import for many Brothers. Some also did not recognise the importance of the movement because of the teacher training deficiencies of earlier years and especially the lack of P.C.I. Training which would have enabled them to read, study, analyse and develop a critical faculty.

- I think that it liberated many men from the drudgery of former times. It gave people with imagination the freedom to do things differently and to break with the "we always did it that way" syndrome. The advent of the New Curriculum focused attention particularly on the individual pupil - especially on the needs of
the weaker pupil. There was an admission that the system did not cater adequately for the less-gifted pupils and remedial teaching was introduced.

- The new curriculum had a positive influence on the Brothers in the primary school, as it had, I think, on most primary school teachers. Since education is the influence of one person on another, and is successful to the extent that right relationships pervade, then the new curriculum was the tonic that education needed and was not before its time. In fact, previous to that, it was very much a policy or a tradition that was influenced by results and payment by results at second level and almost as with second level, it was geared to the prestige of scholarships and less to the happiness of the unique young person. My impression was that many of the Brothers had already become person-centred through the courses that were conducted for them at irregular intervals by the Irish Province, but especially by the articles that they were encouraged to write in the Brothers' house magazines and were expected to study and discuss afterwards. When the new curriculum was introduced, I do not recall any serious objection to it by the Brothers as a whole, though there may be one or two Brothers who are into the results mentality, might find the new process counter-productive in helping them to maintain their scholarship record..... and facilitated acceptance of it within the ranks of their lay colleagues.

4. What impact did the advent of Boards of Management have on the primary schools?

- Very little direct contact here. Observed that in the early days they had no teeth. The former Manager had to be Chairperson and, largely, continued to act as Manager. Of course things have changed – a little.

- Some BOMs were not given too much responsibility by Parish Priests as they were afraid to trust them, as this was a new situation and they were afraid that they would take over and find out how the money was used in the past. As this was a new experience for both Parent representatives and also the Teacher members things moved very slowly. Maybe the position has improved since I left the service.

- It gave parents more responsibility and the Church had less of an influence. It gave parents their constitutional right.

- It brought a very big financial help.

- The P.P. or the Principal (in the Brothers and Sisters schools) could no longer choose staff members independently. There was far less mobility in the staff – they grew old together. Parents became more involved, if only in raising funds for the parish contribution.

- My first experience as Principal was in Greenmount where we had a Board of Management. The impact of the Board in Primary schools did not make much of a difference. Most decisions made by Principals. Teachers were very much in dread of them at first.

- It gave a spread of control. It gave a voice to parents. It gave the Principal an opportunity to air his views and also relieved him of a share of responsibility.
• The primary Boards of Management seemed to be largely "rubber stamp" operations with the Principal and perhaps the chairman still "running the show" as before.

• Initially not much, but as time went on BOM became more important. The system was opened up, became more accountable to parents, etc.

• A most important development on the educational scene. For quite some time their influence was nominal but a major impact was the gradual breaking down of a barrier that existed between parents/home and school. This of course created almost limitless possibilities for parents, children and teachers and society. Hopefully it will develop/expand.

• As far as I am aware, very little. In many cases the potential of BOMs was never realised. The chairman, seemingly, took the decisions and these were rubber-stamped by the Board. This has changed considerably in recent times and boards are beginning to have executive input.

• In practice very little, I believe. They were a "token" gesture to parents. This did alert a number of Principals and Teachers to the wisdom of involving parents more in the life of the school - Parent-Teacher meetings were unheard of before this period, for example and in a limited number of cases, there was progress. But some Principals and particularly the Parish Clergy never grasped the real value of parent involvement.

• Boards of Management would have helped the primary schools in a big way. The fact that accountability was central to the process would, of itself, justify them. Furthermore, if a member or members of the Board had deep convictions about their faith and the potential of a Christian school to be an effectively functioning centre of evangelisation, they could do much to influence the Principal to act, because he in turn, could point the finger to each class and hold the teacher responsible for the spirit in the class and the level of a person-centred way of doing things. This is so different to secondary school where it isn't easy to have individual teachers accountable for what is happening in their classes.

5. How would you compare the experience of teaching in a parish managed school as against the experience of teaching in a school managed and under the trusteeship of the Presentation Brothers? (This question refers to Primary/National Schools)

• I never found any great difference.

• You felt more supported in a Brothers' school. Priests didn't like Brothers being popular in schools or games - a Brother's place was in the monastery.

• In general, the clergy didn't interfere while things were going well. I found great fulfilment and independence in a school managed by the Brothers.

• There was a greater sense of freedom in our own schools, whereas in the parish schools one was always looking over one's shoulder. It depended on the P.P. one had of course.
• As Principal, I felt I had more freedom in our own managed schools, but this depended on the clerical chairperson - some of whom still thought they were Managers rather than chairpersons of BOM.

• Having taught in both, the experience is the same.

• I had very limited experience of either system. Two years in a parish managed school and six in Pres. run school – no great difference.

• I found a greater potential for personal and school initiatives in schools managed by the Brothers – altogether more positive approach to education on many fronts.

• My experience - not a lot of difference but much preferred Brothers management.

• Teaching in the latter would, I think, prove to be a much more relaxed and worthwhile experience.

• As a teacher, there was no difference that I could identify. As School Principal, I was aware of certain restrictions but generally speaking, the Chairman of the Board (Priest) trusted the Principal to run the school. (The restrictions mostly related to spending money on pupils' needs - as opposed to spending on school [building] needs.)

• Because I have had no experience of teaching in a parish managed school, I am not in a position to pass judgement on it vis-a-vis the one managed under the Trusteeship of the Presentation Brothers. But I would presume that the school managed under the trusteeship of the Brothers had a better chance and has a better chance of being realistic about setting goals, evaluating the process and in reviewing policy and being realistic about progress than would be the case in parish managed schools, where the priest involved would not be coming from the same background as the Brothers and in cases where the priest was effective, it was often by accident, rather than by training.

6. How do you view the increased parental involvement in education?

• Very positive. For seventeen years now I have worked closely with (a) parents on BOM (b) a Parents Council. Both have been supportive and challenging.

• Some parents are very good and are willing to help. It can also help parents to discuss any problems their children may have. Some parents are anti-teacher and anti-school anyway. This may stem from their own experience of their time in school. Whatever the reason, they do not co-operate.

• It is a good thing because it is their constitutional right. It gave teachers more parental support and problems are detected and smoothed out more easily.

• It can be a very good thing. What most parents want is time to discuss their school problems with the teacher. A lot will depend on the class teacher and Principal.

• I welcome increased parental involvement in education. The challenge for schools is to broaden parents’ interest beyond their own child to include all the children in the school.
Up to 1969 or so school contact was with the Principal. In that role I had a lot of contact with parents from 1965. The time seemed right and I valued parent involvement. From 1969 on Parent/Teacher meetings were introduced. I worked with a Parent Association 1969-1980. A parents’ committed appointed 1969-1976 (very satisfactory). From 1976-1980 elected, at advice of JMB (not so satisfactory).

It can only be for the good of the pupils. The teacher has a better chance to know the child’s background and so be more understanding and sympathetic to both parents and pupils. Parents can be a wonderful support.

I agree with parental involvement. The greater the involvement of parents the better the education of the child. Most parents in my experience are most co-operative and only too willing to be of help. I found them excellent in fund-raising, book-sales, etc.

I think that it is a good step and should help them to fulfil their obligations and make them conscious of their responsibilities.

This was an overdue healthy development giving substance to the maxim that parents are “the primary educators of children”.

A bit of a nuisance but vitally important.

I welcome it ‘though I believe their involvement must be structured, in a sense controlled, otherwise too many cooks could spoil the broth.

I now appreciate that I should have made contact – the main contact was parent-teacher meetings – these never closed the gap – in the few cases where contact was made, parents understood and appreciated what “I was about”, there was greater rapport. Contacts since have been pleasant.

It is a major advance and creates wonderful opportunities for creativity and social development if managed properly and with vision.

It has to be good but obviously some difficulties and problems can result from “awkward” parents.

It has potential for great good. Parents are vitally interested in their children’s educational welfare and have much to contribute in terms of moral support, financial help and other areas of expertise – provided it is exploited discretely.

I think increased parental involvement is to be encouraged. Parent/teacher meetings helped me to understand my pupils better. Knowledge of the home background helps to inform the teachers of health problems a student might have – or family problems which may cause the pupil difficulties in learning. A maxim which says “To teach John any subject one needs to know John and know the subject” is very true and parental contact with the educational scene help the teacher to know John.

Involvement of parents is vital but I am not at all happy that the token role given them is adequate. While individual schools/principals have made worthwhile progress in this area, the "official" policy goes little beyond token involvement.

The increased parental involvement in education can be misleading. We know the theory that education begins in the home and that parents are the primary
educators. But many parents lack awareness of that responsibility and of the fact that there is no substitute for what happens in a good Christian home in terms of Christian education. Consequently, they need a lot of assistance in enlightening them to the implications of that fact and in encouraging them and supporting them in that very demanding role, especially in the context of today's culture. Having some of them on a Management Board or even in a Parents' Council can allay the fears of Trustees. But in each case, the effectiveness of parents' involvement in the formal school scene has to be evaluated and done so at regular intervals. Until the Province has a stated philosophy of Christian education and a written policy on how to implement it, and a regular review of the effectiveness of the structures they put in place to deliver on that policy, then we cannot claim to have Christian education as a priority in our congregation. That is not to say that a lot has been done over the years, but we are now conscious of what is required in terms of putting stakes in the ground to help us achieve our targets. Until encouraging and supporting parents become genuine targets for the Brothers, assessed in terms of investment of funds, time given to it by the various Councils and administrative units, and regular evaluation procedures implemented, we cannot claim effectiveness in that field. The increased parental involvement is encouraging but, in many cases, it is without a clear sense of direction, in my view.

7. To what degree was attention given to the on-going professional development of the Brothers?

- Much was left to the individual. Some lost touch very early and also lost energy and capacity to work in school - hence semi-early retirement. Most professional development took place through subject associations and contact with progressive colleagues.

- In my early years I would say none. Religious life came first and if you observed all the rules you were a good religious and all things followed as a consequence. This of course was not true and it took many years to reach the standard that should have been taught to us early on.

- Not much done until new curriculum came in.

- Every help and encouragement was given to Brothers provided they were still able to do their day's work in school. It never resulted in a year off or travel abroad. These things were unheard of at the time.

- Attention to the professional development of Brothers was spasmodic and tended to be an ad hoc response to crises as they arose.

- Provincials on visitation encouraged us to continue with studies. Being involved with exam. classes and school games I was just not able to find time. Needs for development did not appear too obvious. In the period during and after Vatican II great efforts were made in the area of Religious Education. Religion teachers in the various dioceses were encouraged and helped by diocesan reps. Summer courses for the Brothers usually included a course in catechetics. Through the 1980s many Brothers availed of the development courses at the Retreat Centre at Mt St Joseph.
• Brothers who wished to further their professional development were facilitated normally as long as it did not interfere with their work. It was only in the 80s and 90s that Brothers were encouraged to do so and were even allowed take a year off school for such development.

• There was a move to give Brothers more help in being catechists through the course in Mt. Oliver, which was done by an average of one Brother per year in the 1970s.

The general message that was given was ‘get your degree and get on with the teaching’. There would have been a push in the 70s to get as many Brothers as possible into the classrooms.

Courses done by the Brothers now are generally for personal development.

We missed out in developments in career guidance, counselling, PE and chaplaincy.

• There were so many courses in every conceivable topic in connection with Primary Education available during the Summer in Education Centres throughout the year. I did a number of special courses for Principals - one lasting two weeks which was excellent. All these were open to the Brothers. Never had any problem in getting permission to attend.

• To the Brother who was interested the sky was the limit. Courses were always available. Despite the fact that they worked in school all day many were willing to do the evening B.A.

• Not given the priority one would expect in a congregation with education as its central strategy and ministry.

• To be honest, very little. It was probably left to oneself. The opportunities were there but no pressure was brought to bear on one to attend courses.

• We have not failed in this area. Brothers were always supported and encouraged to take whatever was needed for on-going personal development.

• Only limited opportunities were afforded and frequently over load in work practice, consequent burnout, etc. militated against opportunities being availed of. I am personally convinced that our most serious weakness as educators originated in a lack of philosophical training, in various fields. Had this been available I think many Brothers had the potential to make notable contributions in the field of education. They would have developed a far greater ability in an analytic and critical approach to various natural and moral sciences as well as cultural and literary experiences (I fear this is a pet theory/subject/hobby of mine).

• Generally good, if not very good. Professional training was always a priority with the Brothers from the 1930s and ‘40s onwards. Brothers were facilitated to do courses etc. later on.

• Attention was fairly haphazard, alas. Very little was done (up to recent times when significant improvement has taken place in this area) to help Brothers cope with a heavy workload, changes in curriculum, exam pressures and competitiveness, the need for wise innovation and the whole ethos of Christian
education and its implications. “Staff development” is a recent welcome development - inservice courses were rare.

- From the mid-fifties Brothers were encouraged mainly to do summer courses. Music, Science, Teaching Junior classes art. In the sixties Brothers were given the chance of taking a year out to study Catechetics. I can't recall any Brother doing higher studies at University level at least here in Ireland. Getting the basic qualifications and getting into school was the main preoccupation. A number of Brothers who were in the Primary schools were encouraged to study for BA, mainly at night in UCC.

- The ethic we lived by was, get a basic qualification, go into school and stay there until retirement. Some few Brothers availed of summer or short-term courses, or did "evening" degrees. Other than that, we had not tradition of encouraging people to seek further qualification. In fact, I believe that we considered it a selfish/self-seeking exercise which was discouraged.

- The attention given to the on-going professional development of the Brothers varied over the decades. Much was done to my knowledge in the ‘60s in terms of the standards of the day, by way of helping the Brothers' ongoing professional development through lectures and summer courses. They were encouraged, especially the primary school people, to do degree courses "traditional BA" as they were called and others to do diplomas in the technical schools in the cities, which a few availed of. From what I can recall after my return from the West Indies in 1969, it was difficult to get Brothers to take a sabbatical and those who did needed one-to-one sessions with a view to twisting their arms a little with a veiw to availing of that channel of enrichment. But the booklet in preparation for the International Workshop for Principals in 1986 "Projects, Pilot Schemes and Personal Experiences" illustrates some progress in that area in the chapter entitled "Aspects of Growth - Intellectual and Professional".

I am not sure as to the cause of the reticence of Brothers to avail of that policy to help them to refine their gifts and talents more and to lift their horizons in terms of their ministry of Christian Formation. But to some extent the attitude that was inherited from the '40s at least, was that the congregation did not have the funds to educate its men. When you think that the Brothers in the South Monastery in my time, that is 1945-'46 and from 1948-'54, were getting in the region of £3 per man per week to balance their budget. There were about 18 staying there at the time and the rest of their salary went to Mount St. Joseph to balance the budget of the big numbers there and Br. Angelus Keane as General did much to see that all the Brothers who could avail of it got a professional qualification and it required strong budgeting and the will to have it done and for me, he was the pioneer in enlightened thinking and the one who had the courage to face that challenge with the serious lack of capital.

It is possible then that since all the Brothers knew of the lack of capital, that for some to take time off to get added qualifications would possibly be seen as selfish and that to some extent might have coloured the attitude in the 1960s to 1980s.
8. How do you see the position of the lay teacher in Presentation Brothers' schools?

- It is my experience that lay teachers and these Unions had a very high regard for the Pres. Brothers. This was stated at times of tension like the 1969 strike. It was also true regarding the allocation of Posts of Responsibility in the early days.

- All the lay teachers that I have taught with have been very committed to their work generally speaking, but their position on the school Staff was taken for granted in the early years. They were never consulted on anything, but the Brothers were ignored too as authority was invested in the Principal and the Cigire. When the INTO got sufficiently strong and asserted itself, then the lay teacher had a greater say in the running of the school.

- Lay teachers are more important than ever now and especially if he or she is the product of a Brothers' school or the product of Brothers' Associate group or some such connection with the Brothers.

- Most of our schools are almost run by lay teachers. Any help given to the Principal and teachers should help to cultivate the Presentation spirit.

- In practice, I see no difference in the position of lay teachers in our schools compared to teachers in other schools.

- In the 1950s and 1960s the schools I taught in had more Brothers than lay teachers. The lay teachers were privileged, required only to teach their classes, while we the Brothers, together with class work, had to attend to games, help in running a Boarding school, etc.

From 1970 onwards the numbers of lay teachers increased dramatically. At all times, in my experience, the spirit of acceptance, friendship and co-operation with the Brothers were excellent. Lay teachers were not in charge at that time.

- Lay teachers were very happy to work with the Brothers and supported them in every way.

- From limited experience and conversations with lay teachers of this period, I have the impression that lay teachers were happy teaching in Pres. Brothers schools. Generally, they had good relations with the Brother Principals and most of the Brothers.

- In my opinion, the lay teacher in the Primary schools was treated as an equal and a colleague. He or she was one of “us” rather than “them”. As the number of Brothers in the schools declined, obviously the role of the lay teacher became more important.

- A developing partnership out of necessity as much as out of conviction. Relationships were always cordial as between Brother and lay.

- The importance of the lay teacher has gained in importance according as the number of Brothers decreased. We are lucky to have so many ex-Religious on our staffs who realise the importance of our charism and who are genuinely interested in carrying it on.
I think, by and large, they are excellent and very supportive. I think we should 'court their favour' a little more maybe bringing interest groups in our city schools together for the odd function.

Q. 35 et al. again deals with this. They gradually assumed a role of greater significance. I cannot truthfully say that this was the result of a planned philosophy or programme by the Brothers, rather the result of diminishing numbers of Brothers and introduction of the 'free education' scheme, greatly increasing the pupil numbers, especially 2nd level.

Co-operation continued and improved. The financial advantages of Posts of Responsibility caused some problems. I did not experience lay Principals.

While it is true that promotion prospects were poor in the main, yet the lay teacher in our schools was regarded as a valued partner in education and his contribution to the school life, especially extra-curricular, was appreciated. The relationship between lay teachers and Brothers was generally very good.

In my memory there has always been a high percentage of lay teachers in our larger schools, especially at secondary level. The opening of the West Indian Mission meant that many young Brothers who would have been in the Secondary schools made room for further lay participation. I feel there was always a good relationship between the Brothers and lay teachers, although there was a "Brothers' Room" in some schools. Lay teachers were always involved in extra-curricular activities.

Even up to the mid 1970s, there was still a "them and us" attitude towards lay teachers. Teachers were told what to do by the (Brother) Principal and did not have a say in the running of the school. It was from the late 1970s on that they began to be treated as equal partners and colleagues. It could be agreed that this development coincided with the drop in numbers in the ranks of the Brothers, but I like to believe that some Principals were far-sighted enough to have begun the process of consultation while the Brothers still formed a significant percentage of school staffs.

I am not sure of the position of the lay teachers in our Presentation Brothers schools from 1960 to 1970, but I presume it was a continuation of the position that I knew previous to 1954, i.e. where there was a great sense of camaraderie, a great sense of belonging and a deep mutual respect for each individual teacher, regardless of whether they were lay or religious, before 1954 and after 1969. I have never, during those periods, heard a lay teacher criticising the Brothers or the Brothers' administration or the policy we were following. In fact, I heard many times the admiration that the lay staff have for the Brothers and how outstanding that relationship between lay and religious in the Pres. schools is in comparison to that in the schools of other Orders. It is my perception that the relationship within our schools, lay and religious at secondary as well as primary is something that we should be very pleased with. Furthermore, there was no indication that the lay people were upset or disturbed because it was a Brother who was always Principal of a Brothers' school. It is only in recent times when the numbers of Brothers on the staff are so few that the thought of a lay Principal surfaced, but even then I haven't recalled a criticism even in schools where there
are only one or two Brothers and have a Brother as Principal, eventhough such a negative reaction would be understandable.

9. **What was the relationship between the Presentation Brothers and the Teacher Unions?**

- It is my experience that lay teachers and these Unions had a very high regard for the Pres. Brothers. This was stated at times of tension like the 1969 strike. It was also true regarding the allocation of Posts of Responsibility in the early days.

- Among the INTO members the Presentation Brothers were well thought of as they were always fair to them in both appointments and the treatment as a member of staff.

- Overall, good, but strained at times especially when teachers were looking for better conditions, the Brothers corrected the Primary Cert. papers.

- In my experience the relationship with the Unions has been, overall, positive. In the Secondary sector we have consistently followed the lead set by the JMB and have avoided any serious rift. We enjoy the improvements to teaching won by the Unions.

- Up to 1965 the Unions were weak. An attitude of respect and awe towards the Brothers, e.g. Mr. O'Reilly, President ASTI c.1965 - teaching in Pres. Cork. By 1969 the Unions called a strike and threatened more e.g. 1971 - I taught in Pres. Bray, unaware the lay teachers did not go to class, i.e. one morning! No serious Union problems in the schools in my experience.

- There seemed to be a good relationship. Some Brothers were members of INTO. The Brothers recognised what the Unions had achieved for them and always contributed to the widows and orphans fund.

- With one exception - the Douglas case - I'm not aware of any tension between the Brothers and the Teaching Unions.

- On the whole, I would say excellent. We were fortunate to have taken over any school run by lay teachers, such as Ballina and the Marist Brothers. I never experienced any clash between the Pres. Brothers and the Unions.

- It was not great and the Brothers had very little contact with same.

- In primary schools the INTO welcomed Brothers as members, whereas in Secondary the ASTI were always somewhat antagonistic to religious. The ASTI was seen as an obstacle to progress.

- Our relationship with the Unions has always been positive. We have consistently backed them and I think they appreciate that.

