

EDUCATIONAL GOALS

The educational process has been an integral part of the development of the Christian church from the beginning. As one evangelical has said, “Christian education . . . arises from the fertile soil of the Bible.”¹ Vatican II declared that “The sacred ecumenical council has given careful consideration to the paramount importance of education in the life of men and its ever-growing influence on the social progress of the age.”² Also, “For her part Holy Mother Church, in order to fulfill the mandate she received from her divine founder to announce the mystery of salvation to all men and to renew all things in Christ . . . has therefore a part to play in the development and extension of education.”³

The Vatican II document goes on to say that parents have the primary responsibility to educate their children. This educational process requires the help of society as a whole, mainly focused in the schools. Therefore, “Parents, who have a primary and inalienable duty and right in regard to the education of their children, should enjoy the fullest liberty in their choice of school.”⁴

Because many Roman Catholic children will be taught in non-Catholic schools, it is incumbent on “those priests and laymen to teach them Christian doctrine in a manner suited to their age and background and to provide them with spiritual help by means of various activities adapted to the requirements of time and circumstance.”⁵ This process extends to higher level education, where the goal is to achieve a deeper understanding of truth. The result is that “the convergence of faith and reason in the one truth may be seen

1 Edward L. Hayes, “The Biblical Foundations of Christian Education,” in Werner C. Graendorf, ed., *Introduction to Biblical Christian Education* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1981), p. 25.

2 “Declaration of Christian Education,” preface in Flannery, *Vatican Collection: Vatican Council II*, p. 725.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 726.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 731.

5 *Ibid.*, p. 732.

more clearly. This method follows the tradition of the doctors of the Church and especially St. Thomas Aquinas.”⁶ Having established the importance of education in Christian formation, we now turn to its historical development.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION IN HISTORY

The development of education in the church may be observed in several stages. The first of these occur in the Old Testament period.

THE OLD TESTAMENT

An investigation of processes of the common education roots of Catholics and evangelicals begins in the Old Testament, since “the roots of Christian education run deep into the soil of Judaism.”⁷ God made contact with the Jewish people through human history and the law. With this in mind, Jewish young people were taught “that they should put their hope in God, and not forget the deeds of God but keep his commands” (Ps. 78:7).

Instruction (education) was a central theme in the spiritual development of the Hebrew people. It was coupled with life itself: “Hold fast to instruction, never let her go; keep her, for she is your life” (Prov. 4:13). During the exile, the synagogue became the center of Jewish religious life. Its main purpose was to instruct. Barclay notes that “It is necessary clearly to remember that the Synagogue was very much more a place of teaching than the modern Church. The object of the Synagogue Sabbath services was not public worship in the narrower sense of the term; it was not devotion, it was religious instruction.”⁸

THE NEW TESTAMENT

Because the church emerged from the Jewish milieu it utilized the same educational structures found in the Old Testament. Although Jesus remained within the Jewish framework, he raised teaching to a higher level. Indeed, he was the Master.

⁶ Ibid., p. 735. The new catechism addresses this subject: “Catechesis is an *education in the faith* of children, young people, and adults which includes especially the teaching of Christian doctrine imported, generally speaking, in an organic and systematic way, with a view to initiating the hearers into the fullness of Christian life.” *Catechesi tradendae* 545, 18; quoted in *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, p. 8.

⁷ C. Graendorf, *Introduction to Biblical Christian Education*, p. 26.

⁸ William Barclay, *Educational Ideals of the Ancient World* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1974), p. 24; quoted in *ibid.*, p. 27.

The Holy Spirit's coming on the day of Pentecost turned uncertain disciples into zealous preacher-teachers. The people who responded to Peter's preaching "devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles" (Acts 2:42).