- Cordial but not of any great import - a pity! And perhaps engendered suspicion in a profession where unity of purpose was so important. This diminished as Posts of Responsibility became ‘available’ for non-religious.
• Reasonably good, by and large. At negotiation level there would have been hard bargaining and little give and take but the teacher unions recognised the positive mutual good relations (based on mutual respect and collaboration) at school level and that neutralised a good deal of potential hostility and aggro.

• The only knowledge I have of this is the late sixties/early seventies when there was a row between ASTI and the Management of what was then Col. Muire Douglas over the dismissal of a teacher. The teacher remained on the Staff. There was tension over the appointment of a Vice-Principal in Col. Muire subsequent to my leaving the school.

• There was a "live and let live" type of attitude, I believe. Relationships between Brothers and teachers in schools were generally very friendly - probably exceptionally so - and so any clashes with official Teachers' Unions were avoided.

• The relationship between the Brothers and the teachers Unions was on a business basis to my knowledge. There was certainly no anti-relationship there. There might be some passing negative reaction between a given Principal and the representative of a given Union. But overall, there was a healthy respect on a business basis between Unions and Brothers. The Brothers accepted that teachers needed the support of a Union, like every other professional group and they acted accordingly to my knowledge. The fact that the relationship between lay teachers and Brothers was so good in our schools, meant that the relationship with the Unions was good. The only time that there might be some confrontation might be the local representative on behalf of a given member of staff and I know in one case where that member of staff was not supported by the rest of the staff.

10. What importance do you attach to the teaching of religion in Presentation Brothers schools?

• I attach great importance to it. It's what makes us different.

• The teaching of religion is important in all schools as without it, the children will not learn the meaning of life and their moral duties and what is right and wrong. The children deserve to get the best and the Brothers owe it to them to see that they get every chance.

• Very important, especially as a support for full-time R.E. teachers and a very good way of developing the whole person.

• The teaching of religion is of primary importance in our schools. Otherwise we have no business being involved in these schools.

• Always considered very important. The set programmes in the Dioceses I taught in were examined either orally or in writing. OK in Junior Sec. Classes. Senior classes did not get much benefit, so that poor teaching and the confusion resulting from Vatican II left that age group poorly prepared for life - these are today's parents! I noticed great improvements from 1975 to 1980. I don't know if that has been maintained to this time.
• The religious formation of the pupils is of the greatest importance. If we fail in that we fail to follow the spirit of our founder and don’t deserve to be called a religious institute.

• It was one of the changes that Edmund Rice made in the Pres. Sisters Rule when he took it as a Rule for his Society of the Presentation – that there be one half hour (11.30 to noon) Religious Instruction. This was the case up to the late 1960s (in my experience). In more recent times, with changes in schools and in religious practice, R.E. has lost status in the schools. Effective ways of using it as the glue which keeps the school together have not been found.

• In the Primary schools I felt the teaching of Religion to be of supreme importance – that’s our raison d’être. In Secondary schools Religion teaching was the Cinderella of subjects – first to be dropped for any reason.

• I think that it should be the only role that Brothers should play from now on.

• In Primary school R.E. was given a central place but in secondary it was not given a high priority in the allocation of resources. Individual Brothers took some imaginative initiatives.

• It is the most important subject for life – but it isn’t easy to convince the pupils of that. In the Senior Classes it is the one subject where they are not under pressure. However, the subject needs specialist teachers.

• Whether it becomes an exam. subject or not, I would shudder to think of a school without any element of Catechesis in evidence.

• In Dungannon Secondary School (academic failures – 11-16) the provision for these schools – especially the less able streams B.C.D.E. was totally inadequate – everything was geared to the Grammar Schools, also it was non-structured, there was too little attention given to Scripture.

• Of paramount importance. But I do not refer so much to Religious Knowledge and the teaching of religion as to the atmosphere/ethos created by values portrayed right through, etc. etc., by the Brothers.

• I think it is important though my views have changed somewhat. Knowledge is just a part or a step.

• Very important. It has been increasingly difficult in 2nd level schools in recent years.

• While religious instruction held an important place in the Brothers schools (especially Primary) the preoccupation with reaching high academic levels and scoring well in exams had a damaging effect on the “practical” teaching of religion; it was not given the high priority it deserved.

• I often wondered if we in the secondary schools were more concerned about results in the Inter & Leaving Cert than in the Religious Education of our students. In Birr in the early Sixties (1961-’64) there was a definite curriculum laid down and this was examined through a written exam set and corrected by the Diocesan Authorities. Schools under clerical management were exempt and this caused some resentment.
I think that there may be a huge gap between what we propose to be about and what we actually practice. All or most of our documents state that our first priority is Christian Formation while the practice would indicate that we have become so caught up in the success drive that the primary aim may have receded into the background somewhat.

The teaching of religion in Presentation Schools is essential to the existence of such schools. I prefer to address the religious education and catechetics as two separate things. Religious education I would use to cover the knowledge dimension. Obviously, the students should be challenged intellectually with the principles on which the faith are based and an intellectual grasp of these and of Scripture is one of the goals of the Christian schools. We live in an era of specialisation and there is little hope that the religious knowledge can reach the level of excellence that the secular subjects aim at unless the people responsible for that subject are as well qualified to do so as those in the other subjects.

Because there are no points available for those who pursue that course the people responsible for imparting that knowledge would have to be seen to live what they preach and be enthusiastic about it. That may be a demanding standard but that is the only position to sustain.

The Catechesis dimension then is the responsibility of the whole school and that unfortunately has been identified with evangelisation as the only priority. There is solid evidence to establish that without happy relationships within a group - a relationship that reflects respect, acceptance and trust, there is little or no hope of developing a Christian milieu. Energy must first be invested in developing such a milieu before the challenge of evangelisation can be effectively promoted. Not all members of staff understand this principle. Neither are they committed to promoting a Christian milieu in the school as the way of passing on the faith. This attitude has to be addressed by the Trustees and through them, by the Boards of Management, but especially by the Principal and Vice-Principal and a core group from within each Staff. There is growing evidence to establish that this cannot be effectively done within a school without the leadership of an effectively functioning chaplaincy.

So, religious education and catechesis cannot normally be effectively addressed by the traditional teacher of a subject. Hence the growing importance of the chaplaincy role. This in turn might not easily be sustained without external support and hence the need for the Trustees to have a well-thought-through coordinated policy, promoted and driven by a person who has deep convictions on the matter and who exudes enthusiasm for the role.

I see little point for Trustees to be responsible for the so-called Christian schools where the religious education and catechesis are not on their rightful pedestals and should a school claim to have those two challenges catered for at that level, then they cannot be sustained without the personnel referred to above. There is ample evidence to establish that lay people are highly qualified in delivering on today's educational standards, but there is equally strong evidence to suggest that those who are involved in the promotion of religious education and catechesis are being frustrated, some of whom are even walking away from that challenge. This is going to increase as materialism gains momentum and hence the over-riding question for Trustees of Catholic Schools to decide on a half-hearted effort in
many schools or a wholehearted effort in a few and that few might have to be one or two schools where a modelling process is followed.

11. How did the Brothers respond to new developments in catechetics?

- This varied very much with the person. Some responded well — others no. Some even drifted out of teaching R.E. and perhaps were not challenged until it was too late. Mt. Oliver was used by some, even some of our lay teachers were sponsored there.

- Very slowly, initially I would say courses.

- Each diocese had its own meetings and discussions. The Brothers were involved in all of these. The Provincial Council also were very positive in giving time and finance to support the Brothers re catechetics.

- At a Congregational level the response was poor. At school and individual level it was mixed from enthusiasm in some cases to “didn’t want to know” in many.

- Most Brothers made some effort. From 1970 on lay teachers were appointed to the schools as Catechists. Fewer Brothers were seen teaching senior classes... confidence was not there. No newly qualified, confident young Brothers came on stream to meet the challenge. So the lay teacher now has to the carry the torch and the time appears to be opportune for them. But they so need support.

- The new approach was welcomed by the Brothers. The old ‘fear’ was taken out of it and the R.K. period was looked forward to.

- Sent Br. Liam to Corpus Christi College London in 1968/’69. Sent Brothers to Mount Oliver Course. Brothers did the Dip in Catechetics in UCC/UCD. On the negative side: No Brother did Mater Dei Course or any primary Degree in Theology (to my knowledge). There is a perception that the community schools have been more effective in the area of catechetics. The basis for that is that they have established structures, with the help of their fulltime Chaplains, through which there is more co-ordination for the catechetical programmes.

- Some Brothers responded well by taking courses in Catechetics and by keeping in touch with new developments. Others sat back and complained that they could no longer teach Religion – not qualified, etc. The Brothers in the Primary schools, I would suggest, welcomed the new developments and got on with the job.

- In the national schools they did their best. They attended courses and co-operated with the Diocesan examinations.

- Substantial efforts were made through Seminars, courses, diploma studies, to keep abreast of developments e.g. the “Hoffinger Seminars”, the UCC and Mount Oliver diploma courses. Brothers were involved directly in setting up the Catechetical Association in Cork in the early 1970s.

- Fairly well, but there is no doubt that qualified catechists are essential.

- I think the Brothers were always in touch. Courses were always being encouraged by way of inservice at Summertime, especially. Much energy and
time was invested in Brothers through sabbaticals etc. I think we have done very well, indeed.

- New developments in catechetics had made little progress in many dioceses in the Irish scene. Brothers were generally aware of this in the 1950s and '60s and many did avail of the opportunity created by summer courses. Although awareness of the deficiencies grew among the Brothers, Diocesan programmes did not develop properly. This, I would suggest, was most apparent at 2nd level. During the 1960s an effort was made to introduce our Novices (as future teachers) to some fresh approaches in catechetics re presentation / subject matter, etc and a programme was devised with a weekly time allotted.

- Very well I think. Courses in early days by Sr. Marie de La Cruz and Hoffinger attended by all the Brothers in Ireland.

- Positively. They did courses, studied and took them on board.

- They welcomed them because they presented religion in a more humane and acceptable guise - with emphasis on responsibility, personal relationships and the love of God. Part of the reason for the unsatisfactory teaching of religion was the image of God projected by the older texts and the legalism it generated.

- Personally, I had the opportunity of spending a year in London at Corpus Christi College which was a Catechetical Centre as I was Assistant Novice Master at the time. I found on my return to Novitiate that my views were regarded as too "progressive". When the Centre opened in Dundalk some Brothers were given the chance to go there. In the fifties summer courses were organised to improve our theological knowledge. There was a lot of "De Fide from Trent" in the content and Vatican II subsequently brought changes in approach. We were exposed to the Catechetical Movement through summer courses. Brothers attended courses in the Centre near Navan run by the Sisters of Sion. There was a catechetical section in the "Renewal Programme" held in the summers of 1964-1970. There was always plenty of texts available to the Brothers who wished to know!

- Apart from one notable exception, that I am aware of (Br. Raymond Sharkey), the Brothers were not leaders in this field. Generally speaking, they adapted well to change and supported new developments - quite a few Brothers did summer courses in Catechetics - but they were not innovators or leaders in the areas of development and change.

- The Brothers' response to new developments in catechetics was uneven. There have been many courses followed over the years, as sponsored and promoted by Major Superiors. But the work in individual schools depended on the enthusiasm of individual people and in some cases that was outstanding and in other cases it left much to be desired.
12. How do you view the present state of religion in schools?

- I suppose it varies from school to school. I think it's better than it ever was. Big challenges lie ahead with the new R.E. syllabus and R.E. as an exam. subject.

- From the comments one hears from teachers and others it seems that there is a certain amount of indifference creeping in to the children's interest and this may be due to the attitude of adults.

- A lot depends on the home. The last few years I was in school I noticed a number of young mothers had given up going to Mass. This had its effects on the family and the school. The school did help those families, especially at Holy Communion and Confirmation.

- Whereas the general picture is one of disinterest, many of our students are positive about their faith. Making religion an examination subject is a move in the right direction.

- A high percentage of students are coming from homes where there is little if any practice of the faith. At best the school could only supplement the influence of the home – not replace it. In my visitation of schools 1980-'84 on vocations I found the attitude to Religion positive. In the Retreat Centre, Mount St. Joseph 1986-'90 girls generally very positive while 50% of boys seemed indifferent.

- Looking at it from the old conservative viewpoint, religion would appear to be on 'its last legs' as regards Mass going, Sacrament reception and prayer in the home. In many cases, everything is left to the school. The school is probably the only place where many of them pray or even hear about God. Yet there is a lot of good in the children, a greater awareness of people in need, etc.

- It depends on the schools and the teachers concerned. It also depends on the importance the Principal gives to it. Religious related activities are probably more important than the classroom teaching of religion. In many cases, in Irish schools we have failed to celebrate religious feasts and the highs and lows of life in a Religious/Spiritual manner. This is a weakness.

- Personally I would like to see Religious Studies as an examination subject at second level. I'm not at all happy with the present state of religion in the schools, especially at second level – lack of interest. It has not impacted on the lives of the pupils who no longer attend Mass or the Sacraments.

- They are doing their best to get the parents involved in the National Schools and it seems to be working.

- 'Informed Religion' is healthy enough with the faith commitment of the majority of teachers shining through. The 'formal presentation of religion' varies enormously with the expertise of the R.E. teachers and especially lay catechists.

- I am happy that there is a very good relationship between students and Religion teachers. I think pupils are less cynical and less critical than they were twenty years ago.

- I believe the state of Religion is in a relative healthy state in spite of the many extraneous obstacles. Teachers have not 'thrown in the towel', difficult though it may be. I know, I would like to be more forceful.
• It reflects the state of Religion in the community.

• Much improved. There seems to be a much more serious attitude towards it among staff and students and the involvement of students in the liturgy and in charitable activities has helped to focus students’ minds on religion.

• I have been out of touch with school for some years and am not clued in. I believe that the atmosphere of a school is important. If students and teachers respect one another and there is a sense of justice and caring within the school community I feel that Christian values will be more readily accepted. The attitude of parents is all-important – school, home and parish must work together. If the home is not a religious one, I feel that the school can do little in spite of its best efforts.

• All the indications are the state of religion in the schools in Ireland is at a crossroads. Because of the level of stress to which teachers are exposed and the lack of interest in that challenge by parents as well as by youth, makes the work of those responsible for the promotion of the religious dimension of the schools increasingly difficult. Trustees have no choice but to address that fact.

13 To what degree was there a distinctive Presentation Brother approach to the teaching of Religion?

• I’m not so sure that there was a congregational approach. There was certainly an individual approach – depending on where each Brother was at. A congregational approach would have needed a congregational preparation.

• I am not aware that there was much difference in the method of the Brothers as against all other teachers. When there was the question of an examination the aim of all teachers was to get a good result first and then to add some stories and other anecdotes with a religious flavour. Often when preparing a class for the Sacrament of Confirmation there was a lot of memorising of answers and facts as the Bishop was going to examine them. There was little time or thought given to the meaning behind the questions.

• An atmosphere of friendship and warmth – interest in the individual, you felt you were somebody special.

• In our schools there was an excellent religious atmosphere. The programme in each diocese also helped to make the teaching of religion a happy period each day for the students.

• I don’t think there is any.

• At Primary level where Pres. Brothers were at their best, in my opinion, I could identify a ‘Pres. Product’. The religious education permeated the day’s work and a faith community seemed to have taken form. Though I tried this at second level, I met with only partial success - I could sense it in a school, though unable to describe it.

• I don’t know that there was any great difference except possibly in the emphasis put on preparation for First Communion, First Confession and Confirmation. I
think also that prayer was always very important to the Pres. Brothers in the classroom.

- In many of our secondary schools up to recently, most of the teachers on the staff taught a R.E. class. Now that teaching religion has become a specialised art, this practice has all but disappeared, but one positive feature of this was (a) give staff members an opportunity to share their faith (b) R.E. was not for ‘the clerics’ alone - it was for all.

- I think it depended on the individual Brothers. Teaching religion was priority in many cases. In the past, pupils punished for not attending Sunday School Masses prior to my time. We did not always keep in mind the spirit of our founder.

- It was taken seriously enough in the N.S. Personally, I felt the Brothers were very successful in that sphere. Our Rules always stressed the importance of the religion class.

- It was probably never very dogmatic nor rigid. It was coloured by positive healthy relationships cultivated mainly through extra-curricular activities.

- A definite period, three times weekly and couldn’t be missed, lightly. I think the Brothers taught with great commitment and conviction but also with compassion.

- 1 Brother/28 in the school!

- Re the ‘imparting’ of R.E. the programmes were detailed and therefore limited in the various dioceses. There would have been a specific Pres. influence re attitudes to various facets of living as absorbed during formation and from community living.

- Difficult to know was there a distinctive approach. Devotion to Our Lady was one element perhaps. Results were important - and affected the approach.

- Difficult to say. Their humane and somewhat lenient and amiable approach towards discipline (with exceptions of course) was reflected in their attitude to religion teaching and would be more in keeping with the new developments rather than the old strict and narrow attitudes.

- I think that there was an emphasis in our schools on prayer, the Mass, devotion to Mary which sprang from our own spirituality. In my own young days, the Brothers gave me the example of their lives - daily Mass, attendance at parish May devotions, Holy Hours, etc. I can’t recall any harsh approach in the teaching of Doctrine. There were morning and evening prayers in school - the Religion Programme was followed. I feel that we have lost prayer life within our schools.

- I could not claim that this was ever identifiable, in my experience.

- There was a distinct Presentation Brother approach to the teaching of religion based on the tradition of the earlier Brothers. This was especially so at primary level, where Brothers took their responsibilities seriously. In fact, in the ’50s it would be my impression that the teaching of religion was relevant in the Presentation schools and there was much enthusiasm and investment of effort in the preparation of First Holy Communion and Confirmation classes, but also in attendance at Mass and in follow-through exercises. My impression of the teaching of that subject in secondary school was that the prescribed texts as laid
down by the church were irrelevant to the needs of the young people of the day. They were very much doctrine orientated and poorly written and students saw them as deplorably dry. Yet in the schools that I know of they had a lot of devotional exercises linked with May and October, with regular Confession and with attendance at Mass and a big drive to make a special effort during the Lenten period.

In later years a new effort was made to highlight that challenge as detailed in the Five-Year Development Programme of '82. But as materialism gained ground and enthusiasm for the subject waned among the young and the experience of the turbulence that teachers and youth experienced during the late '60s there was a turning-off towards all things religious. But the Bishops, through the newly-established Mater Dei programme, did their part to fill the vacuum and schools and religious orders financed the training of some teachers and employed graduates of Mater Dei. But the attitude in the schools changed and became "leave it to the experts" and the traditional approach of having most teachers involved with at least one class went overboard. This proved to be an unwise move as many teachers had much to offer from their own philosophy of life based on the great heritage towards the Christian faith in Ireland. However as the specialisation dimension surfaced, they would claim to be unequal to the task of mastering the new texts and the new approach towards the theories highlighted by Vatican II.

In the Brothers International Workshops as well as at Provincial and local group level, much time and effort has been given at discussion level to religious knowledge and the catechetics. But because of the rapidity of change in texts and attitude, it would seem that we have to review the effectiveness of our policy heretofore and honestly face the new challenge.

14. What is your perception of the relationship between the Presentation Brothers and the teaching of the Irish language?

- The Brothers have supported the language. Some of our Brothers were very, very good Irish teachers. The Brothers who taught Irish to Senior level had a multiplier effect with their colleagues. We were short in numbers here.

- The Brothers were very favourable to the Irish language without being fanatics. Some were more successful at imparting a good knowledge of it but the home influence and encouragement were lacking.

- Very enthusiastic but sometimes it had a harshness and failed to instil a love for the language.

- There was a very good standard of 'written Irish in all our schools. We had just a few schools who were excellent at spoken Irish.

- Most of the Brothers had (have) a love and positive attitude to the Irish language. Some in the past, were very committed to its restoration and use.

- At Primary level all excellent and committed. Except in Col. Muire, Col. Therese and Mount St Joseph, the promotion of the Irish language at Second level was left to those who taught the subject.
• The teaching of Irish was always a top priority for the Brothers. A very high standard of Irish prevailed in our schools as a result of constant drill, something which has decreased greatly, especially in the last ten years.

• A few fanatical ‘Gaelgoiri’. Some ‘managerial monks’ taking the money associated with teaching the Gaeilge. The rest - the majority - not much interest.

• The Presentation Brothers were never perceived to be die-hard Nationalists like the CBs. Irish was not the spoken language in our schools in most cases. Many Brothers spent holidays in the Gaeltacht in an effort to improve their knowledge of the spoken language and to be better prepared to teach it.

• There was always a strong bond. The order did a lot to promote the language. Colaiste Muire did wonders for the language. We had quite a number of enthusiastic teachers of Irish.

• Many Primary school Brothers developed a high level of proficiency and enthusiasm for the language. Only a minority of second level Brothers had the same involvement. A few schools had a strong ‘Gaeilge ethos’ where Irish was used in ordinary discourse.

• The Brothers were never fanatical about pushing Irish.

• Brothers generally were supportive of the language. During 1940s, '50s and early 60s, some Brothers taught part of curriculum through the medium of Irish. In common with teachers generally, the restrictions engendered by the Department of Education programmes and instructions meant that sufficient emphasis was never laid on the communicative method.

• Brothers generally were enthusiastic about Irish - probably lessened in recent times. Colaiste Muire in early days had a big influence - being All-Irish College.

• Irish had a special place in Presentation schools.

• Generally, a very positive attitude prevailed towards the language. Opportunities were provided to improve standards of spoken Irish by visits to the Gaeltacht and some schools provided instruction through the medium of Irish.

• When in Primary school with the Brothers, we were taught Irish but it was not ‘beaten’ into us. I had a fair knowledge of Irish when leaving the Sisters. In Col. Muire we did all our subject through Irish and were encouraged to speak Irish around the house, on the football field, etc. When I was a Novice we were encouraged to speak Irish as a ‘gift to Our Lady’ - This caused a certain tension among us as all were not as keen on the language as others. We were not convinced that Mary was particularly keen on Irish.

• Generally speaking, Brothers were very diligent in promoting the Irish Language. Many Brothers had a great love for the language and were both diligent and expert in its promotion and development. By and large, their love for the language was passed on to their pupils.

• The Presentation Brothers had an open mind about the teaching of the Irish language. They were loyal to the Gaelic tradition and they were level-headed in their interpretation of how to promote it. Some individuals and schools were more successful than others, especially where Irish was the spoken language. But
all students of Presentation schools, to my knowledge, would have got a healthy respect for the Irish language and culture from the Brothers and their schools.

15. What role did Irish play in our own formation and training?

- My own formation and training was so rushed that cramming was uppermost. Left primary school, one year in Douglas, followed by one year in Passage after which the Inter was done. Then the junior novitiate or spiritual year when we had very little study of Irish or, indeed, any secular subjects. Then the leaving Cert Year as Senior Novices which was just tough going. Looking back, we did very well to emerge from it. An honours Leaving Cert after three truncated years' study, not much time there for absorbing Irish culture.

- I still think that though the fact that Coláiste Muire was an all Irish school and we were not allowed to read any English books except on rare occasions, it militated against acquiring a good general education, which as future teacher we should have had.

- It was very important to get honours in Leaving Cert Irish.

- The Brothers in Douglas gave us a good training and love for the language.

- Not much. The use of Irish was encouraged in the Juniorate.

- Very important. Very little Irish leaving Primary. Learning Irish at Col. Muire was easy, one just picked it up from one's companions. All communication with the Brother-teachers was through Irish. We seemed to be at ease relating to them at sport and especially when at manual work which I liked. That same style of relating continued through my novitiate years. Card games etc., all through Irish. Prayers in Irish as meaningful as in English.

- I did all subjects through Irish in Primary school so that Irish was never a problem for me in Douglas, Passage or training college. Having to speak Irish around the grounds on the playing fields, etc. gave us a great 'feel' for the language. The Saturday night Irish Concert and the occasional Irish drama made it an enjoyable learning experience. Irish was kneaded into every aspect of our lives.

- None.

- Irish did play a big role in my early formation, not so much in the De La Salle College.

- I could not speak a word of Irish when I arrived at Col. Muire. After four years, I was able to do the exam. It was one subject I loved to teach afterwards.

- Very little indeed - bhi Gaeilge agam ón gcluichean. Bhi bheim beag ar an nGaeilge òn Dubhghlas ach ní raibh faic i Ard N. Iosaef ná i UCC. The G.A.A. formed our attitude to games. We picked up Irish music and dancing in Cursai Gaeilge.

- In the Juniorate we studied all subjects except English and Religion through the medium of Irish. As a result, I got to like Irish and studied for my degree but it didn't help my Maths or Science.

- I enjoyed the language because I was good at it. I was lucky to have teachers who themselves liked it. They passed on their enthusiasm for the language to me. I got
a sense of identity giving me a certain pride in who I am. Visits to the Gaeltacht also helped.

- At 14 years (1952) I arrived in Col. Muire with no Irish. I loved it, rich in vocabulary, rich literature, but it impeded the learning of other subjects, e.g. Latin, History, Science, etc (through Irish).

- Very important and beneficial intellectually and culturally, which led to personal esteem and national esteem. It created for me an interest in the culture of other peoples, Celtic and others, and influenced my reading, adding to my enjoyment of literature (translations) from the Nordic and many other countries. I think it could be a fascinating study for some scholar, i.e. The role played by Irish in our “European-ness”, especially in the 19th and 20th centuries following on the Renaissance of 14th, 15th and 16th centuries. (So much of our research has been concentrated on the impact in Europe by Ireland in the earlier centuries).

- Primary/Secondary education/Teacher Training through medium of Irish, Irish in B.A. Degree with H.Dip in Ed. I got a great fillip from teaching summer courses in Irish College, Coláiste Laichlin Naofa, Inis Thiar, Co. na Gaillimhe 1969-'79.

- An important one I would say. Through study, visits to the Gaeltacht and reading of the literature, I developed an enthusiasm and love for the language which helped me greatly in teaching the language and teaching subjects through the medium of Irish.

- There was an emphasis on acquiring Hons Irish in Leaving Cert as it was necessary if we were to go to Training College. I took Irish as a subject in my Degree and taught if for all my years teaching. I can't say I met any fanatics down the years. We enjoyed our holidays in the Kerry Gaeltacht.

- The enthusiasm of a primary school teacher for the language had a profound effect on me - he was years ahead of his time in terms of charts and aids. Love for the language was closely linked with loyalty to games and culture as I grew up. All this had a large influence on me later when as a teacher I had the freedom to give expression to the commitment I felt to the Irish language, games, music, etc.

- Irish did not play a major role in my formation and training.

16. How do you view the present state of Irish in the schools?
- Not good. Some Irish teachers should not be teaching - let alone teaching Irish. At higher level this is well done. Relatively few Irish teachers are inspiring. Come to think of it, the same is true of English.

- From reading the newspapers and seeing the percentage marks in pass and honours papers in the Leaving Cert. it seems that there is a steady decline.

- It is losing status and standards are lowering, but more hope for Irish with Gael Scoileanna mushrooming around the country.

- I think the students like Irish through the new curriculum. Perhaps the standard has dropped.
• Not able to judge as I have been out of school too long. The Brothers did not get involved with the Gaelscoileanna though I helped in the appointment of teachers in the Douglas school - a good experience for me. Time was when Brothers did run Gealscoileanna and did it well. The quality of teaching Irish in secondary schools was difficult to maintain, perhaps more difficult now, students opting out. The good teachers could keep the whole class involved to the end.

• I’m afraid the standard has ‘plummeted’. Most of the teachers haven’t got any ‘feel’ for the language as they never used it as a spoken language. The Buntus Courses do not put any great emphasis on vocabulary as in the old Cúrsa B. The pupils are great at ‘switching off’ when it comes to Irish.

• Irish in the ordinary National School and more so in the secondary schools is at a very low level, with the introduction of so many other subjects. The Gaelscoileanna may be the salvation of Irish.

• I fear that as a subject it is neglected.

• A strange mix as between the Gaelscoileanna and the ‘nodding acquaintance in the Secondary … where Irish tends to be a ‘book language’.

• More and more pupils are trying to opt out of doing it. However, as against that, a surprisingly large number want to do Honours at 5th Year level. A lot depends on the teacher they have.

• Interest has not been great in recent years. There has been little innovation to the course/exam system in recent years and unless students are very good at Irish, little interest is shown in the subject.

• Top grade pupils very good. Many weaker pupils opt out and lack motivation to progress.

• The standard of spoken and written Irish has deteriorated. This is reflected in the high failure rate in the examinations.

• I expect this differs from school to school. My brief return to Spioraid Naoimh in 1991 brought me in contact with the new syllabus and approach. I feel that students who are weak and who do not see the ‘usfulness’ of Irish will not try too hard to learn it. I feel (rightly or wrongly) that most students would not do Irish as a subject if they were free to choose.

• The present state of Irish in the schools is not good to my knowledge. That has been largely influenced by the culture of our day. Time was when we believed that schools influenced their local communities. There is little to establish that that is in fact the case. Much of the evidence suggests that it is the local community and the local culture that influences what happens in the school in terms of promoting values and attitudes. Hence the need to come to terms with that challenge.
17. **To what extent was there a distinctive approach to the teaching of history in Presentation Schools?**

- It would be an individual approach, based on family more than Congregation. I could not say that there was a Congregation approach.

- I did not notice any special emphasis in the way we were taught and we taught it ourselves as the school programme prescribed. Some individuals may have given it a more nationalistic interpretation.

- No distinctive approach - it depended on individual Brothers.

- The syllabus from the Department of Education was the same for all teachers. The rest was left to the discretion of the teacher.

- Nothing very distinctive: (i) the Catholic view always supported in a controversy of a religious kind; (ii) a nationalist side supported with regard to Irish History. In all cases a reasonable approach taken ... I do think.

- I'm not sure that our schools had a distinctive approach; we used the same texts as other schools, texts which greatly emphasised Irish victories and especially the heroes of 1916.

- I think it was exam orientated.

- A nationalist bent - in later years at least.

- I would make the point that sometimes England's relationship with Ireland didn't always come across very positively.

- I do not think that there was a distinctive approach in primary schools by our Brothers. The Brothers would not favour the revisionists. Our history, colonisation etc, has had anything but a beneficial effect on our approach to history teaching. You know I don't think I have every heard a discussion among our teachers on say the dialectic between the historian and various circumstances, events, social, etc., perhaps these things will come.

- It would have been the same as most other schools - which was a bit nationalistic and anti-British.

- The teaching of Irish history was influenced by a sense of nationalism and patriotism giving perhaps a biased, if not distorted, view of the realities of history.

- I'm not in touch with the current situation, but I cannot recall any distinctive approach from my own school days.

- I would not have been aware of any except that there was a strong prejudice against English and things British.

- To what extent was there a distinctive approach to the teaching of history in Presentation Schools? I am not sure that there was a distinctive approach in terms of a distinctive policy. But the balanced attitude of the Presentation Brothers within themselves towards history, and especially Irish history, would have permeated the school and its classrooms and it is this balanced approach that will be the distinctive stamp of the teaching and of the influence of Presentation schools on its students.
18. How would you describe the attitude of the Presentation Brothers to Irish nationalism?

- Very variable. Many were Fianna Fáil and Republican but there was a fair representation from the other side. The Kerry influence!

- They are proud to be Irish and hold everything Irish with respect. This does not cloud their judgement so that they are blind to its faults and failing.

- Varied - it depended on individuals in modern times. A lot of old Brothers were pro-British (more so than the Christian Brothers according to "X") because they were trained in England, i.e. Br. Connolly.

- Majority favoured nationalism.

- The great support for the use of the Irish language was for me and many Brothers a nationalist stand. All would, I think, long for a United Ireland - by peaceful means - very few Brothers I knew had extreme views.

- The majority of our Brothers, I would say, revered those who fought for our freedom. Songs and recitations relating to our heroes were always high up on a Brother's repertoire.

- I found more of this from my teachers in National School than I ever got from Brothers.

- A difficult question to answer. Most Brothers I knew or know, would not have been fanatically nationalistic - apart from a few. In general, most have a love of Ireland but not bitterly anti-British.

- It depended on where the individual Brothers came from. The Gaelic culture would predominate.

- Ambivalent - especially in our Rugby schools.

- Fairly balanced I would say, apart from the odd 'dyed in the wool' nationalist I have found the vast majority of the Brothers very balanced and sane in their outlook.

- They don't know what the problems in N.I. are. The have forgotten the origins of 'the Troubles'. The IRA had a ceasefire - all was well, leave it like that - and the Orange men will tramp down Garvaghy and the Ormeau, etc.

- Brothers were generally supportive of a distinctive Irish Nationalism. There is possibly an interesting connection between this and the fact that practically all the Brothers had a rural background, with quite a few having some connection with the "War of Independence", either through their native area, family, friends, or even having forbears - relatives directly implicated.

- Some were very nationalistic, others seemed to be unimpressed.

- Very favourable in the past. At present this favourable attitude has been revised to an extent because of some of the excesses it has produced and also because of a greater sense of international links - especially the EU.
Moderate. I have never experienced any fanatical ‘Gaels’ among the Brothers. We were taught to respect the men and women who fought to win the measure of freedom we enjoy. I don't know any Brother who would condone the use of violent means in the present day.

Some significant Brothers were fiercely nationalist and the vast majority were strongly nationalist. In a number of cases this nationalism was expressed less in positive action to promote the national cause than in anti-British verbal expressions.

The attitude of the Irish Presentation Brothers to Irish Nationalism would be unbiased at institutional level, but however individual Brothers would be either pro-Treaty or anti-Treaty. I am not sure of the attitude of the Irish Brothers in the pre 1916 period but there is evidence that balance was a hallmark of the Congregation's attitude to nationalism from the earliest days.

19. In general terms, what would the dominant attitude of the Brothers have been to the physical force tradition of Irish nationalism?

- Much the same as it was in education - ambivalent, OK on my side, terrible if the others were involved. Is this not true of all aspects of physical force - even in Gaelic Football?

- Justified in the 1916 to 1921 period as Ireland deserved to be an independent nation in its own right. Having attained the status of a Republic in the 26 counties, the hope is that physical forece would not be right now to coerce the six remaining counties to join the Republic.

- Mostly against physical force, especially older Brothers, i.e. Augustine, Eugene Sheehan.

- Any mature Brother would have encouraged peace while teaching History.

- A small number would favour the physical force approach. Most would not.

- In my experience only a few Brothers would have advocated physical force. Our history, however, had taught us that only force worked in the pursuit of Independence. In the recent past, we have learned that violence can get out of hand and spread through the country leaving us unsure as to who is friend or foe. That state of affairs makes me fearful. And that would be the case with most Brothers.

- I suppose our attitude would be regarded as being a bit ambivalent as we believed that Britain never gave any concessions except after physical force, though there would also have been great admiration for the work of such as Parnell also.

- I found more of this from my teachers at National school that I ever got from Brothers.

- I doubt if many Brothers would have favoured physical force to bring about the unification of Ireland - since 1922. Previous to that date, many would have favoured physical force - just a guess - despite the warnings of the Bishops.

- Sympathetic.
• Ambivalent again. We had some armchair generals, but I wonder how deep the support for violence in any shape or form would be. It would be of the "internalised oppression" variety, i.e. anti-British out of a sense of injustice.

• In a community of seven you might have two advocating violent action to achieve national objectives.

• Some ambivalence I would say, though generally not pro-violence. Questions 17, 18 & 19 I think have a very close connection with one another. It would take quite a volume to really deal with these in a worthwhile and coherent fashion. There was also the very real association between nationalism and religion, the morality of the just use of force etc. to be considered, not to mention a host of other side issues like the land question, etc.

• The attitude of the Brothers would be anti-physical force with very few exceptions.

• While understanding it, they would generally be opposed.

• Favourable. Again this has undergone a certain revision because of the events of recent history.

• I'm not sure, but I feel that most Brothers would believe that physical force was necessary at one time. It is possible that many would hold the view that we never got anything from the British without fighting for it. I doubt if many Brothers nowadays would agree with all the terrible things that have been done over the past 25 years. One finds extremists everywhere - in the sphere of nationalism - Gaelic culture - sport.

• Most Brothers would be sympathetic; some would be fiercely pro-physical force; the rest would be passively supportive.

• I am not aware if I am interpreting that question correctly, that the Brothers identified with any physical force tradition of Irish Nationalism.

20. In your experience, how was the 1966 Commemoration of the Easter Rising celebrated in Presentation Schools?

• We went along with what was happening around us. I don't recall anything special about it. We, some of us, attended the Easter Pageant in Croke Park. We had a meeting in Bray that week and it was exceedingly cold so the first layer of clothing was a pyjamas!

• My only knowledge of this is that I took two bus-loads of primary pupils from Glasthule to see "Seacht lá, Seachtar Fear", which was a dramatization of the Rising of Easter Week and which was staged in Croke Park.

• Not very much. It was watched on T.V. A special Mass. Proclamation displayed in schools. 1916 Rising explained in schools even though it was not on course.

• Irish History of that period was discussed and the celebrations in Dublin were followed with great interest.

• I cannot remember any great celebrations in our schools in 1966.
• With great enthusiasm and pride. I was then in Cobh. The Brothers were represented on the Cobh Co-Ordinating Committee. On the special day, after Mass, the students from many primary and secondary schools preceded by the college FCA group marched in parade to the primary school yard. A platform and public address system were already in place. I presided. Maithe agus Mór uaisle an bhaile were present and the high light was an address by Seamus Fitzgerald (of the Parade) with Cobh connections. The 1916 Proclamation was read in Irish and English. Later Clonmult was visited.

• It was celebrated with great joy with the unveiling of the 1916 Proclamation in every school. The history of 1916 was taught in greater detail than ever before.

• It was celebrated in the Novitiate. We were allowed to watch T.V. - the programmes on the Rising and we put on a concert, as an exercise in elocution, with emphasis on the poets of the Rising.

• Various speakers were invited.

• I was starting my secondary teaching in Col. Muire which had just started as a day school. We had no more than two classes I think and I can’t remember any great excitement about the commemoration of the Rising.

• At the time I was not directly working in the schools being with novices at Mount St Joseph. We did produce a little effort there based on the poetry and writings of the movement among other items and with the help of Mrs. Nolan and indeed some quite talented novices - “sic transit ...”

• The commemoration in Birr was very low key. I happened to be out of school from Easter to Summer that year. I cannot remember anything much in the school. A few charts were put up with the 1916 leaders on it - sent to the school by the Department.

• In 1966 I was in Mt. St. Joseph as Asst. Master of Novices and was not in touch with school life. I presume there was a renewed interest in the men who were involved in the Rising. Most schools I think acquired the picture that was published then showing the men who signed the Declaration.

• Individuals would have done quite a lot in their own specific classes; very little would have been made of the commemoration in an organised way within the schools.

21. How do you see the contribution of the Presentation Brothers to extracurricular education?

• This has been very good - mostly in sport. Brothers have been very generous with their time and have benefited themselves in that in-depth relationships emerged as a result.

• For our size in numbers, our contribution was excellent. We were dedicated to the training of teams in Gaelic, Rugby and Soccer, both at home and overseas. Some Brothers who were more musically able produced operettas, others taught choirs; others still taught their students to play in Bands. There were those who helped in the Scouts; others too, helped the old folk; Br. Polycarp was dedicated
to the mentally handicapped and devoted the last third of his life to getting people interested in their welfare. He gave lectures to adults in different parts of South Offally in order that the children would benefit. Some other Brothers helped in Simon. All this was done outside of school.

• For most Brothers, their whole lives were given to the students.

• As games were considered by our Superiors to have a value in the training of young people, all Brothers were free and even encouraged to spend time at sport. Training of choirs and bands for concerts and parades. Teaching individuals to play different instruments. Providing tuition to weaker students, always free.

• The Brothers have made a huge contribution to extra-curricular education over the years. Their work for hurling, football and rugby is second to none while they have been to the fore in debating (in English and Irish), Question time, Athletics, Dramatics, Feiseanna, Chess, organisation of holidays for pupils in the Gaeltacht, musicals, bands, drill displays, etc.

• All the young Brothers in my day were engaged almost every evening in organising games or bands or chess, etc. and even the older Brothers took an active part, e.g. training athletes, Br. Dermot, Br. David, etc.

• Judo, bands (both involving trips). They raised and maintained standards, challenged to excellence and gave vision, ambition, bonding, memories.

• There was no organised approach on such matters as adult education and other movements related. Individual Brothers did from time to time engage in various extr-curricular efforts, but the individual effort always faded out and the advantage of continuity was lost.

• They made a large contribution to games - rugby, gaelic, and in recent years, soccer. To a lesser extent they promoted tennis, badminton, volley-ball, handball and in co-ed schools, basketball. Cultural activities promoted by the Brothers include music, debating, public speaking, media education, charitable involvement (SHARE etc), travel, enterprise, etc.

• As the numbers of Brothers in schools dropped, the lay teachers took over extra-curricular activities, much encouraged by the Brother Principal.

• The Brothers contribution to extra-curricular education has been a major one. They have done much to promote the GAA and rugby in their schools. Their commitment of resources both in personnel and finances to games and to athletics, choral activities and drama, is to their credit. They were also heavily involved in the promotion of St. Vincent de Paul and in the Legion of Mary in their schools. But from the 1950s on there was a growing investment of energy in all forms of extra-curricular activities and the investment in these activities has grown over the years and some secondary schools would take pride in the fact that they would have as many as twenty-five extra-curricular clubs and societies alive and well in the school.
22. What has been the contribution of the Presentation Brothers to Gaelic games?

- Considering our small number, I think it has been huge and is acknowledged as such.

- The Brothers always gave of their best in training pupils in Hurling and Football. They themselves often played with the local Club, although it was frowned upon, but A.N. Other often played a great match with Clubs like Letterkenny or Deonegal, or Kinsale, Birr, The ‘Barrs, or Tyrone. Offaly should be very grateful to Br. Denis and Br. Vincent for all the hard work they put in training the hurlers as the County would not have won All-Irelands without their great work.

- Up to almost 1960, the Brothers were known by their Rugby schools. Nearly all GAA games in our schools were in the Primary. Dungannon, Enniskillen, were known in the North. All our primary national schools were very much involved but not known in a national way. Then came Coláiste Chríost Rí, etc.

- All the Brothers were committed to the promotion of Gaelic Games. Mostly from rural backgrounds, they were anti-soccer, anti-rugby, as being British games. The Brothers work for the GAA was valued in every County and Brothers showed great pride in seeing one of the Past pupils return with an All-Ireland medal at hurling or football.

- Apart from three schools, Gaelic Games were encouraged and played in all our schools - Primary and Secondary. Brothers have made a tremendous contribution - Brothers Denis, Cronan, Vincent, Colm, Canisius, to mention but a few.

- Very impressive in my opinion, participating in coaching, organising and freely giving the use of such facilities as they possessed.

- Time and energy were freely given. It is being missed at present.

- They aroused the interest in and taught the skills of hurling and football.