Paul's directives to Timothy and Titus include much instruction concerning the importance of building up of the "body of Christ." Teaching leads to a proper understanding of Scripture (2 Tim. 2:14–15 ; 3:16–17). It ensures sound doctrine (1 Tim. 4:6 , 16 ; 6:3–5 ; 2 Tim. 4:3–4). In Titus, sound teaching is used to counteract heresy (Titus 1:9 ; 2:12) and establish order in the household. Christian education was certainly crucial in the development of early Christianity.

THE POST-APOSTOLIC PERIOD

With the death of the first generation of Christians, something was needed to replace their oral traditions. That something was a collection of literature which came to be recognized as the "canon" of the New Testament. This canon ("measuring rod") was used by the early church fathers to deal with heresy and to build up believers in the faith.

Because of the large number of converts that the church attracted, education was of paramount importance. "Catechumenal training arose to insure that those embracing Christianity understood the faith and were committed to the lifestyle expected of believers." Inquirers in the catechizing instruction classes were carefully taught, and only when they had proved competent in belief and life was baptism given.⁹

THE MIDDLE AGES

The cultural and intellectual barrenness that marked the early medieval period has caused some to characterize the entire era as the "Dark Ages," the implication being "that no gleam of light was forthcoming until the Renaissance re-lighted its torch from Greece and Rome. That generalization, ill founded in historical fact, greatly misrepresents medieval cultural and intellectual life."¹⁰ The monastic orders which came into being in this period continued the work of literacy and instruction. They maintained libraries and labored to carry on the task of instilling a life of devotion and service in the Church.¹¹

THE MODERN SCENE

9 Clifford V. Anderson, "Christian Education in Historical Perspective," in Graendorf, *Introduction to Biblical Christian Education*, p. 40.

10 V. Raymond Edman, *The Light in Dark Ages* (Wheaton: Van Kampen Press, 1949), p. 123.

11 Graendorf, *Introduction to Biblical Christian Education*, pp. 41–42.

The spirits of secularism and moral relativity that have permeated our culture have found a warm welcome in our educational institutions. Not only in secular circles but, sadly, in schools which formerly maintained a classic Christian stance as well one can discern movement away from orthodoxy. We will briefly touch on the cause and effect on Roman Catholic instructions and movements in the United States.

COLLAPSE OF THE SUPERNATURAL

This interesting phrase is used by Richard John Neuhaus in his provocative work on the current state of affairs in the Roman Catholic Church.¹² On Roman Catholic “progressives” he observes that “The familiar path traveled by these theologians was blazed and well beaten by Protestant liberalism in the nineteenth century.”¹³ Concerning this new shift: “The controlling presupposition is a general loss of belief in the supernatural and a radical turn toward humanity.” It would seem that traditional Christian belief cannot survive a “plausibility collapse” with respect to the supernatural and the transcendent.¹⁴

Historian James Hitchcock has also addressed this shift in emphasis. He wrote: “Catholic institutions in the United States have never been able to find the proper balance between commitment and openness.”¹⁵ Hitchcock finds change has occurred philosophically: “The dominance of the Thomistic system has broken everywhere, and in many schools an extreme reaction has all but driven Thomism out.”¹⁶

In an earlier work, Hitchcock begins by stating: “One of the great human mysteries of modern times is the amazingly swift process by which the Roman Catholic church, apparently one of the most solid, self-confident, and enduring institutions in the history of the world, was plunged into an identity crisis of cosmic proportions.”¹⁷ Its bad enough when un-Christian influences attack the church from *without* but when this comes from *within* the result is disastrous: “Many Catholics today are being victimized by ideologies they do not even know exist, proffered in pseudo-religious language by persons whom they have been conditioned to respect.”¹⁸ Hitchcock goes on to describe the effect that pluralism and post-Vatican II bureaucracy has had on the modern Roman Catholic Church.

12 Richard John Neuhaus, *The Catholic Moment: The Paradox of the Church in the Postmodern World* (New York: Harper and Row, 1987), pp. 73–82. Neuhaus, a Lutheran pastor when he wrote this volume, has since converted to Roman Catholicism.

13 *Ibid.*, p. 73.