- The Brothers contributed quite a lot to Gaelic Games, especially in the rural areas in primary schools. This effort was not always credited as much as the successes in the Cork secondary schools, e.g. Coláiste Chríost Rí and Spioraid Naoimh.

- The Brothers' contribution is far greater than is acknowledged and appreciated by the people generally. Because our schools were not readily identifiable (in the same way that CBs schools are) the Presentation Brothers contribution to Gaelic games is not at all fully appreciated. Still in every Primary School tremendous work was done by the Brothers and the contribution to the promotion and success of Gaelic games in the few secondary schools which we had has been enormous. The involvement of Brothers in local Clubs has also been exceptionally influential.

- The contribution of the Presentation Brothers to Gaelic games has been a major factor of the impact they made on the students and on the local community in all our schools, other than the private ones of Cork, Glasthule and Bray. But even in these, there were periods when Gaelic was also one of the games promoted.
23. Was there a distinctive ethos in Presentation 'Rugby' Schools?

- Never having worked in them, I cannot speak from experience. Results and status of our ex-pupils would suggest there was.

- In the early days they were elitist both in the Staff and pupils. They felt that they were far superior to the mere ordinary schools. When a Brother was changed to one of these he had to travel 1st class and be well dressed to fit the part.

- Yes.

- Not really. The rugby-playing schools seemed to have greater ability in involving more of their staff, Brothers and Lay, and students in the games. Whereas in the ‘Gaelic’ schools, the games were in the hands of the expert few.

- Boys at rugby schools came from the better-off families and so began with a social advantage. Good jobs were waiting for them when they left school, especially they had got on the 1st school XV and better still is the player could boast a cup medal. Rugby code was honour, trust and honesty - all were expected to rise to that standard - ages of players were left to school Head to verify. Never questioned or requested. Rugby developed a school spirit.

- In my experience Rugby involved more of the students, was less competitive and was more of a team game than the Gaelic games.

- Undoubtedly Yes. Like nearly all schools, they had a very special ‘spirit’. Every school would claim to have a unique spirit. But there was a spirit of great loyalty, pride and community in the pupils of Presentation Rugby schools.

- Yes. Pride in tradition; commitment to the school jersey; Anti-C.B. e.g. in PBC; Family spirty among staff and Brothers.

- I don’t think so. I suppose each school has a distinctive ethos but I wouldn’t ascribe it to Rugby.

- Yes, in the sense that it was ‘elitist’ though the game has made many friendships, instilled a discipline and created a bonding between cultures.

- Yes to some degree. This perhaps was not due to an ethos cultivated by the Brothers but rather to the fact that the fame was a part of the private/pay school situation which catered for a particular section of society, quite a few of whom would be more or less professional/middle class.

- I spent one year. I would say there was. Hard to define.

- The same interest, enthusiasm and commitment - the game the only difference.

- There was a perceive ethos in our rugby schools, slightly reminiscent of English Public Schools. Rugby was generally played (in Ireland) in fee-paying and therefore wealthy schools - hence rugby was associated with class. One element in these schools was the great loyalty of pupils to the alma mater.

- I believe that every school has its own ‘ethos’ /spirit. I imagine that since the pupils in the ‘Rugby’ schools came from more affluent homes, they had a different set of values and aspirations. One got the impression that there was a different ‘tone’ in these schools. Accents were different (elocution classes), dress was distinctive when most schools didn’t have a school uniform.
I am not aware of a distinctive ethos in the Presentation Rugby schools. The fact that our three, and for awhile, four schools (Cobh) were catering for the middle classes, the ethos they would have would be similar if not the same as the other rugby schools of Ireland. It was about an openness towards all games. They were as at ease with soccer as they were with Gaelic and rugby and many played both Gaelic and rugby. There was also an openness towards cross-border activities as well as towards the country that looked after thousands of our emigrants - England. I think that the level of tolerance towards the choices of others in the rugby schools was to their credit.

24. What impact had the advent of “free” education on Presentation secondary schools?

- Total transformation. Numbers doubled in about four years. Influx of new staff. Perhaps the selection process here was not good enough and this caused later problems. In my case, the search for new buildings led eventually to our Community School and co-education. The merging of staffs was a very big challenge - again without any real preparation for same.

- Free education was welcomed by many schools as it now made it possible for children whose parents could not afford the then small fees to now have a chance of second-level education. It did not affect the rich, who could afford to pay. Numbers increased in schools and schools became co-ed.

- Pay schools closed down. The Government had more control.

- In 1949 we offered free secondary education in Scoil Chriost Rí to the senior boys in the South Mon. Out of a group of about sixty only one went there, coming back twenty years later, all wanted to go to secondary.

- The principal impact was the influx of students with a corresponding increase in staff. Also for the first time, capital funding became available (and was availed of) from the State, bringing better subject choices, accommodation and facilities.

- Free education was introduced in 1966 or 1967. Fees in Cobh Secondary school at the time were £15 p.a. Under the new scheme we would get £25. We would be rich! Increased numbers had not materialised by 1969 when I was changed. Bray Secondary School benefited greatly. The grant for building was availed of. Numbers at the Secondary school in Bray (from memory): 1960=200; 1980=600. Larger numbers meant greater numbers of lay teachers and a gradual decline in the influence of the Brothers whose numbers remained static. In 1960 a school could be “reformed” in one year. A new School Head could call staff meeting, mostly Brothers and the result was often a transformation for the better. So in the system a change of Preincipal every six years or so seems to have benefited on the whole. With free education, larger numbers and proportionally fewer Brothers, made reform difficult. Later Principals were to stay longer than six years, not necessarily for the better.

- There was an upsurge in numbers, which required more buildings, more teachers and more Brothers. Juniorates were on the way out, Coláiste Muire closed in 1985. (?)
• A great explosion in numbers attending; an improvement in finances; in buildings, new schools sprung up - better facilities, more lay staff; secretaries, caretakers provided. Where we were glad in Birr to have 50-60 pupils in the Secondary School in 1950, now there are hundreds.

• To the best of my knowledge, not an awful lot.

• Explosion of choice. Our Principals seldom focused on full-time administration, which the new schools demanded. Some suffered severe burnout as a result.

• Standards were lowered, especially where the intake was on a first-come-first-served basis. Discipline became more difficult - pupils from a variety of backgrounds some with very limited interest in education.

• My immediate concern was with Primary education, but I did consider that the introduction of the “free” scheme did have very far-reaching effects. Numbers of pupils, building - availability to all strata of society - effects on standards of education, availability of aids (though limited), equipment, furnishings, etc. all contributing to a changed school atmosphere and relationship between staff and pupils. In common with all those engaged in education, the scheme had quite a profound effect on our own schools. Rural schools/towns were especially affected. It is now pretty difficult to image areas where the nearest 2nd level establishment was some 40, 50 or 60 miles away, with no real travel facilities available.

• The numbers increased, interest and effort decreased. The parents who were making a sacrifice lost some interest in the school. The parents in Birr who gave gifts at Christmas stopped when “free” education arrived. A percentage of pupils who were not able to benefit from secondary curriculum entered the system.

• It made education available to a wider cross-section of people and provided therefore a greater mix of “backgrounds”. It also was responsible for a greater range of ability - from genius to remedial and this created problems both in recruiting pupils and in educating them - some were incapable of benefiting from the type of education available in secondary school.

• With the advent of “free” education, many pupils who may have gone to Vocational schools came to our secondary schools within the scheme. Subjects like Woodwork, Technical Drawing, Art were introduced to cater for pupils who may not be able to handle the more academic subjects. I think there was a greater “mix” of pupils in our schools as a result. I think the locations of the schools mattered. I imagine for example, that there are more “Professional” peoples sons attending Coláiste an Spioraid Naoimh than Coláiste Chríost Rí. I imagine Glasthule has pupils now from homes that could not afford the fees a few short years ago.

• All but one of our fee-paying schools joined in the scheme - eventually. In the other Secondary schools the fees were so low that the introduction of the scheme did not impact largely. An opportunity for making a fuller educational programme available to a much larger body of young people was lost because our schools continued to offer a mainly academically-weighted programme.
The impact of free education on Presentation Secondary schools influenced, in time, Presentation Bray and Glasthule to go public. I don't think it had any big effect in Presentation Cork, while the schools that were in the public domain grew in stature because of the new standards that free education introduced, which in turn influenced a wider choice of subjects. The advent of the community and comprehensive schools and the emphasis on bringing games into the co-curricular domain influenced a new capacity to develop the whole person as part of the curriculum.

25. How have the Presentation brothers dealt with issues of access and equality of educational opportunity?

- Not too well. We are inclined to hold on to traditional values, e.g. the old Leaving Cert. There is a marked reluctance to tackle the Vocational Leaving Cert and the Applied Leaving cert. Even the Transition Year has had to endure rejection - especially from parents who could have been better prepared.

- As far as I am aware, the primary schools take in all applicants. In Post-Primary they try to do the same but due to the number of applicants this is not always feasible so they have to have an entrance exam.

- Very well.

- At times a few of our secondary schools neglected to take the weaker pupils - through lack of accommodation.

- In my experience, students, irrespective of ability, have been accepted and encouraged onwards by the Brothers.

- In all my experience all pupils who presented themselves were accepted. In Bray where pupils in the local National School were disadvantaged I agreed with the Principal to reserve a number of places in 1st Year for his pupils. He saw this as a great encouragement to him and his staff. When in a position to do so, I took care to see that the weak class got their share of the good teachers.

- Rich and poor alike had access to our schools, though academic ability was a factor as there was an entrance exam. I fear we didn’t cater very well for the less academic student, especially in the post-Primary schools.

- The Private Pay Schools (post 1970) have been elitist and exclusive. In other cases, schools have expanded the curriculum and enlarged buildings to cater for a wide range of students. In National Schools all were accepted.

- In most schools access and equality did not arise. Pupils were admitted, irrespective of ability or financial circumstances. In PBC Cork there was always a problem - weaker pupils were excluded. Entrance exams were always a problem.

- Not a very good record as we tended to use ‘entrance exams’ to select with little enough concern for those excluded by the process. Some were hurt by the selection process - both parents and students.

- How the Brothers dealt with the issues varied from school to school. Our schools in general, catered for the more academic type and therefore only students of a
certain standard were accepted. However, this has changed and now our schools try to cater for all abilities.

- I think the entrance exams did create a 'two-tier' structure, those who went to the 'tech' and those who went to the voluntary system.

- In my opinion, the Brothers sought to make education accessible, within their limits. Paradoxically, after the introduction of 'free' education our (CBs included) 2nd level schools in cork (personal experience) disappointed, failing seriously to cater for less favoured children. With CBs I represented the TBA (Primary) seeking to examine this situation. Apart from one, perhaps two 2nd level schools, principal teachers, even rational discussion on this very important problem proved well nigh impossible.

- I have never experienced refusal or denial of access or opportunity for any reason.

- They have dealt with it reasonably well. Despite the perception that they selected 'the cream', their method of recruiting ensured that children of past pupils, brothers of existing pupils and pupils from local national schools gained access to secondary schools and these obviously were of mixed ability. 'Equality' is a problem. Schools do their best with inadequate resources to provide the best education for all, but it is difficult.

- One recalls that the older Constitution said something to the effect that the Brothers shall give their pupils instruction that would be suitable to their state in life. The presumption would seem to be that pupils from certain backgrounds would have a specific sphere of activity. Outside Pres. Cork, Bray and Cobh and Glasthule, secondary schooling was not available in our rural locations - Secondary Tops were in existence in Scoil Chriost Rí, Birr, Kinsale,. Carrick-on-Shannon eventually had a Secondary - Letterkenny never did - St. Eunan's College was there. Killarney was served by St. Brendan's College. Enniskillen was taken over from the Brothers by the clergy. Pupils were prepared for jobs in the Post Office, Pre-Preparatory College, Garda.

- I would say that we continued (at Secondary level) to favour the academically-gifted pupils. Involvement in Birr Community School, the Nagle-Rice Project by CFRC and the North-side Projects are efforts in the right direction.

- I think that at primary level, the Brothers would be known to be fair in their efforts to accommodate those who knocked on their door. At secondary level, they would in the smaller schools take everybody they could accommodate, but where the number of applicants was greater than the number of places, then the easy way out was on the basis of an examination and that was seen as a process removed any traces of favouritism, though I could understand Principals giving special accommodation to sons of old boys and brothers of boys in school already. I know that in Presentation College Cork the entry was based on four dimensions: 1) from the parish - which would have been very few; 2) brother of a boy in school already; 3) son of an old boy; 4) proximity to the school. After that academic ability was a factor. Furthermore, the class arrangements for the First Year students was based on those could sing and those who couldn't and usually there were more singers than non-singers and they were placed in alphabetical order and the third class then would be non-singers and that would determine the allocation of classes up to the Inter. and after that the allocation of Honours/Pass
depended on the individuals' Intermediate results. One could ask the question: Could one justify a fee-paying school in a Congregation such as ours? My answer is 'Yes, certainly up to the present' because it meant that one could stay outside the public system and choose one's own subjects and through the fee-paying structure establish subjects that other schools couldn't offer, such as philosophy, dancing and drama as part of the curriculum and smaller classes, especially for R.E. However, there is a strong case for the private school's potential modelling as there is the opportunity to model a form of education that's not normally available to the public system. This has been demonstrated by the Jesuits and other Orders.

26. To what extent was the Community School issue debated among the Brothers in the early 1970s?
- We were at the centre of it and we lived it for most of a decade. I'm not so sure that we were typical of the Brothers at large.
- It was debated. Carrick-on-Shannon closed as a result because no agreement could be reached as to the type of school needed – in 1995 a Community School was opened in Carrick.
- Not very much, except in places like Birr, etc.
- My recollection is that Community School idea was understood and welcomed by the Brothers but we failed to take an independent stand on the issue.
- In the Dublin area the TBA and the Dublin Diocesan Educational Council provided all Brothers with up-to-date information. Up to the decision to get involved in Birr, the Brothers were probably more anti than pro. Fear of the unknown and the reluctance to change.
- I'm not aware that it was discussed among the Brothers. The suggestion of Community schools was seen as a threat for quite a while. The CBs led the opposition - as far as I know - and closed off participation in them by Brothers.
- The only experience I witnessed was in Cobh and the debate was intensive. The Brothers and Nuns decided to go it alone. The clergy had an influence on this decision.
- It was debated heatedly by those in authority but not by rank and file. We were led and said by Bishops and clergy and also by the CB leadership at the time.
- Initially, all Brothers were united against the idea and a good deal of debate did take place but it was of a negative nature. Of course very few of our schools were 'threatened' by it at the time.
- Br. Bonaventure's Principalship and that of his successors in C.C.R. and C.S.N. are testimony to excellence and preservation of ethic/ethos, staff unity and loyalty, drive and spirit.
- No intimate personal experience of this, except so far as the provision of equality of educational opportunity was concerned.
• No general debate. When the problem arose in a local area it was debated. There was sizeable opposition to the Community School in Birr.

• It was considered an important issue and the Brothers’ Association, T.B.A., were very critical of the move - “Nationalisation by Stealth” and felt it was the thin end of the wedge of a take-over of education by the State

• I can’t recall any great debate taking place. The Provincial and his Council along with the General council dealt with this matter. I feel that the individual Brothers were not overly concerned except maybe in locations where the change to Community School affected themselves. There were places on the staff and on the Board of Management for Brothers while we had some Brothers available.

• We guarded our institutions and did not face the issue really. Birr is an exception; but a marvellous opportunity was lost in Cobh for example because we did not believe in our ability to influence the situation, we were dictated to try the Bishop and clergy (all well-meaning) and we were determined to hold on to our "independent status".

• The community school issue was, to my knowledge, not debated to any serious extent among the Brothers in the early '70s, but I could be wrong about this. What I do know is that the Brothers broke ranks with the CMRS in order to take the best of what was on offer, as in the case of the outcome of the Birr school.

27. How do you see the contribution of the Presentation Brothers to management and Principalship?

• Again, far beyond our numbers. This sounds like boasting! I chaired the Selection Board for the appointments in Coláiste Chríost Rí, Coláiste an Spioraid Naoimh and Glasthule. I have been involved in various ways at Board level. Selection Board or preparation for rationalisation in the following areas: Kells, Castlcomer, Cashel, Cahir, Portumna, Dunmore, Carrick-on-Shannon, Dungarvan, St. X Shannon, Ballinasloe, Gort, Passage West, Ballinakill, Mountmellick, Hospital in Limerick, Kilrush, Kilkee.

• They made a big contribution and the fact that Lay Principals are now Associates will help maintain the traditional ethos of these schools.

• The present policy of the Provincial Council is excellent. I like the idea of the help provided for Principals. Long meetings of Boards of Management are a burden on the few Brothers involved. It would be much better if the Brothers could be only involved in formation or evangelisation of students and teachers.

• Both at Primary and Secondary levels I think we had a good tradition in Principals and management. However, that is in the past and eaten bread ... etc.

• For me, the Manager in a Presentation school was there to represent the Provincial and his Council and to govern the school as they would wish it to be done. In that sense, the Brothers had a lot to offer and a definite educational policy. Without any special training, it was remarkable how successful Brothers were as Principals. Invariably hardworking and self-sacrificing, a generous response was got from the teachers and the pupils responded to a discipline that
was easy and not burdensome. A discipline in which the students were able to be free to grow.

- Most of the Brother Principals were outstanding leaders who were highly regarded by staff, pupils and parents. Where Brothers were in managerial positions, they supported Principals and staff, financially and otherwise.

- A practice of the Principal being the Manager (or acting as such) in secondary schools seems to have been widespread up to the introduction of the Boards. I think with was a regrettable development. It placed all power and decision-making in the hands of one man. Procedures were not as clear-cut as they should be, much was left to the initiative and good will of the man in charge.

- A mighty contribution considering our numbers. Brothers have accepted the rather thankless and burdensome role of Principalship with no financial rewards to themselves over many years – often with little or no preparation. We have managed all our own Secondary schools and some Primary schools and have done a reasonably good job - often lacking in finances.

- Time consuming!

- 1) Good staff relationships. 2) Generous treatment of staff and students. 3) Setting up Principal and Vice Principal Association. 4) Organising in-service for staff.

- I believe a school managed by Brothers and with a Religious Principal should continue for as long as is possible to maintain. Such a presence can make a statement in the community and beyond.

- In some aspects, perhaps positive. A serious deficiency, in my opinion, was the failure to formulate a planned and unified approach for all our schools. Ability and qualities of leadership, vision, dedication to Edmund Rice’s hopes, organising ability, recognition for parent rights and power for good, as well as the ability to build on respect for pupils, leading to a good rapport, were unfortunately not always given priority in making appointments, especially re Principals, ‘contingency’ sometimes prevailed. It is of course easy to be over harsh and in hindsight view with greater clarity. One must always remember that the State was relatively young in the modern education field.

- From what I know, they have given generously and been very committed.

- Brothers did a very good job as Principals, the importance of management is new.

- Valuable. They bring their educational expertise and experience to bear on both and try to project the Christian and human values which are under threat in a materialistic milieu. The personnel, both of school and BOM, are often parents themselves and have a vested interest in these values for their children – but they need enlightened leadership in those areas, and this is where the Brothers can help.

- For as long as I can recall, the Principal in our secondary schools was also the Manager. Most Principals that I knew functioned well and had good relations generally with the staff and pupils. Thinking back, one wonders if these men had any training for the jobs they held. Life was simpler then and the power to hire and fire was in the hands of the various Principals. These men put in many extra
hours on the job. Most Principals had classes to teach as well as all the other tasks that went with the job.

- The Brothers have been largely successful as managers and principals of schools and have been recognised as such. We have not however prepared our lay colleagues adequately for the change over. We are lucky in that we have the CFRC office in place to do something about supporting the lay Principals we have appointed. I doubt that the thrust of the office is towards this end. This needs to be addressed at Provincial Council level. The cries of our principals need to be heard, the resources and the expertise of the office directed towards them or we could lose the opportunity of playing a leadership role in forwarding the cause of Catholic Secondary Education.

- The General Council organised what was considered to be an effective workshop for Principals that was the outcome of some work at Provincial level. The booklet produced as a result of that workshop is, in my view, a relevant reference book as well as containing ideas that are as fresh and relevant today as they were when written. The contribution of the Presentation Brothers to management wasn't to my knowledge, of great significance.

28. What impact have the boards of management had on secondary schools?

- It's an increasing influence. Major contributions are being made by staff and parents - provided some care is given to appointments. Staff and parents have chaired Boards and have grown in the process. The problem - especially with parents, that the time taken to familiarise themselves with the system coincides with their first term of office.

- It has taken pressure off principals. Boards of Management help to co-ordinate teachers and parents for the overall good of the pupils. It is a financial safeguard to have a BOM.

- The increased participation brought about by the Boards has had a good effect. On the negative side they are cumbersome and I can see difficulty in finding suitable persons willing to give of their time and expertise to the Boards in the future.

- Boards were not in place when I was involved with school. Brothers as Principals may find it more difficult to work with Boards - as they were used to doing their own thing. From my experience with Douglas Community School, the Principal and Staff value the Board and appreciate its role. Lay teachers realise the danger of responsibility and feel happy to have the Board to fall back on.

- Looking in from the outside, I would see the boards as great support for the Principal in particular, and for the Brothers too. A sharing of the burden is good for all. It gives parents a chance to co-operate with all.

- A great development. It has introduced a proper system of management and separated it from the Principal's role. Teachers feel more involved in the running of the school and in influencing its development, I think.
• Principals have had to become more organised/more accountable. Boards of Management have been very supportive of Principals. The roles of management and trusteeship more delineated.

• Not very much on the day-to-day running of the school but overall in the long term they have been and are very positive. They offer great expertise and support to the Principal.

• I don’t think they have made a great impact to date in matters of school policy.

• Where they have been accepted, an impact for good. They relieve the harassed Principal of many burdens and are in a position to influence educational policy and be a watch-dog over the traditional values - the good ones!

• As far as my limited knowledge goes, they have made the Principal’s task more complicated. His relationship with staff members can be affected when he may have to refer to the BOM when some teacher seeks time off, etc. I really do not know enough about the powers and functions of BOM to give a coherent answer and my contact with school life is not very close. One hears teachers complain that there is a lack of communication from Board meetings.

• The impact of the Boards of Management on secondary schools influenced Trustees, as well as Principals to think deeper and they were challenged to clear their own understanding of the vision of the Christian school as well as being influenced to do something about its implementation. The whole potential of Boards of Management has to my knowledge, been untapped as yet, and until we are seen to be serious about what they can offer by the policy we will have drawn up and implemented and being seen to invest resources in enriching the group to do what they are capable of doing as a group in a leadership role, then we could be guilty of merely responding to political pressure.

29. How do you see the role of the Presentation Brothers as trustees over the next ten years?

• This is a role which must be clarified. Up to now the Brothers have not been leading as Trustees. Clear policies must be adopted. The ethos and the place of Religious formation must be clearly stated. It is not enough just to nominate a Brother to the BOM – which has been the case with most Religious Orders.

• To encourage the staffs of schools to keep the spirit of Br. Rice alive and to develop the important elements of a Presentation ethos in the schools.

• The present policy of the Provincial Council is excellent but from this on it may be too much for our numbers.

• It has to be a diminishing role. A last opportunity to stamp the Presentation ethos on the schools.

• An important role in empowering and developing the quality of our Principals and staff - enabling them to continue to cultivate the Christian ethos in our schools. Lay people may well succeed where we may have failed to develop the Catholic school.
• As the number of Brothers in our schools decrease, it will be vital to educate and support our members on the boards if we are to have any real influence in the schools.

• Trustees need to be more visible. Who are these people? What can they offer the school? A link with the origins and the story of the school. A vision for the future. Finance. Expertise on the BOM.

• I would like to see the role of Trustees withdrawn from schools in which we are no longer involved. It is a huge burden with decreasing numbers.

• I don’t see the relevance.

• This is our opportunity to: hand on the Pres spirit; to influence National Policy; to support our Lay Principals and draw them into the Presentation Family.

• Our only involvement will be through trusteeship. It will be important for the survival of the Presentation ethos. There has always been a very good relationship between management and lay teachers in our schools. This should continue between Trustees and staff.

• I think it will be very difficult to encourage Brothers to take on trusteeship of our schools, it is a concern as I see it.

• Time to go!

• I am not sufficiently au fait with the various considerations that govern such situations. I have general reservations as regards a number of our ‘trusteeships’ in view of active and available members. Trusteeship as I see it entails much more than just ‘being’ - semi-passivity.

• I can see them having to relinquish trusteeships as numbers fall. If numbers increase, they will have a great opportunity of making a contribution towards education in a supervisory and idealistic manner.

• Since I am not clear on what the role of the Trustees is, I find it difficult to answer this question. Does the role as trustees involve financial commitment from the Congregation. What is our liability before the law if there are cases of physical or sexual abuse reported and proved? Do the Brothers as Trustees have a say in determining what the ethos of the school will be? Have they any say on staffing? Will there be Brothers willing and able to act as trustees in ten years time? I would like to think that there would be.

• If we avail of the opportunities as outlined above, we can have a considerable and positive influence in helping parents, principals, members of boards and teachers promote and give support to the Catholic Secondary School. Positive leadership in our own schools now will, I believe, hugely influence others to take similar action. We are presented with an opportunity!

• I see the role of the Presentation Brothers as Trustees in the next five or ten years in a truly leadership role. That is, a leadership that has clearly established that they have done a lot of reflection on the basis of serious study and evaluation of the Trusteeship of other Congregations and with the organised help of staffs, Principals and Vice-Principals, as well as Presentation communities, they will have put in place a policy, a strategy and a structure that becomes the Presentation
Brothers. This is an age of opportunity, especially since all education but especially Catholic education, is at a crossroads. The potential of parents, has been untapped to my knowledge and until parents will be able to say that the Brothers have done much to enrich our role and to give us an understanding of what in fact our responsibilities are, but especially how to face them in the difficult circumstances of today's culture, we can not rest on our laurels. Building a realistic home-school partnership is an on-going challenge and it won't happen by chance. Tapping into and harnessing the gifts of Principals and Vice-Principals, as well as core groups on staffs, in terms of promoting the ethos of the Catholic school and the Christian milieu on which that is based is another major challenge, but it can be done because the material is there and the goodwill is there.

The last Chapter passed a motion that is now a Chapter Regulation: that every Regional Province set up a group that would look after all of the above by 1999. Such a leadership group has to ask itself today how well it has fared in responding to that directive from the last Chapter.

From my own perspective, I don't think it will get very far until somebody who is able and willing to drive the implications that these challenge entail will we get the result that so many of us dream of. This will entail new commitment by Principals of schools to invest a realistic amount in the whole field of resources for the promotion of Christian education and contribute (perhaps two or three schools working together) to the payment of a Chaplain. The investment of realistic resources in the training and spiritual development of core members of staff, especially teachers of religious education, will reflect the level of our commitment.

30. How have Presentation Schools defined “success”?

- It depends on who is doing the defining. Most would see success in exams as being basic. Much more important, I think, is how a school deals with its weakest members - even at staff level. Hence the importance of the new Programmes - with them, the weaker students find success. Alternative talents are unearthed and cultivated.

- The development of character in youth. That they and their staffs produced students who were well educated in secular subjects in order to attain suitable employment in life and that in their turn would be in a position to hand on to their children sound moral and educational principles.

- Exam success and games success weren't the only criteria, i.e. well-rounded person more important than just exam and games when it came to getting a job. The Brothers pupils seemed to have “this” above other schools.

- I think the Brothers judged their schools in terms of the success of their students, whether it be academic, sporting, business or other.

- In my early years as a teacher, e.g. 1953-1970, academic success was for me very important for each student. One was aware of character formation and Christian education and the cultivation of Christian values and these were not neglected as there was little change in society and school and home pursued the same values.
The external practice of religion was taken for granted. From 1970 on we were presented with a new challenge.

- Having a happy, contented and enthusiastic staff willing to see their work as more than just a job; and being involved in extra-curricular activities out of a sense of vocation. Good discipline would be an important element in 'success', as well as good results in exams.


- Excellence in the past was defined in terms of success in exams - games - cups won - often at the expense of weaker pupils and to the detriment of the total development of the pupil. I hope this has changed.

- Leaving Cert hons. Inter Cert. hons. Munster Cups. No real harm in that - it's not all that goes on in school - it is what is seen.

- By the very nature of education I see the 'educator' always striving for excellence. Under-privilege in a pretty high percentage of Irish society demanded that material success (achievement), suitable employment, etc., commanded an important rating and tended of necessity to become a priority. I think this was the over-riding yardstick of success. Civil spirit and good social behaviour did have importance, especially in more recent times - drug age and other problems.

- In the past it meant success at exams, which was important in its own way, as it meant jobs. That is what parents, etc. wanted. I think the religious or spiritual side was always important, but we were very much exam orientated.

- Too often success has been equated with educational achievement and the Brothers have gone along with that perception. They also see schools as having a wider role in preparing pupils for life by teaching them life skills - often incidentally.

- I suppose exam results are one sign of 'success'. Success in extra-curricular activities is viewed as important. I suppose ideally one should regard success as having helped young people to develop spiritually, emotionally, intellectually. Since we are told that "the child is father of the man", I feel that helping a young person to progress from boyhood to young adulthood well integrated would be real success. Do we know enough about our past-pupils to know if we have helped to form mature, responsible adults?

- Largely, I would say (and in some cases, totally) by academic achievement.

- Presentation schools have defined success in the past very much in terms of what they call "good schools". That was linked to academic achievement and success on the sportsfields. But in some cases it would also be a yardstick of how well they were doing in terms of upholding and promoting Irish culture. But the Brothers and their colleagues would know that these could not be attained without good leadership and right relationships.
31. Generally speaking, how do you see Presentation Brothers as teachers?

- Some are highly motivated and talented teachers. Others are not gifted and have not kept in touch. I don’t like to see Brothers only teaching Junior classes. Surely every Brother should have a subject at Senior level.

- As teachers, we are in general very successful. In some ways we were better than many other teaching Orders. At that time corporal punishment was accepted as par for the course and we were no different but some Brothers were too severe; in fact, I would say, brutal. The brothers were a group of hard-working teachers, who did not spare themselves in their dedication to instructing boys who came from very poor families and who gave their time and energy also to extra-curricular activities.

- Diligent - anxious that their pupils “get on”.

- I think the majority were effective teachers; were doing so by choice; were dutiful; had a genuine love for and interest in their students and enjoyed the esteem of the public and support of their communities.

- My impression of our Primary teaching Brothers was that they were very good at their job - good at imparting knowledge, good at influencing the behaviour of the pupils, good at working within a discipline that was easy and free and response oriented and good at giving a love for learning to a great number of the pupils. A friendship that was to last often grew between pupil and Brother.

- At Secondary level all Brothers were maybe too preoccupied with the academic and sports success of the school. But were we educators? Maybe some of our best were not so successful with results and results were important.

- On the whole they were good teachers and good exemplars for their lay colleagues. They didn’t spare themselves in their efforts to give a sound education to their pupils.

- Generally, men with a human touch, interested in their pupils and friendly towards them. Some very good teachers but, in many cases, it was not the ‘effective’ teachers that had the influence on pupils - in so far as one can judge.

- I was told in the Training College by our Professor of Teaching that he never came across a bad Presentation Brother teacher: True or false? Like all other teachers, we had good and bad. But for dedication, commitment, hard work and effort, we had few equals. We had excellent teachers, others only very mediocre, never should have been teachers, who hated teaching!

- Hardworking to the point of being driven at times. Friendly with students and colleagues. Narrowly focused and intense in the classroom. Involved in and/or supportive of extra-curricular activities. Too involved and active to be very reflective in terms of curricular development or methodology.

- The Presentation Brothers are held in very regard both by past and present pupils.

- Those who specialised and were allowed to specialise and who were allowed to pursue their own subject without having to switch about became experts - mastered the teaching and examination system and could enjoy life because they were competent, confident, enjoyed success, in command, at ease, had job satisfaction, taught the more intelligent, were working within their capabilities.
• Often very creative considering the limited aids, facilities and finances etc. available. Quite a few Brothers would have become prominent in various aspects of education had proper facilities been more available. Perhaps their most notable contribution would be in the formulation of methodology rather than in the pure theory of education.

• Very dedicated to their work. Like lay teachers, some were good some not so good and a few were brilliant. By and large though, very successful teachers and their pupils had more than average examination success.

• In my own experience as a pupil of the Brothers since the age of eight, I have found the Brothers, by and large, hard-working, dedicated men, kindly for the most part, interested in their pupils and past-pupils and worthy of the confidence that parents showed in sending their children to our schools. Most of the Brothers that I have known have kept pace with developments in education and are aware of what is happening in the real world. None of them has been "so heavenly minded as to be no earthly good".

• I see them as exceptionally committed and dedicated, very hard working, ambitious for their pupils and very good at the basic job of imparting knowledge. Relationships with pupils are generally very good - friendly, open, little harshness evident, evidence of considerable respect for the individual, a lively interest in individual's welfare and establishment of genuine friendships which last.

• I see Presentation Brothers as outstanding teachers. But as educators, sometimes some would have too narrow a vision. However, the vast majority would know what to aim at and, within their competence, would strive to do so.

32. To what extent are the Brothers influenced by the vision of Edmund Rice and the early Brothers?

• I would say that most Brothers were highly influenced by the previous generation of our Brothers. Unfortunately, our formation did not include a great emphasis on Edmund Rice. That fact had probably a historical basis for it. We are catching up.

• Even though circumstances are vastly different from Br. Rice's time, the Brothers still have the same interest in the education of the pupils and the poor are treated equally with the more prosperous. This would be his way in our world.

• The Brothers who were alive and good teachers were the Brothers that I was influenced by - I tried to copy and imitate them.

• We were very much influenced by the example of the early Brothers, especially by their work in the schools. It is only of late that we are interested in Edmund Rice.

• Edmund Rice and his early followers had little overt influence on the Brothers I knew except through the Constitutions (Black Book).

• Up to 1980 or so most of us were doing to the best of our ability what was handed over to us to do. The Community reflections after 1983 or so on our history on our founder and the founding Brothers developed an awareness in us that perhaps
we could open up to different ministries, without being unfaithful to our tradition.

We began to look at the needs for our day.

- The work that the Brothers were doing in the various schools around the country was in the tradition of Edmund Rice and the early Brothers. They did not articulate this. In fact to a large extent, they lost touch with Edmund Rice. There was precious little written about him by any of the Brothers. Along with that, the manner of living the Religious Life turned monastic and rigid, not as Edmund Rice would have envisioned it. To that extent, there was a split between the Ministry and Religious life of the Brothers.

- The CBs say we Presentation Brothers were more influenced by the vision and charism of Edmund Rice than they were. There were some of extraordinary influence among the early Brothers, men like Austin Shanahan, Paul Townsend, must have influenced what. What a pity Edmund was forgotten about for so long.

- The vision we had was contained in the Rule Book and it must have come from our roots.

- Until recently, we only dealt with one aspect of Edmund Rice’s vision, viz. teaching in the narrow sense. But I think we are getting back to the spirit of the founding Brothers in our new initiatives and in our efforts to read the signs and needs of the times.

- Very much so in the past ten years or so. The vision of Edmund, however blurred, was handed on from generation to generation of Brothers, mainly by example.

- Not to any great extent. I would suggest that we were told very little of the man in our early formation.

- If Edmund Rice’s vision was that of having schools like CBC, PBC, Deerpark, PBB, PBG, CCR, CSN, then his vision has been realised. We need a new one, a vision for the poor, disadvantaged, the ones no one wants, we are still perpetuating/maintaining a structure (inherited) rather than having a vision.

- Their story is amazing and inspiring.

- The influence of the early Brothers was much greater than that of Edmund Rice. His vision of course would have been so important to those early Brothers so indirectly he did influence. As far as I know, no planned programme, i.e. life, charism of Edmund Rice had any definite time allotted to it in the Novice Formation programme until the 1960s when it had two periods a week allotted. The Br. Cullen CB, who did so much for the unifying of Presentation and Christian Brothers, visited and spoke to young Brothers at Mount St. Joseph on occasions, by invitation.

- The cult of Edmund Rice is a very recent development and his educational influence was I think, negligible in the past.

- Starting with the Renewal Courses in the early sixties and seventies, the "Journeying" with Cassian Yuhaus, the Mission Statement, etc., we have I think become more alive, more conscious of our “witness” value - more caring of one another, more aware of social issues. I think we have tried to answer the call of
Vatican II to go back to our roots. The process over the years towards the Beatification of Edmund has, I think injected new energy.

- Consciousness of Edmund Rice and of his importance to our lives is stronger now than at any time in the past. In the past, the Brothers were influenced more by a tradition handed down than by any conscious acknowledgement of Edmund Rice's place in that tradition. Edmund's influence today will dictate that no new undertaking will begin.

- The Brothers have been influenced by the vision of the earlier Brothers in a major way. They have respected that vision and tried to emulate it and it formed a tradition that they respect and try to follow. There have been some exceptions but generally that has been my experience, whereas the vision of Edmund Rice has only begun to influence them as a group since the '70s and in a major way, in recent times.

33. In your experience, how would you categorise staff/student relationships in Presentation schools?

- I would say very good. There are always some staff who relate poorly with students. I think that a teacher is most effective when he/she respects, values and loves the students. It's great to hear a student say on results day "I loved my Irish teacher."

- Good, caring. There is a healthy level of intimacy.

- Relationships between staff and students were dignified and respectful. There was a good deal of the "man to man" element encouraged. The emphasis was on the kindly rather than the harsh.

- Staff/student relationships varied from time to time and from school to school and with different groups within the same school. Maybe just normal! I taught in three boarding schools, Douglas, Bray and Coláiste Therese. The challenge of having a friendly atmosphere, a home-from-home, and maintaining discipline, was never easy. Staff/student relationships in my day school experience was always pretty good.

- In my experience in Coláiste Muire in the early 60s there was a wonderful spirit. The Brothers were generally approachable, friendly, played games with the boys. The spirit in Coláiste Therese at the time was more rigid and institutional, though the physical facilities were much better there.

- In the past relationships between staff and students were distant. A much more open, friendly relationship exists now, especially in the Primary school. This type of relationship may not be so evident in the Secondary schools.

- Generally, a good spirit of co-operation. The difficult pupil did not fare so well in our schools. We believed in discipline and did not suffer fools gladly.

- On the whole, there is a good staff/student relationship. There is respect for the teachers and the pupils can feel that they will be protected from bullying and will be treated fairly.

- Cordial, supportive, good-humoured, genuine interest and respect.
Excellent. There has been in my experience, very good rapport between student and staff, apart from one or two exceptions.

It is difficult to make a worthwhile/definite judgement on this matter, especially when non-Brothers became so numerically strong in our schools. However my own experience was that generally speaking the rapport was good and in many instances, excellent.

The ambience in our schools was always a happy one - again speaking generally. Past pupils will testify to this I think.

I suppose there have been times when individual Brothers have been too harsh and individual teachers can be over exacting and at times make an issue of matters which are sometimes best overlooked or at least dealt with in a calmer manner. I sometimes wonder if we as Brothers or some of the lay staff have sufficient knowledge of home backgrounds to make allowances.

In the main, I would say that relationships have been friendly, most teachers in my experience have been able to cultivate a high degree of willing, even eager, co-operation without undue pressure - in fact, an exceptional willingness on the part of students to co-operate with teachers they did not have to fear and with whom they could feel very much at ease.

My experience of the staff-student relationships in the Presentation schools has been very good. There has been a healthy respect for one another and that is the fruit of a healthy Brother/teacher relationship and of the quality of the atmosphere in the staff rooms. However, because education is the influence of one person on another and Christian education depends for its effectiveness on the quality of all the relationships that the young person experiences, but especially of the atmosphere that the group creates, it is essential then that that atmosphere, or more correctly, the **milieu**, is created by design in order to give the young people an experience of what living the Christian life is about. The experiential dimension is the crucial one and people will either do things by design or by chance and such an important element of being messengers of the Good News cannot be left to chance. Hence the need to have all those involved, parents, staff and students, involved in refining their understanding of what right relationships mean in the growth of the human person and then, in a special way in the growth of the total Christian person.

34. What do you see as the important elements of a Presentation ethos in the schools?

- A school should be caring community of learning where each individual is valued as a unique human being.

- To develop the character of each student. To develop the consciences of their charges so that in adult life they will be in a position of making moral judgements.

- A caring, loving atmosphere, sharing, paying special attention to the marginalised, working together for the good of all the pupils.
• 1) A good Christian education. 2) A Religious atmosphere in the school. 3) Each student treated with dignity. 4) Special interest in the poor, etc.

• A sense of purpose; dedication to the task; trust in one another and respect for each; acceptance of failure; no one excluded; no favouritism; freedom and responsibility encouraged; a love of things Irish and Christian; religious symbols, e.g. May Altar.

• Respect of teacher for student and student for teacher prevailing. An atmosphere of freedom can prevail when the values and discipline of the school come near what is at home. The role of senior students in creating a community atmosphere has to be valued and worked at. I feel that school order has to be worked on from the top down, while perhaps religious (reform) renewal would come from the first year up, etc.

• 1). Respect for the individual (Commitment Statement 4). 2) Christian formation. Helping all involved in the school, staff, students and parents to play their part together (Con. 52). 3) Special commitment to the poor (Mission Statement; Commitment Statement 3) 4) Link with our origins: Edmund Rice, Paul Townsend, Augustine Riordan and the origins of each school.

• A loving, caring relationship between Principal/staff; staff/pupil; Principal/pupil, where the good of the pupil comes first. School must be a community, a community of good relationships.

• A calm, friendly atmosphere. Spiritually motivated and having the development of each a priority.

• A family spirit among staff and Brothers. A prayerful atmosphere. A caring spirit, especially for the weak and vulnerable pupils. Good relationship with parents.

• A ‘devotional’ spirituality permeating the school. A drive towards excellence. Béim ar an nGaeilge.

• Christian formation of young people in the areas of catechetics, academics, sport and discipline.

• Dedication, the desire to “raise these children to a more dignified status”. The pursuit of excellence.

• The work of a dedicated Brother gives an uplift to the staff of a school.

• Q. No. 40 indirectly deals with this matter. My personal opinion, rightly or otherwise is quite definite. The ethos of the early members of the early Church was so succinctly expressed by the people “Behold how these Christians love one another”. Among the Brothers themselves, unity of purpose of respect for one another, unselfish love and esteem, etc. must be there. This is really what Constitutions seek to cultivate. We would do well to try and achieve this. Otherwise, although individual Brothers may do so much good, a Presentation ethos will just not exist.

• A respect for the individual human being as a person to be cherished - not merely a name on a roll-book or an exam. candidate.
I would like to think that there is a spirit of caring within our schools; that we see the individuals within each class - "Seeing the trees from the wood". That there is a spirit of tolerance, and forgiveness, that Christian values are practised and promoted. That there is a welcoming atmosphere which encourages parents to share their concerns about their families and be co-operative with teachers in forwarding the educational, cultural, spiritual aims of the school.