14 *Ibid.*, p. 75.

15 James Hitchcock, *Years of Crisis: Collected Essays 1970–1983* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1985), p. 29.

16 *Ibid.*, p. 216.

17 Hitchcock, *Catholicism and Modernity*, p. 1.

18 *Ibid.*, p. 72.

Another Roman Catholic, Dinesh D'Souza, has written an important book dealing with the educational scene.¹⁹ In this work, D'Souza details the impact that "political correctness" has had on the American educational establishment. "Multiculturalism," "racism," "sexism," and "relativistic" forces have led to intolerance in a number of schools across this country.

Gerald Fogarty's book *American Catholic Biblical Scholarship* details the history of Roman Catholic scholarship in this country, finding that American Catholicism is moving from a "biblical fundamentalist approach" to one which is more "mature," more "insightful." This new posture is facilitated by an abandonment of biblical inerrancy for a position which extends inspiration only to matters of faith and morals.²⁰

In an address by the president of the Catholic Theological Society of America we find the following evaluation: "St. Thomas Aquinas succeeded in making the Christian message relevant to the learned world of his day. . . . But this is not the day of St. Thomas Aquinas; the modern mind is not prepared to cope with the modes of Greek thought he employed."²¹ What will take the place of the time honored system of Augustinian/Thomism? "[N]o age has been so blessed as ours in the development of such sciences as anthropology, sociology and psychology. Should not these disciplines now become the hand maids of the . . . new pastoral theology . . . ?"²² In a word, believing Roman Catholics and evangelicals would say no.

We have it on good authority that when the names of John Paul II or Cardinal Ratzinger are mentioned at meetings of the Catholic Theological Society of America a good deal of wailing and gnashing of teeth ensues. So much for faithfulness on the part of Roman Catholic "progressive" theologians. What begins in the centers of ecclesiastical education usually seeps down into the teaching at the parish level. One of the authors has a daughter-in-law who is a bright, traditional Roman Catholic. She and her husband have sponsored young people's groups and taught religious education classes in their church. She has been dismayed at the presence of less than orthodox notions in the teaching materials put at her disposal. For example, the bodily resurrection of Christ is questioned, as is the virgin birth. Sin is explained away and the Bible is said to be full of myths. And what is the source of this heterodoxy? "The tragedy is these things are taught by master catechists and people with advanced degrees in theology," says Janice Gray, a San Diego Catholic school teacher with 17 years of CCD experience who has taken numerous local training courses—and walked out on more than a few."²³ But in spite of all the

19 Dinesh D'Souza, *Illiberal Education: The Politics of Race and Sex on Campus* (New York: Free Press, 1991).

20 Gerald P. Fogarty, S.J., *American Catholic Biblical Scholarship* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1989). See chap. 1, "Revelation."

21 Richard T. Doherty, *Proceedings of the Nineteenth Annual Convention* (New York: St. Joseph's Seminary Press, 1965), p. 215.

22 *Ibid.*, pp. 220–21.

23 Tim Ryland, "Local Lay Catholics Resist Bad Teaching," *San Diego News Notes*, March 1993.

liberalization there has been, of late, there have been some promising developments concerning these problems. After all, while the short-term prospects may be pessimistic, Jesus has promised that Satan will not, in the long run, destroy the church (Matt. 16:18).

RENAISSANCE OF ORTHODOXY

Responding to these dangerous trends in their church, orthodox Roman Catholics have accepted the challenge. Two pro-life campus groups are active in schools throughout the country. *American Collegians for Life (ACL)* was founded in 1987 and has grown to more than 300 chapters. *Collegians Activated to Liberate Life (CALL)* works throughout the Midwest and visits colleges to mobilize students to pro-life activity.