- A respect for individual students.
  - A real interest in the welfare, progress, development, future of each person.
  - A friendship between staff members which ensures support in need.
  - Attention to and interest in less-gifted and/or troubled/hurting/deprived pupils.
  - Support and encouragement to develop God-given gifts.
  - Time for development of courtesy, kindness, concern; patience, respect, sensitivity to others, responsibility.

My understanding of ethos is that it is the prevailing atmosphere, the milieu that the people living and working in a school contribute to and live in, that creates that ethos which in turn gives a stamp to the values and attitudes of those who work and live there. For me then it is all about the experiential. To create the right experiences the following elements for me are central:

i) right relationships - and this means ongoing evaluation of the methods being used to heighten awareness of the centrality of right relationships and of taking stock as to how each person in each group contributes to the creation of such an atmosphere;

ii) an understanding of each person's uniqueness and of their unique needs and aspirations;

iii) a school curriculum that seeks to develop the total person;

iv) a religious education programme that has been updated and critically evaluated.

v) a structured programme which seeks to facilitate the students, but the senior ones especially, to participate in service to others
  a) within the school, but in a very structured way to those in need in the local community.

Since one of the important tasks of the school and home is to help young people to develop into warm, loving human beings, love is what it is about. We must interpret love as Christ did. Consequently, a climate of caring should be established in the school because disciplined caring nurtures the natural affection with which each of us is born and also because affection if not encouraged and reinforced, gives way to consuming self-interest and social indifference.

vi) Since a Catholic community is a worshipping community, then properly organised liturgies should be put in place at regular intervals. All the participants, where at all possible, should be involved in their preparation. I do not see these liturgies being held, except at class level and at most, once a term. But the day-to-day life of the school should be identified with prayer. What form that prayer should take on a daily basis would be left to the school or to the individual teacher. But it
would be difficult to justify a Christian school without some form of daily prayer.

vii) Developing a close liaison between school and home. Helping today's parents to cope and helping the parents of tomorrow to prepare now are high on the list of our responsibilities. Again, this has to be a structured programme. Since the standard of family life determines the level of growth of its members, sets the direction of their commitment and shapes the character of a nation, then these facts should influence the response of the schools to their potential to influence the quality of the relationships within the family and between family and school.

viii) Providing a practical education-for-leisure programme - not just to introduce the students to creative activities and hobbies, but to expose them to greater opportunities to mix with others, build friendship and get to know themselves.

ix) Finally, to have all this programme co-ordinated by Chaplain, lay or religious, that has been carefully chosen and properly trained. The experiences that a co-ordinated programme on the above lines provides for students is, in so far as the student is concerned, the ethos of the school.

x) Media education.

35. How do you view the appointment of lay Principals?

- I see the first generation of lay Principals as excellent people who are very close to carrying out the role as we would desire. However, it may be more difficult with the 2nd and 3rd generations which coming quickly. The 'Career Principal' may be a different animal.

- With some sadness. I doubt that, no matter how excellent they are, they will never replace the Brother, as all his energies were towards making a success of the position as he was not hampered by family ties.

- A necessary and a good thing.

- Down through the years most Brothers would be against lay Principals when we had plenty of Brothers. Now we have no other way. So it is a good thing. Our lay teachers are wonderful.

- With much satisfaction and confidence that our Catholic schools will continue to blossom in the future. Being close to a world constantly changing they, with our help, support and training, are ready and willing to face the challenge. In my vocation visits I was impressed by the welcome I got from lay Principals, while some Brothers were so enslaved by the timetable, they were capable of changing and accommodating me! Lay Principals will need a lot of help to keep a Christian atmosphere in the Staff.

- This is a good development. With the decrease in the number of Brothers, it was inevitable that men were appointed who lacked capability and/or enthusiasm for the post. It was not right either that very capable men and women should be permanently debarred from being Principal. I think our lay Principals have been made feel welcome and have been given the support of the Brothers. It is
important that they continue to feel this sense of being part of the ‘Presentation Sector’. There is a good relationship among them now I think.

- I personally have no problem with the appointment of lay Principals. We have been fortunate with the quality of the people appointed so far. We should have no fear as it is we who educated them – rather be proud of the fact that they can now take over.

- A step in the right direction. Religious have been in charge for too long. We equated control with influence which did not follow. Christ said something about Lording it over people and taking the lowest place at table. I doubt if would ever think of the laity if we had the numbers we had in the 50s and 60s.

- I think the appointment of lay Principals was long overdue. We have some wonderful lay teachers, highly qualified and fully committed to the true Presentation ethos. Already they are proving the wisdom of the decision to appoint lay Principals.

- It makes a radical change in our way of being ‘present’ in schools – ‘walking with’ and ‘not in control’. The talents and rightful role of lay colleagues recognised and enabled to flourish and last.

- Inevitable. But apart from that, an excellent idea.

- Liberation to pursue the vision of Edmund Rice. We don’t need to build schools, provide teachers and principals – present structures don’t inspire me – Dungannon did – I gave it all in the face of defiance and unwillingness – and died – paid the price – without success.

- In all honesty, I don’t think this movement emerged until it really became a necessity principally because of falling numbers of Brothers and less choice of Brothers prepared for various reasons to accept the responsibility. It is therefore difficult to assess the movement with any realism. Personally I consider the position of Principal teacher of paramount importance in every possible department of a school and plays a major role in the creating and continually activating a distinct ethos. Apart from general organisation and such matters as parent relations, staff and staff parent, staff pupil relationships are all influenced by him/her. If properly qualified, I would consider a Brother Principal Teacher preferable generally. I would not, however, wish him to be the only religious on the staff – in our type of Congregation “A Wide and Complex Question”.

- Principals are appointed on merit and the school is more likely to get an efficient and competent Head than under the old appointments system.

- I see the appointment of lay Principals as being a consequence of our falling numbers and as an answer to the demand for opportunity for promotion within the system and a growing desire to have more say in the running of the schools. With increased State funding of education, there is an inevitable demand for more lay participation. I know that teachers who worked under Brother Principals were sometimes critical but knew that there was a possibility of a change of Head, now they feel that they are stuck with whoever is appointed. Brothers on the staff may feel marginalised, but even in the “old days” Brother Principals did not pay much heed to how Brothers felt!
This move is also part of the new challenge as well as part of the "letting go" for us. It is much healthier to have competent lay people appointed than to hold on grimly with Brothers who don't want the job or who are not able to do it well.

My concern is that we may not be preparing people sufficiently for these posts and that we may not be supporting them enough when they have been appointed. I would like to see a greater involvement and more use made of the C.F.R.C. Office in this area of support and on-going development for our Principals.

The appointment of lay principals is timely and is very successful where the Presentation schools are concerned, as the appointed people are informed people gifted leaders and committed Christians. They have much to offer the Christian Formation programme of the Brothers. However, the only way to maximise on these gifts is to give them the assistance they need, especially in terms of training for leadership, heightening their awareness on what the crucial issues are and helping them to surmount those difficulties and turn the challenges into opportunities.

36. What measures can be taken to promote the continuation of the Presentation ethos in education?

- Br. Matthew is doing a fine job. The multiplier effect must be used.
- It is going to be very difficult under present circumstances, with the lack of numbers.
- 1) Appointing products of Presentation schools. 2) Sponsoring Brother Matthew's work. 3) Financing lay chaplaincies in schools. 4) Developing the Associate Movement among teachers and management in schools.
- The present policy of the Provincial Council; to help Principals and, if possible, to visit the schools and meet the students and teachers.
- We must use whatever influence we have on the Boards to ensure that Christian values operate in the schools. As Trustees, we should specify to each Board what it is we want in their/our school.
- 1) Principal and staff working to a clearly-defined policy and programme, spelling out the Christian ethos. 2) Religion and its application to life taught with more care to 1st, 2nd and 3rd year. If our senior programme cannot be improved on as of now, then leave the Religious senior classes voluntary. I found Phil. useful and interesting for 6th years – but only with a good teacher. 3) Have a discipline in senior classes which draws a positive response from students in their adolescence.
- Articulation of what the Presentation ethos means is the first step. Regular meetings of Brothers, Principals, Teachers, Parents and Associates would help to clarify and articulate what it means. Then strategies to give life to it in the schools to be devised locally.
- The appointment of good lay Principals and of course the teaching staff. I don’t know that BOMs have that much influence, though Brother involvement on Boards is appreciated by the lay teachers.
• The experts tell us the percentage of values that are mediated through the school: 30%-40% the kids receive from home. 30%-40% from peer groups. 10%-15% from school. This is saying something to us and our commitment in terms of time, personal and physical energy. It might be time to look at another way of teaching.

• We will have to invest more in staff development and boards of management.

• Regular in-service for Principals and BOMs. Involve members of BOM, Principals, staff in the Presentation family as Associates. Support Catechists, chaplains and secretaries through CFRC in-service and otherwise.

• Sow in new ground. Redefine the ethos. Redefine the Presentation approach - is the good teacher the who can “flake” - scare the daylights out of the pupils?

• Of paramount importance would be a unified and unity of purpose among the Brothers. At times I imagine I see too much fragmentation and disagreement not always openly stated. No group, no person has a monopoly of ideas and above all of the Spirit, and so civilised dialogue must be ongoing and ongoing, until this is achieved in fair measure only then do we have a source of or a worthwhile ethos to pass on.

• Through BOMs and trusteeships and through the Associate Movement where lay people join with the Brothers in sharing their principles, charism and spirituality and therefore their philosophy of education.

• I think we need to decide if education is our main apostolate and work towards getting young men who want teaching as a career. We in Ireland may need to look beyond to where there is still need for basic education. There are many young people who do not fit into the present school system. Can we undertake or co-operate in developing a system that will cater for their needs? Adult education in basic literacy - adult religious education - are areas which could be explored. The question – where do we find the manpower?

• Mainly, as mentioned in 35 above, the deliberate and organised use of the expertise available in the C.F.R.C. Office to provide on-going courses for Principals, Board Members, Parents, Teachers/Staff. The use of the Office for this purpose is more valuable and urgent than some of the existing courses available there. We have an opportunity now to give a significant lead in this area which we should not let slip. We will not get a second chance here.

• An on-going programme of Workshops whereby there is participation, not just by Principals and Vice-Principals but by a core group of the staff and representatives of parents, as well as people from the Board of Management who freely choose to participate in them. However, the challenge of inviting the senior students to participate in the school programme is one that hasn't been fully tried.
37. To what extent was physical punishment a feature of Presentation schools?

- As prominent as the norm. We did not have the same name as the CBs. But perhaps some of our worst cases were credited to the CBs. It is my experience that the “no physical punishment” era was quickly adopted and welcomed by most Brothers.

- The use of physical punishment was in every school and college but in some individual cases there were more brutal forms. These cases were not forgotten.

- Very prominent, but not universal. Pressure from inspectors and parents was responsible for a lot of it.

- Presentation schools had a good name re physical punishment.

- To my knowledge the Brothers were no better, or worse, in this regard than our lay colleagues.

- My wish always was that there would be very little. I failed many times myself to live up to that. Other teachers likewise. By middle 1970s only the Principal could administer punishment or was that my own rule in Bray? In my experience 90% of students never experienced punishment. In formation it was impressed on me that a good teacher should need to have recourse to punishing. At an early stage I learned that the more I punished, the more I had to punish! So I eased off with success.

- In my experience, it was rarely used (the cane as an official way of punishment). However, before corporal punishment was banned, students were struck in ways ranging from violent to “shaking up” by Brothers and lay colleagues. This was accepted as permissible. We would find that most unacceptable, as well as being illegal, now.

- In too many cases in the past there was excessive physical punishment in “Religious” schools, something we cannot be proud of.

- I do not think that it was excessive. Young people are prone to exaggeration. They are good observers but bad interpreters.

- I’d say we were no more or no less severe than the lay schools which we ourselves attended. Physical punishment was the accepted norm. Where scholarships were taken seriously there was often too much physical punishment which led to a lot of fear.

- It was, up to about 20 years ago, especially in the Primary schools and to some extent in Secondary schools. It was probably less so than in other comparable schools at the time.

- I did not consider it an issue during my “schooling” with the Brothers. I did have one Brother in Greenmount who certainly went over the top....

- Too much.

- I wouldn’t describe it as “prominent” feature – a “disciplinary” feature.
• It mirrored the attitude to physical punishment in our society (lay) generally, the attitude to children at the time, etc. Generally speaking it was not excessive as compared to other schools. Our Brothers who did punish excessively were in my opinion unhappy and perhaps unsuited to Religious Life and also oftentimes to the teaching profession. Some were mature enough to recognise this and returned to secular life.

• It was not as bad as people think. Very difficult to be accurate in one's judgement here as Brothers differed. But the atmosphere of leniency prevailed more often than that of harshness.

• I recall that the “old” Constitution stated that “The Brothers shall refrain from anything in word or deed that would hurt the tender feelings of their charges”. We were told to salute their Guardian Angels at the beginning of class. By and large, with some exceptions, sever physical punishment was not encouraged or tolerated in our schools.

• Some individuals won fame for themselves in every age! Generally speaking, punishment was not advocated or the norm. In fact, many Brothers and Teachers used it very sparingly or scarcely at all. Relationships were good and class atmosphere was friendly - there was no great need for punishment.

• The physical punishment was not a problem feature of Presentation schools. There were a few exceptions but generally there was a great respect shown for the student as well as for one's colleagues. It was the respect and healthy relationship between Brothers and lay colleagues that set the tone for their relationship with the students. This was equally effective when it was an all-Brothers school.

38. How well do you think the Brothers have coped with the challenge of change?

• In most cases, very well. Some naturally have difficulties.

• It has been extremely difficult. Towards the end of my time with Voluntary Secondary School I was in a rut. The advent of the Community School brought huge change. It has been there ever since. Some Brothers have not been sufficiently challenged to change. It is must easier to stay put.

• I think they accepted change as necessary in present-day religious life. It was harder for older members to adapt.

• Perhaps better than most Religious Orders.

• I think they are coping well if slowly with change. There is probably a long journey ahead but at least now there is a willingness to move given leadership.

• Reaction to change had to take place in the 1970s while we still had influence in the schools. I believe that is the Bray scene we did react by opening up to people in community and school and getting parents involved, etc. When I transferred to Cork in 1980 I was surprise to find communities and schools all looking in on themselves - no change since the 1950s. Religious Education in schools in a poor state. One school Chaplain confided in me that they had given up hope for the Brothers schools! The only hope was to be found in the Community Schools!
• Through Brother Jerome’s influence, we were made to face it. The message did penetrate down in some places but generally, I think, that there was a great reluctance to change among many of our school administrators. They preferred to wait until change was thrust upon them.

• Like all people, change is not easy to cope with or accept. Some have coped reasonably well. Age is a contributing factor in how Brothers accept change. Many Brothers have found change difficult.

• The majority have coped very well. It is a slow process and some will not have time to cope.

• Generally very well - no evidence of deep trauma! Those most resistant to change seem to be the congregational leaders of earlier times - of what they consider the “halcyon days of full novitiates”!

• Very well and are continuing to do so in a very positive manner.

• The challenge was not met in the early 60s and 70s when we should have changed course.

• Change: Religious Life? or Society? or educational scene? or? Considering change as a normal adjustment to growing (old) in a developing world some are adjusting in a mature and considered way, balanced and seeking to discern what is worthwhile, probably not with the wisdom of Socrates or his “City of God” nor the pessimism of his disciple Glancon. Tough question!!!

• They have made the adaptations imposed by change and have not dug their heels in and resisted. The new ministry developments etc are proof of this.

• Much effort has gone into Renewal and many Brothers have continued to inform themselves of new trends and have taken the opportunity to do courses of studies to help them. The fall in numbers has had a certain depressing effect and one is tempted to be pessimistic about the future. I feel we need an injection of new young energy.

• To say better than most others is not adequate but it is possibly true. I think that the size of the group has helped us to help one another to adapt and change more easily, or less painfully. Some very significant initiatives have been taken that have shown the value of adaptation and change.

• The Brothers have coped with the challenge of change reasonably well in terms of their willingness to participate, in Workshops and in follow-through programmes. But much is expected and needed by the leadership team to help people to influence the course of change rather than have change dictate what their priorities should be and what our response to the present challenges in today's society ought to be.
39. How do you view the development of new forms of membership, Associates, Give a Year to God programmes, etc?

- It is a new growth, difficult to assess yet.
- I welcome them all. It's not surprising to me that their acceptance was an uphill battle. One Brother said about the Associates “I'll believe in them when they hand up their cheque”. But that's where he's coming from. The summer courses have been an enormous help in breaking prejudice.
- I think the Give a Year to God programme is excellent. The numbers could be a worry. Associates too is an excellent idea. Perhaps at times there is a danger that some of the Associates could be appreciated more than the Brothers.
- I think these are positive developments and are worth the investment of (more) people and resources. The Give a Year to God Programme is certainly bearing fruit.
- Charism is a gift of the Holy Spirit given for the benefit of the Church community. Hence the charism that the Brothers have been given is for sharing with others. The developments of various forms of association with the Brothers is a sharing of the charism. It has been found to be life-giving for both the Brothers and the Associates; and those who are touched by this development. It has enabled the Brothers to think larger than themselves.
- These are new developments and must be given a chance. I am all in favour of new forms of membership, or new forms of vocation experimentation. Why not try these out? It takes courage to experiment - otherwise we die.
- These have been tried under different headings in the past. We have the Third Orders, etc. I am trying to come to grips with the Associate idea myself. It needs thinking about. It would be fatal to confuse these meetings with Prayer Meetings, yet the danger is there.
- The new forms of membership would appear to be the fruits of the spirit of Edmund Rice. The Associates are a real challenge to us and of spiritual development for themselves. The Give a Year to God programme is a wonderful training programme for youths who are searching for God’s will for them and has already proved itself to be a source of excellent vocation prospects.
- Very positive. Very challenging. Offering openings for new life. Offering openings to share our charism.
- The new forms of membership have put new life into the Congregation and they offer hope for the future.
- I couldn’t speak highly enough of such developments. They bring new life and challenge us to see religious life in a new light.
- No one would think of filling a Juniorate today with 14-year-olds. Dedication (total) to God in religious life is only for adults - people who have grown to maturity in a natural environment in the totality of relationships; in physical wellbeing; emotionally, mentally, spiritually, academically – in true self-knowledge. Presumably formation should be from within.- not aiming at
producing the model zombie to fit a structure; an organisation; a machine. It takes a very mature soul to realise that in the midst of storm and stress one can preserve one's soul in peace - especially if good will and faith combine and conspire to embrace crass stupidity. Give a Year to God, as I see it, is gently, non-coercive, non-demanding, positively for mature - constructive. Structures, shells, institutions, sacred cows, are crumbling around us - that must happen before the fiery glowing ingot will be revealed - the vibrant hidden church. Present procedures are well-founded, procedures of our time - "If it is of God ...."

- Re the development of "new forms of membership", I am not quite convinced that our identity and place in the Church's varieties of Religious Congregations has had the examination, informed discussion and convinced conclusions (even of our chapters) which in my opinion would be a 'sine qua non' for the stability required for a safe and proper evolution post Vatican II. Associates in one form or another have been a feature of all the Orders and Congregations, I think, always effective and valuable while the 'Body' from which they draw their inspiration remained faithful and steadfast. Likewise with some forms of The Give a Year to God. This comment must sound 'facile' but it really would need a well developed thesis to attempt a serious response to this question.

- These are necessary trends in a time of transition and seem to be very successful. They show a vibrancy and courage to respond to fresh demands and challenges and this is a healthy sign.

- I don't quite know what is meant by 'new forms of membership' Does it mean membership for a number of years 'Temporary Vocation' - members engaged in new apostolates - membership where Brothers live in community but have jobs as nurses, social workers, youth leaders, butchers, bakers, candlestick makers - "the concept of 'Worker Brothers' like the concept of 'Worker Priests' as was tried in France? I feel that Associate Membership is an excellent idea where we can share our prayer life with others and be open to their concerns and be inspired by their living of their Christian calling within their lives. I think the Give a Year to God is an excellent idea not only as a means of encouraging vocations but it opens up young adults to deepen their Christian faith and their influence, even if they do not join, must be great. I regard it as a form of adult religious education. Just as most former Religious have continued to live exemplary Christian lives, I feel that those who have done the Year will be all the better Christians as a result. I congratulate the Brothers who have had the courage to get involved in the Programme.

- Our weakness and small numbers entering have given us time to reflect. The result is that we are not putting the needs of the Kingdom and the Church before our own. So we can now ask how best can our spirit and work be carried on into the future. I see the Associates and Give a Year to God programme as an inspired and excellent response. Our laity are educated and open to mission. What they need is motivation, leadership and training and our Brothers can provide that. The time appears to be right and the Beatification of Edmund will hopefully give us all the extra impetus.

- Forms of new life are vital for survival and development. In this time of transition, the courage to attempt the new itself gives life. The Give a Year to God programme keeps us in touch with young people, alert to their needs and
open to new life. With fewer Brothers in the classroom, we could easily cut
ourselves adrift from new life. This initiative affords the opportunity of a two-
way exposure necessary for this new life to affect both sides.

* The interest and enthusiasm of our lay colleagues and friends have at last found a
channel in the Associate Movement. Our efforts to respond in a meaningful way
to them is a real life-giving challenge which I can almost feel moving new life in
us. We are being alerted to the movement of the Spirit in every person drawing
us on. We are part of something exciting. I do not know where it is going, where
it is leading us, but we need to stay with it; and we need faith, trust and more and
more prayer. There is real life here, not just for us but for the wider family.
The new forms of membership, Associates and Give a Year to God programmes,
are shots in the arm for our own morale, in the sense that they unearth new
sources of support and encouragement, as we share our charism and philosophy
of life with others, or others can enrich ours. The Associate movement is just
beginning but it needs careful analysis and evaluation at this stage so as to keep
the momentum at the level at which it has been among many of our Associate
Groups during the past year or two. So, much thought and effort, through
consultation with the people involved is needed, in order to maximise on this new
trend.