A number of journals and magazines are attempting to address the moral and ethical disarray that is occurring in our culture. *First Things*, with editor-in-chief Fr. Richard John Neuhaus, has among its contributors such traditional Roman Catholics as William B. Ball, William F. Buckley, Jr., and John Cardinal O'Connor. They are joined with such evangelicals as Elizabeth Achtemeier (Union Theological Seminary in Virginia) and Thomas C. Oden of Drew University. Another publication, *Crisis*, is a monthly journal founded by the American "god-father" of Thomistic thought, Ralph McInerny. It advertises itself as a journal of lay-Catholic opinion and its publication committee is made up of such illuminati as Zbigniew Brzezinski, J. Peter Grace, Alexander M. Haig, and Michael Novak. An occasional evangelical slips in as well.

Servant Books is the publishing outreach of *The Sword of the Spirit*, an international Christian community reflecting the Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant traditions. Servant Books has published material from "Allies for Faith and Renewal" conferences and other works that reflect on the foundational truths that all orthodox Christians hold in common. Of special interest is the series *Knowing the Truth*, co-edited by Roman Catholic Peter Kreeft and evangelical J. I. Packer. Among the titles in the series is *Knowing the Truth about Creation* (1989), written by Norman L. Geisler.²⁴

THE EAGLE FORUM

Eagle Forum was started in 1972 by Phyllis Schlafly. The organization "stands for the fundamental right of parents to guide the education of their own children."²⁵ Such systems as "Outcome-Based Education" and experimental courses in "self-esteem" or "decision-making" are opposed. Phyllis Schlafly is a practicing Roman Catholic and has been a national leader of the conservative movement since the publication of her best-selling 1964 book, *A Choice Not an Echo*. She has been active in pro-family affairs and

24 Servant Publications, Dept. 209, P.O. Box 7455, Ann Arbor, MI 48107.

25 Informational brochures, Eagle Forum, P.O. Box 618, Alton, IL 62002.

has opposed the agendas of the radical feminist movement, often debating on college campuses.

Mrs. Schlafly writes a monthly newsletter (*The Phyllis Schlafly Report*) and her syndicated column appears in 100 newspapers, her radio commentaries are heard daily on 270 stations, and her radio talk show on educational matters is heard weekly on 45 stations. She is the author or editor of thirteen books on subjects as varied as family and feminism (*The Power of the Positive Woman*), education (*Child Abuse in the Classroom*), and child care (*Who Will Rock the Cradle?*).

Phyllis Schlafly is an articulate spokesperson for orthodox Christian values and morals. As a lawyer she has testified before a number of congressional and state legislative committees. She is a graduate of Washington University and received her Masters in Political Science from Harvard University.

THE RAINBOW CURRICULUM MEETS ITS MATCH

The New York City public school system is the largest in the nation. Its chancellor, Joseph A. Fernandez, decided in 1991 to implement a program designed to teach “the positive aspects” of homosexuality to the almost one million children under his care. The curriculum, known as the Rainbow Curriculum, had among its recommended books such titles as *Daddy’s Roommate*, *Heather Has Two Mommies*, and *Gloria Goes to Gay Pride*. Not content to teach tolerance, Fernandez insisted that his task was to enforce complete compliance and overturn social moral structures that have been in place in Western civilization for centuries. Fernandez had not counted on reaction from the likes of Mary A. Cummins.

Cummins, a feisty Roman Catholic, served in a volunteer capacity as school board president in District 24, West Queens. She told Fernandez in no uncertain terms that “We will not accept two people of the same sex engaged in deviant sex practices as ‘family.’ ” Her protest was joined by six other school boards, and the storm of protest that resulted when the social engineering agenda of the Rainbow Curriculum was exposed led to Fernandez’s eventual termination.

Mary Cummins has drawn support from not only evangelical parents but also orthodox Jews and Muslims. Cummins is backed by David Wilkerson (*The Cross and the Switchblade*), pastor of Times Square Church, and that traditional values champion, John Cardinal O’Connor, archbishop of New York. Again, Roman Catholics and evangelicals are coming together to confront the encroachment of moral decay in society.

TEXTBOOK BIAS

For some time now, Christians of various persuasions have been disturbed by American public schooling in general and the textbooks in particular. Along comes Roman Catholic Paul Vitz, professor of psychology at New York University.

Armed with a grant from the federal government and funded through the National Institute of Education, Vitz has examined the above charges and gathered his conclusions in a book.²⁶

Vitz sees no dark plot involved in the educational revisionism in current textbooks but the result of the secular and liberal mind-set that pervades the leadership in the world of education. The results, however, are not dissimilar. One example Vitz provides is illuminating:

One social studies book has thirty pages on the Pilgrims, including the first Thanksgiving. But there is not one word (or image) that referred to religion as even a part of the Pilgrims' life. One mother whose son is in a class using this book wrote to say that he came home and told her that "*Thanksgiving was when Pilgrims gave thanks to the Indians.*" The mother called the principal of this suburban New York City school to point out that Thanksgiving was when the Pilgrims thanked God. *The principal responded by saying "that was her opinion"—the schools could only teach what was in the books!*²⁷

Vitz concludes: "We are being taxed to support schools that are systematically liquidating our most cherished beliefs."²⁸ This is difficult to comprehend when one contemplates the battle cry of our founding fathers: "Taxation without representation is tyranny!"²⁹

A COOPERATIVE EFFORT

One of the most impressive examples of a cooperative educational effort between Roman Catholics and evangelicals is the Franciscan University of Steubenville in Ohio. It began in 1946 as the College of Steubenville, a small commuter school serving ex-servicemen. In the early 1960s land was donated and the college moved to its present location. The college originally had a Franciscan identity and in 1974 the school called a Franciscan priest, Michael Scanlan, to be its president. Fr. Scanlan had been rector at St. Francis Seminary in Loretto, Pennsylvania. The spiritual climate of most Catholic schools at the time was theologically destitute, much the same as their Protestant counterparts.³⁰

26 Paul Vitz, *Censorship: Evidence of Bias in Our Children's Textbooks* (Ann Arbor: Servant, 1986).

27 Ibid., p. 3, emphasis added.

28 Ibid., p. 91. Paul Vitz first gained recognition with a book addressing "selfism," *Psychology As Religion: The Cult of Self-worship* (reprint; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986). He has also written an excellent work on Freud: *Sigmund Freud's Christian Unconscious* (New York: Guilford Press, 1988).

29 It was reaction to this principle that perpetrated the famous Boston Tea Party on December 16, 1773; see Samuel Eliot Morison, *The Oxford History of the American People* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), pp. 203–4.

30 For a discussion of Roman Catholic educational disarray, see Ralph Martin, *A Crisis of Truth: The Attack on Faith, Morality and Mission in the Catholic Church* (Ann Arbor: Servant, 1982), pp. 99–113. Martin is especially severe on Jesuit institutions, pp. 105ff.

Concerning this situation, the distinguished Roman Catholic educator Russell A. Kirk, comments: “Now a days Catholic students, in point of both intellect and moral teaching, would be prudent to attend not the decayed ‘Catholic’ college but instead either the neighboring Calvinist college or state university.”³¹ John Henry Cardinal Newman would not be pleased.³²

God had been preparing Michael Scanlan for his assignment at Steubenville. Following the directive of Vatican II which encouraged Catholics to enter into ecumenical dialogue with their “separated brethren,” he preached in Protestant churches and held retreats for Protestant groups. Addressing differences between Roman Catholics and Protestants, Fr. Scanlan writes: “At the same time, these differences are not as great as many Christians think. Our discussions cleared up some misconceptions. Catholics do not worship Mary and the saints. Protestants *do* have appreciation for Christian tradition. Scripture *is* central in Catholic life. Protestants do not believe that ‘good works’ have no value.”³³