However, the Give a Year to God programme is imaginative, innovative and
practical. It challenges people to think and some to respond. Even for those who
do not consider themselves equal to the challenge of giving a year to God, then it
challenges them to look at their own lives and there is evidence that they are the
better for that because of the challenge that is being presented to them. For those
who give a year to God, they are enriched in the real sense and even though some
will choose not to follow religious life they are far better because of the
experience and they will re-enter the secular world as it were, with a new sense of
purpose and a new capacity to search for meaning as they seek to deepen their
relationship with the Lord.

40. How do you see the role of the Brothers in Education?

(a) at present:

* Their influence is waning.

* We are governed by numbers. In the classroom yes, not in administration, as
chaplains, counsellors, Boards of Management and specialist - slow learners,
religion, extra-curricular, etc. SERVOL.

* The Brother has a freedom to demonstrate to the profession everything that is
good and noble about the good teacher. His dedication in embracing new
developments should have no vested interest - just for the good of the student.
Parents need to be brought along because they will tend to be highly conservative.

* They are making every effort to enlarge their sphere of influence and they have
made some very positive steps which hopefully will produce results.

* In the marginalised area of schools, i.e. troublesome pupils, travellers, special
class and the handicapped.
• Involved with the poor and disadvantaged. Also involved with teachers etc.

• The numbers of Brothers involved in the classrooms has never been lower and there is no indication that this is going to improve in the future. The involvement of the brothers is now more at the management level and as animators of staffs.

• Never more needed, both at home and on the missions. With so few obviously our influence is diminishing.

• Nearly at an end.

• As influencing developments without controlling either direction or pace. As passing on a torch to new leadership. Involving colleagues in a wider mission.

• The presence of the Brothers is still very important and very influential, even though the numbers are dwindling.

• A difficult one - Principalship, Counselling, Chaplaincy and Physical Ed were areas I felt a Brother could have the greatest influence.

• Back to Edmund - Back to Egypt - get out into the desert. The need to reflect/pray/apply and pray and to pray the Gospel and to read and read the Gospel and pray and pray.

• I have always considered education (in its wider sense) as the jewel among the apostolates and the basis, foundation, sterling point for the development of our rational and spiritual qualities. I think the presence of well-motivated Brothers in education/schools, etc would be a power for good, beyond price. An active role at the ‘coalface’ would immeasurably enhance the efforts of other approaches.

• Mostly as inspirers and advisors in the background – influencing the maintenance of what was best in the past and being innovative and courageous for the future.

• Though fewer in number and getting older, I feel that the Brothers in Ireland and in the other Regions are doing excellent work and giving of their best. Some Brothers may be overstretched. There is a danger of ‘burn-out’ and ‘loss of heart’.

• Continuing to work on staffs under lay principals .. now being motivated and cultivate the lay role and authority of the principal. Easing out of the role of the ‘great teacher and returning to this role as guide, counsellor and friend. Being involved on Boards of Management. Being involved as Trustees.

• In leadership and innovation. In new initiatives. In support for Principals. In development of programmes for staffs, parents, board members. In development of programmes for less-academically gifted children.

• At present, I see it as a big challenge as we may not as yet fully appreciate the influence we have to give real leadership at many levels of Christian formation. Until a strategy is adopted and a structure is put in place that would drive a policy that is formed by our lay colleagues, as well as parents and Brothers, then we will continue to dream of a new approach, while time passes us by. Much has been done about becoming more effective leaders in Christian formation but I would be untrue to myself if I gave the impression that enough is being done to harness
the tremendous good will that is out there among our Principals and Vice-
Principals, core members of staff, as well as parents and friends.
All the headings under 'ethos' above have to be addressed in a constructive way
with ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the process we use. But one area
that is escaping us is taking media education seriously. The world is going in the
direction in which it is largely because of the influence of the media on values,
attitudes and styles of living and until we seek to neutralise the negative impact of
the print and electronic media, then we will continue to fight a losing a battle. So,
a realistic, ongoing programme of media education, for me, is central to every
secondary school, in order to help the young people to understand how the media
works, acts and uses them as fodder for sowing an attitude of mind that makes
those minds easy prey to the consumerist mentality. And until we help young
people to understand how that process is weakening their ability to cope with the
challenges of life, especially the stress of today's world and the success symbols
that are dominating it, they won't have energy and sufficient self-belief to listen to
our message of the love of God for them and, much less, to become the medium
of His message to others as their self-belief is undermined and their ability to
achieve success as materialism understands it, dwindles.

40. How do you see the role of the Brothers in Education?
(b) over the next ten years:

• Fewer in classroom or administration. Developing new forms of Trusteeship.
  Developing new forms of Chaplaincy. Supporting Principals, BOMs, catechists.
  More involvement in Adult Faith Development.

• Continuing to work on staffs under lay principals, now being motivated and
cultivate the lay role and authority of the principal. Easing out of the role of the
'great teacher and returning to this role as guide, counsellor and friend. Being
involved on Boards of Management. Being involved as Trustees. As Trustees to
be prepared to invest money on staff development with a view to moving the
school into a basic Christian Community. The absence of Christian Formation in
the home should challenge us to find an answer - by providing help in the
development of parents. To counter the break-down in marriages by searching
for a better preparation for that vocation at final school year.

• I think we should be more mission orientated - I mean to Peru, SHARE, etc,
especially in education. I think the future might be there.

• This will be a time of great change and challenge. Leadership to mange this
change will be essential. I think that what Br. Matthew is doing is excellent. On
the ground and in the schools the Brothers’ role will be best served in advancing
the cause of the disadvantaged.

• The future is in the hands of God and with His unfailing help and the prayers of
Our Lady of the Presentation, the hope is that all the efforts of the Brothers will
be blessed with an increase of membership in all the Provinces.

• In the marginalised area of schools, i.e. troublesome pupils, travellers, special
class and the handicapped. Supporting of schools formally for the benefit of the
marginalised.
• Keep up the present policy, as much as possible, especially help to Principals, teachers and visits to the schools.

• As many Brothers as wish should be encouraged to be involved at levels that are appropriate to them for now and for the next ten years.

• To enable staffs in our schools to value the link with the Brothers and to see themselves as bearers of that tradition.

• Impossible to see, but our role will be on Boards of Management and in Trusteeship.

• Withdrawing from at least three of our present schools. Continuing to develop staffs in the Presentation Spirit. Developing lay Chaplaincy further – using some Brothers for same purpose when suitable Brothers are available. Investing further in the type of youth development that Martin is doing.

• Re-direct, re-train Brothers willing or new members joining, into specialist areas other than the Teaching Apostolate.

• And pray.

• I avoid this section or the giving of a direct answer – which I would find pretty daunting. There are so many imponderables. My hopes are that there will be a gradual expansion of active members from whom strength to sustain and implement planned approaches may be drawn.

• A background influence.

• One could be pessimistic and dread what the next ten years may bring but we need to look to the signs of new life here at home, in Ghana, etc. Edmund Rice had few supporters, times were very bad, but he had the faith to carry on. Maybe the idea of ‘Refounding’ will take root and flourish. New situations will arise, new challenges will emerge and new opportunities will present themselves. At almost 65 years of age, I fear that my contribution will not be great, but God willing, we shall go on.

• Some few Brothers will be involved in supportive roles. The majority will be in projects like C.A.R.E. and NEWLO; in Third World; in projects at home like North-side Project and Youth Development work.

• Over the next ten years we will have an opportunity to put stakes in the ground as it were, that would help to maintain the best of our tradition of the past and to pass the baton as it were to young hands who will be willing and able and committed to hold it and pass it on in turn. There are many methods of handing on that baton, handing on the faith, but each of those under the 'ethos' heading above has to be addressed courageously but with informed facilitators and practical structures. There is every reason to believe that the next five years will give us opportunities that we never had before. I say that because of the hope that is being generated, the good work that is being done by our leadership teams and the need now to be very frank in evaluating the effectiveness of our policies and strategies. But the ability is there, so is the goodwill and similarly with commitment and dedication. What group of businessmen could call on so many outstanding people in terms of goodness, enthusiasm, commitment, dedication as
we can call on? Many of them are looking for leadership and they are looking for ways that they themselves can make a worthwhile contribution. The policies and strategies and structures that the Southern Network of Major Superiors drew up for the Christian Formation Resource Centre is an example of good planning. But it also illustrates when the strategy is weak, if not wrong. The strategy and that whole programme, I take responsibility for it, but I now see a major weakness in it and hence the lack of progress with Mission Statements and the level of commitment to evangelisation.
CHAPTER 5: APPENDIX D

The following is the text of a paper delivered by the author to a Brothers' Educational Conference in 1990. It gives an insight into educational issues the Brothers were dealing with at that time.

Setting the Scene

The process of reflection and discussion we are involved in today is not new to the Presentation Brothers. Each generation of Brothers have in their own time had to face challenges and difficulties in the apostolate. What is new however, is the complexity of the problems we face and the difficulties of the context in which we face them. In 1945 Br. Damian Hanley addressed an Educational Conference held in Coláiste Muire, Douglas in the following terms:

... Brothers will look back with satisfaction upon long periods of what they consider perfect service; but such satisfaction is an almost infallible sign of mediocre service. All of us must be on our guard against that smug complacency which closes the mind against new and up-to-date ideas and makes all progress impossible.

It is in a spirit of openness I would like to approach my task here today. I think we need to engage in a critical examination of our school ministry. I see it as my task to disturb you, to challenge you, to confront you with new perspectives. This will not be done in a negative or destructive way but rather in a way which will stretch our mental horizons and motivate us to action. We are not here today to roast old chestnuts - not even to roast old chestnuts in new ways. We are here today because we are faith people - people who believe that the spirit is at work in the midst of our chaos 'making all things new'.

Marcel Proust might say we gather here merely 'in remembrance of things past' - but our task is more than this. A creative fidelity to the apostolic achievements of the past demands a critical evaluation of our present efforts. A favourite dictum of my novice-master was: 'If you love what you criticise, you can do no harm'. It is a policy I have tried to follow throughout my life and it informs whatever I share with you today.
I love the Institute of Presentation Brothers and I rejoice in what we have done and are
doing in our school ministry. However, ‘there is a tide in the affairs of men which taken
at the flood leads to fortune’. We live in a historic moment of change affecting all areas
of life and posing crucial challenges for the Church's ministry in education. If we carry
on doing what we always did, in radically changed circumstances, and with less
personnel, the result will be burnout, disillusionment, breakdown and our ministry will
become increasingly irrelevant to the young people we wish to serve.

What I have to say here is based on my experience over the past two years. During that
time I have had the privilege of sharing for short visits in the life of all the schools of the
Province. I have spent many hours talking to principals, teaching Brothers and lay
teachers. I have experienced your welcome and your hospitality and I have also gained
an insight into your difficulties and your struggles. In particular, I have spent many
hours with catechists and religion teachers. I have listened to their stories of success
and of failure and I know the tension that exists on the frontiers between educational
theory and practice. Though most of my own work has been in second-level schools, I
have also had regular contact with primary schools. Lay teachers at both levels have
given me many and varied insights, both positive and negative into how they see the role
of the Brothers. The constraints of time necessitate that what I share be both highly
selective and subjective. I hope, however, that there will be enough there to stimulate
discussion and debate.

Christian Formation

I see christian formation as a total process, involving in its school dimension, the total
life of the school community and not confined to the work of the catechists or the
religion class. Christian formation is about the making of Christians - about forming
Christ in the young people we educate - and that is an awesome process. In the context
of today's society and the dominant values of that society, it is also a very difficult
process. And I think the first step is to realistically accept the difficulty of the task we
set ourselves. We should not get involved in the process unless we accept this.

The first question to ask ourselves is: "Who are we forming?" Are we in touch with the
experience of young people today? Have we an appreciation of what it is really like to
be a 10-year-old ... 12-year-old ... an 18-year-old in today's society? Because the experience of being an 18-year-old in 1990 is very different from what it was in 1960 or 1950. Are we in touch with the music to which young people are listening, with the material they are reading, with the films and TV programmes they are watching? For anyone engaged in Christian formation not to be aware of the life experience of those he is trying to form is to court disaster. And yet, so often we arrive in front of classes with our bibles and our text-books and fail to make any use of the life experience of the young people. Indeed, the Holy Spirit, the great formator, works through the life experience we neglect. A precondition for any attempt at Christian formation is to be in touch with the world of those we are trying to form. This demands effort on our part. As we grow older, it is so easy to be out of touch with the experience of those we teach.

A key question is: "How do we set about this process of Christian formation?" In a recent document on this topic, the Superior General, Br Jerome says: 'It (Christian formation) is dependent on a realistic home-school partnership, where there is agreement on basic values and a common process'. Are we clear on our basic values? Why are many of us willing to spend our lives, with such dedication and energy in the school apostolate? How can we set about agreeing on a common process for Christian formation with our lay staffs?

For us, Presentation Brothers, our efforts at Christian formation must be further determined by the solemn declarations made after much prayer and discernment at our recent general chapter. In our Credal Statement we say:

We commit ourselves to an examination of and response to our environment, courageously adapting our ministry to changing situations and setting up new structures as the need requires.

And in our declaration on our option for the poor we say:

- - - To this end we will devote our personnel and material resources, progressively redirecting our present apostolate into that area of Christ's Kingdom most in need of His saving compassion and loving ministry.

It is now three and a half years since we as a congregation solemnly committed ourselves to these statements. Has there been progress? Where has there been implementation? Are we learning from our successes and failures? I think we have all
come up against the difficulty of changing the system, particularly as it concerns our school ministry. Yet any attempt at Christian formation will be mere window dressing if our entire school system is not subjected to critical analysis in the light of the Gospel.

**Systems View of Schooling**

At this stage perhaps an overview of the system will help us come to terms with the difficulty of change. One view of society sees the needs, expectations and, more importantly, the values of society as determining what happens in the school. The school in turn produces the results and products which contribute towards the stability and efficiency of that same society. In general, our schools have been successful at this level and have retained a reputation for good discipline and examination results. As Presentation Brothers, we generally fitted into this model of schooling and it was fine as long as society held our values. When society was Christian, the school met the needs of such a society and contributed towards its stability and efficiency. A major problem arises however, if we stay in that model of schooling long after the values of society have changed in a fundamental way. Modern society's, values, needs and expectations largely ignore the Christian message. The emphasis is on power, prestige, money and competition. Our schools, caught in a pattern of historical response to the needs of society, have continued to mirror these values and, in practical terms, the Christian message has been 'side-lined' to religion class three times a week. Even this is regarded as an annoying intrusion on the real business of the school.

Our schools then may have unwillingly become accomplices in contributing to the stability and efficiency of the materialist society surround us and should we be surprised that Christian formation, religious education and catechetics are in crisis?

There is great difficulty in changing any system but I would contend that we need to confront this challenge. The difficulty of systemic change is that the people who are the most successful products of a system are the very ones who are in a position to change it - but why should they initiate change? Many people say that there will be no change in our second-level system until the universities change their policies. Others say, 'No - you must go right back to the primary schools and initiate change at that level'. Generally speaking, our primary schools are more genuinely educational institutions.
The pressure of the exam system is not so dominant, though many associated with primary education consider that assessment at the point of transfer has a disruptive and disturbing effect on the implementation of the primary school curriculum, especially in the final year or two. They report considerable pressure to abandon their otherwise child-centred approach in favour of specific preparation in the areas examined by post-primary schools. Isn't it interesting, in the context of change in the primary schools that we still talk of the "New Curriculum" even though it has been in place now for almost 20 years? The analysis of our school ministry in the 1987 document 'Presentation Brothers and the Option for the Poor' highlights the fact that despite large classes and other problems, the Christian formation process is on a more solid footing at primary than at second-level.

It could be argued that since the foundation of the State and the development of the connection between examination success and school prestige, we have not been an innovative society in education. Indeed, the reverse could be said to be true, that our thrust has been towards maintenance rather than mission. In our school ministry, and I understand the historical process by which this has come about, we are associated by and large with the advantaged in society. We are caught in a system now where the examinational tail wags the educational dog. Recently, one of our own Brothers recounted to me his experience in meeting first year parents. He undertook this in his own time in the evenings as part of a pastoral care effort since he is form-master for the class. The parents, even at this stage, however were asking him questions about the ability of their sons to do Leaving Cert. honours Maths. The danger of getting the product right and keeping the stakeholders happy is that we do not pay sufficient attention to the process. Yet we know from history that many revolutions started by individuals and groups taking a stand for what they believed to be true.

We live in a hierarchical society in terms of money, status and prestige. Our system of education mirrors this. Are we prepared to be prophetic and counter-cultural in trying to make our schools real centres of evangelisation? Are we prepared to endure the pain and perhaps disapproval which genuine conversion and change always demand?

Some commentators say that education in the US has now clearly become a way of making money. Everything is judged in terms of the financial rewards that are gained in
doing it. Is our system becoming the same? We prepare the ‘A’ streams for third-level but what do we prepare the so-called ‘weak’ streams for? Is it true to say that we are preparing them for failure - and that by the time they leave our schools they are going to accept being failures?

**Religious Education**

There is great frustration in our schools with religious education, especially at senior level. Many teachers are demoralised and some exhibit the symptoms of burnout. Could it be, perhaps, that the problems with R.E. are symptomatic of a wider malaise in our schools? Religious education is a non-exam subject in an exam system. It is regarded as a ‘doss’ class. It is perhaps, the one point in the system where, the students have a chance to let off steam, to vent their frustration. Religion is only the surface target and religion teachers are, unfortunately, in the front line of attack. There is a wider frustration with the system. Many of our students are bored and they tell us so, sometimes directly and sometimes, indirectly, through disruptive behaviour. They find the curriculum irrelevant to their lives. They find the instruction method of teaching does not satisfy their need to be active, to be involved, to participate in learning.

The curriculum caters for those who are going to University or to third-level. But what of the rest? They, too, are put through the same system. What have we to say to them? Even in the top streams, I have encountered resentment at the narrowness of our system, at the lack of opportunities for personal development. Is it any wonder that these students are often the most articulate in their rejection of the Christian message?

**Falling Numbers**

The impact of falling numbers over the next few years will lead to a market approach to education. I do not think we realise, as yet, the full impact of this trend. I believe parents and students will vote with their feet. If we are perceived only to be serving the academic *élite* then parents of middle and so called ‘weaker’ stream students will in increasing numbers opt for community colleges and vocational schools. The perception of these schools is that there is more curriculum innovation and more of an attempt to provide a relevant curriculum for students. Already there is evidence of falling numbers
in quite a few Religious secondary schools around the country. The danger is that the school ministry, which we believe in so much, will slip away from us as we become increasingly irrelevant to the needs of many students.

The Agenda for Change

We have work to do. We must begin from where we are. The journey of a thousand miles must begin with the first step. It is going to be long and difficult. There will be many obstacles along the way. But we must begin - Christian formation will only take on a genuine character in our schools when every aspect of our system is challenged by the critical light of the Gospel. What is the point in speaking about equality and social justice in a religion class when the student in that school is rigidly streamed according to a narrow academic definition of intelligence foisted on us by social forces not of the Gospel.

What hope is our system offering to these classes? We must engage in a process of dismantling any elements of educational apartheid which operate between schools or within schools. We must critically examine our entry and streaming policies, our curriculum and methods of assessment. We should be to the forefront, along with others in demanding greater Department of Education activity. Are we utilising all our strength to challenge the cutbacks, the lack of resources, the lack of in-service training? What are we doing to demand curriculum innovation, to train for leadership, or to help principals and staffs in the task of organisational change?

Our present society is materialist and consumerist. It is hierarchical in terms of money, wealth, prestige. What are we doing in education but propping up that system, ensuring its stability and efficiency? Bernard Shaw said: 'Some men see things as they are and ask why? But I dream of things that never were, and ask, why not?'

To ask 'Why not?' To challenge ourselves with the 'Why not?' and in asking, to instill confidence, to attempt again, what may appear to be beyond our reach, and in reaching and striving be conditioned to succeed.
Personal Experience

I stand before you today, Brothers, as a product of a Presentation Brothers' education. My father and all my uncles went to school in Turners Cross in the 30's and 40's. My brother and I were the first generation of our family ever to complete secondary school and go to University. Growing up in Ballyphehane we may not have been wealthy in the things of this world, but we were a people rich in faith and that was further enhanced by the chance given us by the Brothers to make, through education, a quantum leap and reach for the stars, beyond those confines imposed by human circumstances. We had that chance because the Presentation Brothers did something radical and new in the 30's by going into the growing suburb of Turner's Cross and writing a new chapter in education in Cork City. The Presentation Brothers instilled in us a belief in ourselves, a belief that anything was possible and that we could be the best. Those of you who have seen that beautiful film 'Dead Poet's Society' (and every teacher should) will remember John Keating's advice to his students ... 'Carpe diem. Seize the day ...and make your lives extraordinary'. ‘Carpe diem’ was a strong element of education as I experienced it at Turners Cross. This provision of a very relevant service and this building of confidence and self-esteem was Christian formation at its least.

The Presentation Brothers, as selfless and dedicated men came to serve us, and in that service they became our friends. Perhaps the challenge for us in our schools today is to transform our ministry of instruction to a ministry of friendship. As Yeats would put it: "Think where man's glory most begins and ends, and say my glory was, I had such friends".