Later, in August of 1969, Michael Scanlan, at the direction of Sister Caroline, the Superior of the Discalced Carmelite Sisters, met with two charismatic priests. They laid hands on him and Scanlan relates: “The Spirit fell. It was primarily an experience of prayer, but prayer unlike any other I have experienced or studied.”³⁴ He experienced what Pentecostal and charismatic Christians call “the baptism of the Holy Spirit.” Armed with his newly found spiritual resources, Fr. Scanlan took charge of a “Catholic-in-name-only” school and turned it into a biblically based Roman Catholic institution that majors in turning “cultural” Catholics into “born again” ones. To assist him in redirecting Steubenville, Scanlan points out that “For many years, evangelical Protestants associated with the Christian Coalition have worked with our students as dorm directors. These young graduates, mostly from Covenant Presbyterian colleges, worked closely with our campus ministers in teaching our students the basics of practical Christian living and in leading them to a deeper spiritual life.”³⁵

Speaking of the spiritual unity that he finds with evangelicals, Fr. Scanlan writes: “I have found friends and allies in unexpected places, particularly among Protestant evangelicals. Frankly my beliefs about the essentials of the gospel are closer to those of evangelical Protestants who are culturally very different from me than they are to the beliefs of some Catholics whom I grew up with. . . . I regret this, but I am not surprised by it.” Scanlan finds that the common bond which unites believing Roman Catholics and evangelicals is: “We are united by one life in Jesus Christ, not by a shared human culture.

31 “The State of Catholic Higher Education,” in Ball, *In Search of a National Morality*, p. 197.

32 Newman, the famous convert from Anglicanism to Roman Catholicism, wrote *Idea of a University* (New York: Longmans, 1947), in which he sets forth his ideals for Christian religious education.

33 Michael Scanlan, *Let the Fire Fall* (Ann Arbor: Servant, 1986), pp. 68–69.

34 *Ibid.*, pp. 80–81.

35 *Ibid.*, p. 177.

The work of God transcends cultures and nations and tongues. It takes priority over human preferences and smashes man-made barriers.”³⁶

Finally, in the ecumenical journal *Touchstone* one finds the following information on Steubenville: “Theology is one of the most popular fields of study, and there are more undergraduate theology majors than in any other Catholic college or university in the United States. . . . Steubenville has grown to a fully accredited university with 1,700 students, who come from 49 states and 22 foreign countries.”³⁷

Students from Steubenville join hands with their evangelical counterparts and during spring break evangelize hundreds of vacationing college students on Florida beaches. After fifteen years, the university is thriving and enrollment is at an all-time high. The school is mentioned in *America’s Best Colleges* guide and also in the Templeton Foundation’s *Honor Roll for Character Building Colleges*. Somehow we think Cardinal Newman would be happy.

AN EDUCATIONAL MINISTRY IN JERUSALEM

One author (Ralph MacKenzie) was privileged to tour the Holy Land a few years ago. It was during this trip that he met Joyce Shafer, who works for Church School Service, Inc. in Jerusalem. Shafer—originally from California—is an evangelical of the Pentecostal persuasion who works at providing Christian literature for the various communions in and around Jerusalem. She takes flannel graphs and other Sunday school teaching materials such as the “Little Folk Whole Bible Visual Sets” and translates them from English into Arabic for the Arab churches and Sunday schools in the area.

Church School Service has reached out into other parts of the Middle East such as Jordan, Egypt, and Iraq. Concerning distribution of flannel graphs, Joyce comments, “This continues to be an extremely fruitful service to the Arab churches and schools in Israel and elsewhere in the Middle East. Every church denomination co-operates.”³⁸ Church School Service is clearly non-sectarian in its ministry, serving all Protestant representations as well as numerous Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches. When thinking about the Holy Land, many people are only aware of the conflict between Muslims and Jews. However, a portion of the body of Christ exists there and attempts to witness, under dire circumstances, to the truth of Christianity. Joyce Shafer is part of this ministry and has asked Christians to “ ‘Pray for the peace of Jerusalem’ (Ps. 122:6). Also pray that the Prince of Peace will come soon.”³⁹

36 Ibid., p. 179.

37 News release, “Franciscan University of Steubenville, Ohio,” *Touchstone* 3, no. 4, winter 1990.

38 “Prayer and Praise News Letter,” *Church School Service*, fall 1993.

39 Ibid. Joyce Shafer’s address is: Church School Service, Inc., P.O. Box 19179, Jerusalem, Israel. U.S.A. address is: Florence Christie, Church School Service, Inc., 13930 Church Place, Apt. 70-F, Seal Beach, CA 90740.

OTHER AREAS OF COOPERATION

There are many areas of educational opportunities in which Roman Catholics and evangelicals share a common interest. One of these is in the area of parental choice in education.

PARENTAL CHOICE

Many Christians see the idea of “parental choice” as being a way to combat the sorry state of affairs in education today. In some school districts, vouchers are given so that parents of, say, differing religious and cultural backgrounds can send their children to the school of their choice. Basic educational standards are required at these institutions. This seems to be an eminently fair system in a pluralistic society that is experiencing a violent clash of values. Take, for example, the topic of the earth’s origin. With vouchers, creationists could send their children to schools that teach creation and evolutionists could send their children to schools that teach evolution. Neither would *have* to send their children to schools that indoctrinate their children against their beliefs but could choose to send their children to a school based on Judeo-Christian, secular humanist, or New Age values, depending on their convictions.

This system causes great agitation among secular educators, however, principally because “the debate is not really about ‘choice’ at all; it is about ‘control.’ Loss of students to the private sector means loss of the government’s control over them and, more importantly, over the money the state allocates for their education.”⁴⁰ This issue soon will be presented to voters in a number of states. We will wait for the results.

BILL CREASY, CATHOLIC BIBLE TEACHER EXTRAORDINAIRE

Teacher, author, and lecturer Dr. Bill Creasy is a member of the English faculty at the University of California, Los Angeles. His year-long course, The English Bible, is one of the most highly rated courses at UCLA. Dr. Creasy received his bachelors and masters degrees in English from Arizona State University, *summa cum laude*, and his doctorate in medieval literature from UCLA.

Dr. Creasy is also a parishioner at St. Paul the Apostle Church in Westwood, California, where he teaches two courses. The first is a five-year program through the entire Bible and over 200 people attend the course each Monday evening. The second course is an in-depth study of the Bible, taking six to nine months per book. He also teaches a five-year “thru-the-Bible” course in Malibu, and conducts weekend Bible seminars and retreats across the country.

40 Robert A. Destro, “Parental Choice and Educational Equity,” in Ball, *In Search of a National Morality*, p. 159.

Creasy serves as an Adjunct Professor of Christian Spirituality at Mount St. Mary's College, and at the request of Cardinal Roger Mahoney, he is a member of the Spirituality Commission for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. His latest books include *The Imitation of Christ, a New Reading of the 1441 Autograph Manuscript*⁴¹ and a forthcoming book, *Mark, the Narrative Strategy of a Gospel*.

Concerning the importance of the study of Scripture, Creasy believes that “Catholics don't know how to do Bible studies. . . . I think it's very important to teach the whole Bible. . . . People duck the difficult parts. If it's the Word of God, you have to study the whole thing.”⁴²

The two authors were present at St. Paul the Apostle Church for a Monday evening Bible study. We sat fascinated as Creasy taught from the Gospel of John for nearly two hours non-stop. Close to two hundred people (the majority Roman Catholics) followed along attentively, taking copious notes. Chuck Swindoll and John MacArthur would have been impressed.

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC/EVANGELICAL CONNECTION IN PANAMA CITY

One author (Ralph MacKenzie) met Carli Jelenszky when both were studying in Seminary West. Jelenszky is vice-president of a large jewelry firm in Panama City, Panama, and moves in the higher socio-economic circles there. He came to faith in Christ through the witness of a Wycliffe Bible translator and the Lord led him to come to the United States for theological education.