Choose Life

I believe we are at an historic moment. We must choose. We must re-commit ourselves again to serving young people. We must courageously challenge all that is not of the Gospel in our schools and in our society. Small in numbers, but strong in faith and vision we take on a great task. Faithful to our founder and the early Brothers we believe that the difficult we can do immediately and the impossible will take a little longer!
We have given our lives to Christ and to young people and there is no turning back. We will follow, even if none come with us, through the chaos and pain of death to resurrection.

Truly Brothers, in the words of Robert Frost: ‘We have miles to go before we sleep and promises to keep ... and promises to keep’.

Thank you very much.

REFERENCES


I would like to thank all those Brothers, lay teachers, students and parents who have helped me in formulating the thoughts expressed in this paper.
CHAPTER 5 : APPENDIX E

Presentation Brothers
Anglo-Irish Province Directory
1997-'98

PROVINCE LEADER
Bro. Bede Minehane
Presentation Brothers
Provincial House
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REGION LEADERS
Ireland
Bro. Fabian O'Donoghue
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Dartford DA1 1YG
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Tel. 01-322-279106

OTHER PROVINCE TEAM MEMBERS
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Presentation Brothers
Westcourt
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House Tel. 021-272239

Bro. Martin Kenneally
Presentation Brothers
Callan Community
Lynbrook
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Fax: 021-346770
e-mail callanpb@iol.ie
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# ADMINISTRATION OFFICES

**PROVINCE**
- Presentation brothers
- Provincial House
- Glasthule
- Co. Dublin
- Tel. & Fax: 01 2801711
- e-mail: pbm@iol.ie
- Contact: Bro. Bede Minehane

**REGION**
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- Administration Centre
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- Sheare's St.
- Cork
- Tel. & Fax: 01 2801711
- Contact: Bro. Martin Kenneally (Vocations)
  - Bro. John P. Hunt (Finance)
  - Bro. Fabian O'Donohue (Personnel)

**EDUCATION**
- Presentation Brothers
- Education Office
- Tullamore Rd.
- Birr
- Co. Offaly
- Tel: 0509 22190
- Fax: 0509 22125
- Dir: Bro. Denis Minehane

**CLEO**
- Christian Leadership in Education Office
- Mardyke House
- Cork
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- e-mail: jfehenY@iol.ie
- Dir: Bro. Matthew Feheny

**EDMUND RICE**
- Edmund Rice Office
- Mardyke House
- Mardyke
- Cork
- Tel & Fax: 021 278935
- Dir: Margaret O'Driscoll

**HERITAGE**
- Edmund Rice Heritage and Study Centre
- Mardyke House
- Cork
- Tel & Fax: 021 276958
- Dir: Bro. Denis Sheahan
- Sec: Phil O'Leary
COMMUNITIES

BIRR
Presentation Brothers
Tullamore Rd., Birr,
Co. Offaly
Community:
Bro. Nilus O'Regan (Assistant)
Bro. Denis Minehane
Bro. De Paul Hennessy (Bursar)
Bro. Ultan Rohan (Leader)
Kitchen:
Lis Horan, Bernadette Carroll.

BRAY
Presentation Brothers,
Bray
Co. Wicklow
Community:
Bro. Malachy O'Shaughnessy
Bro. Placid O'Mahony
Bro. David Morrissey
Bro. Athanasius Early (Bursar)
Bro. Eunan Page. (Leader)
Bro. Thomas O'Connor
Kitchen:
Mrs. Mary Doyle, Martin Beatty.

COBH
Presentation Brothers,
Bishop St.,
Cobh,
Co. Cork.
Community:
Bro. Livinus Kelly
Bro. Chrysostom Flanagan
Bro. Conleth Burke
Bro. De Sales Burke (Leader)
Bro. Callistus Herlihy (Bursar)
Bro. Walter Hurley (Assistant)
Kitchen:
Maura O'Mahony, Teresa Murphy.

CALLAN - LYNBROOK
Presentation Brothers,
Callan Community,
4 Lynbrook,
Glasheen Road,
Cork.
Community:
Bro. Rupert O'Sullivan
Bro. Martin Kenneally
Robert Rea
Daniel O'Regan
Mark McMahon
Flachra O'Suilleabháin
Kieran O'Connell
Tel: (0509) 20247

DUNGANNON
Presentation Brothers,
11 Killyman Road,
Dungannon BT71 6DE
Co. Tyrone
Community:
Bro. Oliver McGreevy (Bursar).
Bro. Adrian Lavin
Bro. Alyosius Canning.
Bro. Edward Butler.
Bro. Majella Burke. (Leader)
Bro. Camillus O'Connor (Assistant)
Kitchen:
Mrs. Mary Bell

GLASTHULE
Presentation Brothers,
Provincial House,
Glasthule,
Co. Dublin
Community:
Bro. Philip O'Carroll.
Bro. Basil Daly (Assistant)
Bro. Bede Minehane
Bro. Andrew Hickey (Leader)
Bro. Aidan McHugh (Bursar)
Bro. James Murphy
Kitchen:
Helen Mahon.

KNOCKFREE
Presentation Family Community,
109 Knockfree Ave.,
Churchfield,
Cork.
Community:
Bro. Hugh Sweeney FPM
Bro. J. Mel Gill (CFC)
Sr. Trinita Laffan (PBVM)
Tel: (021) 346765
Fax: (021) 346770
e-mail: callanpb@iol.ie

Tel: (021) 811218
HEATHERTON
Presentation Brothers,
2 Heatherton Park,
South Douglas Rd.,
Cork
Community: Bro. Fabian O'Donohue
Bro. Joseph Bell (Leader)
Bro. Joe Nealon (Bursar)
Kitchen: Angela Walsh

KILLARNEY
Presentation Monastery,
Killarney,
Co. Kerry
Community: Bro. Gabriel Landers
Bro. Claver Flood
Bro. Hilary Murphy
Bro. Justin Kelly (Leader)
Bro. Maurice Quinlan
Bro. Gerard Jones (Assistant & Bursar)
Kitchen: Mrs Bridget Collins

MAHON
Presentation Brothers,
1 Inchera Close,
Mahon,
Blackrock,
Cork.
Community: Bro. Liam Quirke (Bursar)
Bro. Vincent Costin (Leader)
Bro. Patrick Fitzgibbon

MOUNT ST. JOSEPH
Presentation Brothers,
Mount St. Joseph,
Blarney St.,
Cork.
Community: Bro. Leopold O'Mahony (Bursar)
Bro. Jerome Kelly (Assistant)
Bro. Clement McCarthy (Leader)
Bro. Michael McKeown
Bro. Benedict Taylor
Kitchen: Aedeen McGuckin

MAIVILLE
Presentation Brothers,
Maiville,
Turner's Cross,
Cork
Community: Bro. Leo Hoare
Bro. Dominic Sheehy
Bro. Felim O'Regan
Bro. Justinian Collins
Bro. Bartholomew Browne
Bro. Plunkett Browne
Bro. Cronan Loughrey
Bro. Gilbert Quirke (Bursar)
Bro. Cyprian Dunlea
Bro. Loyola Connolly
Bro. Enda O'Donovan
Bro. Vianney O'Mahony
Bro. Benildus Fenton (Leader)
Bro. Bosco Stack
Bro. Germanus Noonan
Bro. Barry Stanton
Kitchen: Cissie Loughlin, Mrs. Byrne, Breda Foley.

MARDYKE HOUSE
Presentation Brothers,
Mardyke House,
Cork.
Community: Bro. Matthew Feheney
Bro. Eugene Burke
Bro. Denis Sheahan
Bro. John P. Hunt (Leader)
Bro. Sean Bonner (Bursar)
Kitchen: Sheila O'Sullivan Noreen Russell,

MILTOWN
Presentation Brothers,
3 Kilcolman Estate,
Miltown,
Co. Kerry.
Community: Bro. Angelus Fitzpatrick (Leader)
Bro. John Guinane (Bursar)

Tel: (021) 364288
Tel: (064) 31267
Tel: (021) 358350
Tel: (021) 392160
Tel: (021) 272649
Tel: (021) 272239
Tel: (066) 67334
**GENERALATE**

Presentation Brothers Generalate, Mount St. Joseph, Blarney St., Cork
Resident: Bro. Stephen O’Gorman (Congregation Leader)
Secretary: Mrs. Margaret Murphy

**PERU MISSION**

Hermanos de la Presentacion Apartado 710 Lima 100 Peru
Community: Bro. Ted Murphy
Bro. Mike McGrath
Bro. Jimmy Curley

**GHANA MISSION**

Province Leader: Bro. Donatus Brazil
Tel: 001 416 393 8931 Fax: 001 416 229 6092
Region Leader: Bro. Edwin O’Sullivan
Tel: 00 233 72 3126

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**NOVITIATE-KONGO**
Presentation Brothers Mt. St. Joseph P.O. Box 385 Bolgatanga UER Ghana West Africa

**NAVRONGO**
Presentation Brothers P.O. Box 10 Navrongo UER Ghana West Africa

**BOLGATANGA**
Presentation Brothers P.O. Box 322 Bolgatanga UER Ghana West Africa Tel: 00 233 72 3126

**PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

**BIRR**
Tel: (0509) 21033
Teaching Staff:
An Br. T. Ó hAonghusa (Príomhoide) Tony Sampson
Mrs. J. Quealy Mrs. T. Sampson
Mrs. Mary Lonergan Mrs. Barbara Hanamy
Ms. Marina Mulqueen Mrs. R. McManus
Niall Kelly Mrs. M. Fogarty
Mrs. M. Kennedy Mrs. Moruka Larkin
Mrs Teresa Kelly
Cleaning: Mrs. C. Spain, Mrs. M. Kirwan
Pupils: 234

**COBH**
St. Joseph’s School Cobh, Co. Cork.
Tel: (021) 812424
Teaching Staff:
Mr. Michael Farrell (Principal) Mr. P.J. O’Brien (Vice-Principal)
Mr. Eamonn Carney Ms. Melissa Leahy
Mrs. Maureen O’Connell Mrs. Eileen Halley
Mr. Anthony Kenneally Mr. Willie McSweeney
Ms. Siobhán Brosnan Mr. Martin Fleming
Mr. Denis Healy Ms. Carmel Cherry
Office: Mrs. Thérèse Lucey
Maintenance: Mr. R. Carley, Mr. J. Conroy
Pupils: 297
St. Patrick's P.S.,
Killyman Road,
Dungannon BT71 6DE

Teaching Staff:
Mrs. M. Hampsey (Principal)
Mrs. A. Quinn (Vice Principal)
Mrs. D. Foley
Mrs. M. Duffy
Mrs. A. O'Neill
Miss C. Murphy
Mrs. B. Donnelly
Miss M. L. Mallon
Miss E. Donaghy
Mrs. P. Devlin
Mrs. B. Cassidy
Mrs. E. Foy
Mr. S. Magennis
Mrs. M. Daly
Mr. J. Moore
Mrs. A. Hamill
Miss R. Campbell

Classroom Assistants:
Mrs. M. C. Coney
Mrs. A. McErlean
Ms. M. Harte
Mrs. K. Slater
Mrs. A. Y. Slater

Supervisory Assistants:
Mrs. G. McMenemey
Mrs. P. McGlinchey
Mrs. P. Daly
Mrs. R. Pearson
Mrs. B. Grimley
Mrs. B. McCullagh

Crossing Patrol:
Mrs. A. McKillion

Staff:
Mr. E. Logan
Mrs. A. Quinn (Vice Principal)
Mrs. D. Foley
Miss C. Murphy
Mrs. B. Donnelly
Miss M. L. Mallon
Miss E. Donaghy
Mrs. P. Devlin
Mrs. B. Cassidy
Mrs. E. Foy
Mr. S. Magennis
Mrs. M. Daly
Mr. J. Moore
Mrs. A. Hamill
Miss R. Campbell

Classroom Assistants:
Mrs. B. Maxwell
Mrs. P. Shiel
Mrs. R. Madden
Mrs. H. Toner
Ms. J. McGuinness

Supervisory Assistants:
Mrs. S. McMenemey
Mrs. M. Devlin
Mrs. S. McMenemey
Mrs. F. Davidson
Mrs. M. Burns
Mrs. A. Mullan

Crossing Patrol:
Mr. L. Holmes

Office:
Mrs. M. McRory, Mrs. A. Cahalane.

Maintenance:
Mr. G. McAteer

Cleaning:
Phyllis Nicholl, Mary Dynes, Jacqueline Ferguson, Carmel McCloskey, Ellen Dorris, Sinéad O'Neill, Julie Morrow, Sharon Courtney.

Pupils:
652 Boys and Girls

---

Seoil Mhuire na nGras,
Greenmount,
Cork

Teaching Staff:
Mr. Donal Whooley (Principal)
Mrs. Mary Barnes
Mr. John Daly
Mr. Jim O'Dea
Mrs. Anne Hobbs
Mrs. Maureen O'Sullivan

Classroom Assistants:
Ms. Eileen Hogan
Ms. Dawn Rochford
Ms. Carmel Naughtan

Office:
Mrs. Ann Lande (Vice Principal)
Mrs. Anna Herrick
Mr. Humphrey Moynihan
Mrs. Anne Delahunty
Mrs. Annette Walsh
Ms. Mairéad Allen

Maintenance:
Finbarr Delea, Pat O'Brien.

Cleaning:
Phil Ross, Catherine Brett, Helen Ó'Mahony.

Pupils:
189 Male
71 Female

---

Scoil Mhuire na Mainistreach,
New Road, Killarney,
Co. Kerry.

Teaching Staff:
Diarmuid Ó Paghain (Priomh-Oide)
Aingeal Bean de Barra
Caitriona Bean de Barra (Leas Priomh Oide)
Michael Ó Gliosain
Seán Ó'Mathuna
Paula Courtney

Cleaning:
Helen Dowd

Pupils:
89 Male

---

Seoil Mhuire,
Miltown,
Co. Kerry.

Teaching Staff:
Mrs. S. Knightly (Principal)
Mrs. O'Connor (Vice Principal)
Mrs. Joan Cashman

Maintenance:
Mr. M. Cronin

Pupils:
63 Boys
BIRR

St. Brendan's Community School,
Birr,
Co. Offaly

Tel: (0509) 20513 (Principal)
Fax: (0509) 20510 / 20511 (Office)

Teaching Staff:
Mr. Tom Foley (Principal)
Mrs. M. Mahon (Vice Principal)
Mr. M. Qually
Mrs. A. Joyce
Mr. J. O'Neill
Mr. Padraig Horan
Ms. S. McConnell
Mr. B. Kennedy
Mrs. C. Bergin
Mr. J. Curley
Mrs. M. Larkin
Mrs. M. Hogan
Mr. M. Grogan
Mr. B. McGurk
Mrs. M. Maher
Miss B. Brennan
Sr. Anne O'Driscoll
Mr. B. Kelly

Office: Mr. A. Mellsop, Mrs. P. Grogan.
Cleaning: Eight (Part-time)
Pupils: 777

PRESENTATION BROTHERS COLLEGE

Presentation Brothers' College, Tel: (021) 273743 (Office)
Mardyke, (021) 275326 (Students)
Cork
Fax: (021) 273743

Teaching Staff:
Dir. of Students
Mr. Pat O'Shea
Tom O'Flynn
Paschal Duggan
Donal O'Brien
Joe O'Shea
Mick Hennessy
Ms. Deirdre O'Keefe
Hal O'Neill
John Scannell
Miss Marian Carey
Mr. Aidan Twomey
Claire Lynch
Enda O'Regan
Donal Murphy

Mr. O'Sullivan (Principal)
Mr. Pat O'Shea
Tom O'Flynn
Paschal Duggan
Donal O'Brien
Joe O'Shea
Mick Hennessy
Ms. Deirdre O'Keefe
Hal O'Neill
John Scannell
Miss Marian Carey
Mr. Aidan Twomey
Claire Lynch
Enda O'Regan
Donal Murphy

Pupils: 387 Boys

COBH

Colaiste Muire
Bishop Street,
Cobh,
Co. Cork

Tel: General Office (021) 813800
Fax: (021) 813800

Teaching Staff:
Sr. Ann Lenihan (Principal)
Mrs. Paula Sweeney
Ms. Mary White
Ms. Susan Ormond
Mr. Adrian Gebruers
Sr. Xavier O'Leary
Mr. Barry Collins
Sr. Fachtina Murray (P.T.)
Ms. Mary Fitzgerald
Ms. Norma Stafford
Ms. Phil Agger
Mr. Liam Foy
Ms. Aisling O'Callaghan

Principal: Sr. Mary Colnosty
Vice Principal: Mrs. Maureen Maher
Chaplain: Fr. Joe Quin.n
Office: Mrs. J. McCall
Caretaker: Mr. J. O'Reilly

Pupils: 387 Boys

DUNGANNON

St. Patricks Boys High School,
41, Killymeal Rd.
Dungannon,
Co. Tyrone.

Tel: 08018 687 22205

Principal: Mr. Joseph Cullinane
Vice Principal: Mr. Art McRory
Chaplain: Fr. Joe Quin.n
Office: Mrs. J. McCall
Caretaker: Mr. J. O'Reilly

Pupils: 387 Boys

Groundsman (Wilton): Edwin Weldon
Pupils: 600 Male
Presentation College, Glasthule, Co. Dublin

Teaching Staff:
Mark Fennell (Principal)
Val Walshe (Vice Principal)
James Murray
Mrs. Bridget Cunningham
Peter Campbell
Sharon O’Connor
James McNally

Office: Joan Quinlan
Cafeteria: Marie Kelly
Library: Terry Russell
Maintenance: Rose Morgan, Willie Matthews
Pupils: 254 Male


Teaching Staff:
Sr. Canisius (Principal)
Mr. George McAuliffe (Vice Principal)
Mr. William O’Reilly
Ms. Jean Buckley
Mrs. Eileen Kirby
Ms. Marion Barrett
Ms. Margaret O’Connell
Mr. Stephen O’Grady

Maintenance: Mr. John Griffin
Caretaker: Mr. Liam Philpott
Pupils: 180 Female, 174 Male

Glasthule

Tel: (01) 2801338
Fax: (01) 2300183
E-mail: prescolg@indigo.ie
Pupils: (01) 2808917

Miltown Presentation

Tel: (066) 67168 Office
(066) 67167 Staff
Fax: (066) 67168

Presentation College, Putland Hill, Bray, Co. Wicklow

Teaching:
Bro. Eunan Page (Principal)
Gavin Bradley
Bro. Thomas O’Connor
Henry King
Mrs. Margaret Marron (Guidance)
Mrs. Jill Doyle
Gerry Duffy
Rory Murphy
Pat Gregory
Thomas Page
Anton O’Carroll
Paul Kilrane
John Dillon
Diarmaid O’Grainne
Miss Pamela Fitzgerald
Ms. Martina Kelly
Mrs. Deirdre Gallagher
Mr. Michael Egleston
Ms Veronica Kidd

Maintenance: Rose Morgan, Willie Matthews
Pupils: 254 Male

Bray

Tel: (01) 2861338 (Principal)
(01) 2867517 (Office)
(01) 2862460 (Staff)
Fax: (01) 2861338

Tel: (066) 67168 Office
(066) 67167 Staff
Fax: (066) 67168

Office: Mrs. Bernie Flynn
Pool: Declan Lally, Leo Temple
Cleaning: Janet Keegan & Team
Caretaker: Strat Sutton, John Lally
Pupils: 592 Male
OTHER MINISTRIES AND USEFUL ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Bro. Barry Stanton
Mount St. Annes Retreat Centre,
Killenard,
Portarlington,
Co. Laois

Secretariat of Secondary Schools
Emmet House,
Milltown,
Dublin 14

CORI SECRETARIAT
Milltown Park
Dublin 6

ACCOUNTANTS
Coopers and Lybrand

INSURANCE
James Bruen & Sons Ltd.,
45 South Mall,

SOLICITORS
O’Flynn, Exhams & Partners
Russell House,
Main St.
Carrigaline,
Co. Cork.

Gen. Sec George O’Callaghan
Tel: (01) 2938255
Fax: (01) 2695461

Tel: (01) 2698011

Cork (021) 277833
Dublin (01) 7048500/6088700
Dungannon 08018 68722/26

Contact: Jack O’Sullivan, Mary Scannell
Tel: (021) 277322
(021) 271508

Contact: Brian Russell
Tel: (021) 373047
Fax: (021) 373159

CANADA / USA

Province Leader
Bro. Donatus Brazil
Tel: 001 416 393 5931
Fax: 001 416 229 6992

Regional Leader
Bro. Francis Schafer
Tel: 001423 694 3135
Fax: 001 423 694 5080

Communities:

BREBEUF
Presentation Brothers
Brebeuf College,
211 Steeles Avenue East,
Willowdale, ONT
M2M 3Y6 Canada
Tel: 001 416 393 5931 (House)
001 416 393 5508 (School)
Fax: 001 416 229 5656 (Prov. Office)
001 416 229 4077 (School)

KISSIMMEE
Presentation Brothers,
1602 N. Pettis Blvd.,
Kissimmee,
FL 32741 USA
Tel: 001 407 846 2033
Fax: 001 407 846 7473

e-mail: knoxpb@worldnet.att.net
or fpm1802@juno.com
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Province Leader</th>
<th>Region Leader</th>
<th>Communities</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENGLAND</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bro. Bede Minehane</td>
<td>Bro. Richard English</td>
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<td>DARTFORD</td>
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<td>Community</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bro. Owen Hartnett</td>
<td>Bro. Richard English</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Bro. Roy Kennedy (Comm. Leader)</td>
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Annals of the Carrick-on-Shannon Community.
Annals of the Cobh Community.
Annals of the Dungannon Community.
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