Upon graduation, Carli returned to Panama City and has begun several Bible study classes in Roman Catholic churches there. Many Hispanics—raised in a nominal Catholic culture—upon experiencing true conversion to Christ, became very anti-Catholic. Jelenszky takes a different approach. He has used his contacts with the Roman Catholic hierarchy (including a close friendship with a Vatican official who is a lay-theologian) to develop the aforementioned Bible studies. All this while remaining a committed evangelical believer.

EXCHANGE LECTURE OPPORTUNITIES

Finally, the authors have a modest proposal to advance. Opportunity for discussion and interaction between believing Roman Catholics and evangelicals should be encouraged. Indeed, this already exists on a limited scale (see chap. 17). Might we see the day that a Roman Catholic theologian of the stature of Cardinal Ratzinger addresses the Evangelical Theological Society? Or Harold O. J. Brown lectures at the North American College in Rome? Given some of the situations mentioned in Part Three of this work, these

41 (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1989).

42 Mary Rourke, “Hitting the Book,” *Los Angeles Times* , Section E, p. 2.

scenarios no longer seem out of the question. Compromise of convictions is one thing, but dialogue is another. We oppose the former but favor the latter.

One author (Norman Geisler) can testify to the value of Catholic higher education, having received a doctorate in philosophy from a Catholic institution. Compared to the two secular universities he attended, there was a marked difference in their worldviews. In fact Carl Henry once proposed that there should be a Christian University based on the *Apostle's Creed* and perhaps the *Nicene Creed*. This would include Roman Catholics. Some Catholic schools are reaching out to incorporate evangelical faculty. Presently, one of the best collection of evangelical philosophers to be found in a large graduate school is at the University of Notre Dame.

As we noted in Part One, evangelicals have much in common with a Catholic world view. Both are theistic. And theologically, both are trinitarian. As for the differences, courses in a joint Catholic-evangelical university could be tailored to the various ecclesiastical preferences. In our opinion such a university would be better than what many evangelical parents presently do, namely, send their young people to secularistic universities that under mine the Christian values and beliefs of their posterity. Sadly, many evangelicals would rather have their children come under pagan influence than study with Roman Catholics.

CONCLUSION

We have briefly sketched the impact that unbelief and loosening moral constraints have had on education in general and religious instruction in particular. Also, various people (and movements) who seek to remedy this situation have been mentioned. Paul Vitz identifies “moral relativity” as a major culprit in the deterioration of the current moral climate. One model to emerge from moral relativity is “values clarification.” Concerning this model, Vitz writes: “Values clarification must be contrasted with the traditional view of explicit praise for virtue and strong condemnation of wrong-doing.” This traditional approach is ineffective, the progressives claim, because “today’s complex society presents so many inconsistent sources of values.”⁴³

This spiritual laxity was not lost on the participants at Vatican II. Kevin Perrotta, a director of the *Center for Pastoral Renewal*, noted that “the bishops expressed their ‘regret that the theological discussions of our day have sometimes occasioned confusion among the faithful.’ ”⁴⁴ Therefore, “The prospective Vatican policy regarding those who teach Catholic theology in Catholic institutions . . . must not only be academically

43 “An American Disaster: Moral Relativity,” in Ball, *In Search of a National Morality*, pp. 43–44.

44 “Catholic Renewal,” in *Evangelical Renewal in the Mainline Churches*, ed. by Ronald H. Nash (Westchester, Ill.: Crossway, 1987), p. 152.

qualified but must also communicate it faithfully and live it.”⁴⁵ We have an obligation to provide our children with a Christian education. One can hardly conceive of Abraham and Sarah sending Isaac to the Canaanite University in old Salem!⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 154.

⁴⁶ Salem was later called Jerusalem (Gen. 14:18). See “Salem,” in J. D. Douglas, ed., *New Bible Dictionary*, 2d ed. (Leicester, England: InterVarsity Press, 1962), p. 1055.