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Spiritual Not Religious: What the Catholic Church in America Must Do to Become Relevant Again in a New Generation

John P. Campbell
Sacred Heart University

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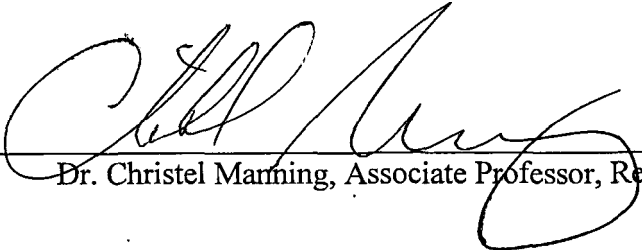
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Acceptance Page

This Thesis is Accepted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree
of
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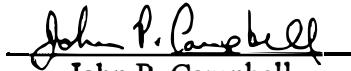


Dr. Christel Manning, Associate Professor, Religious Studies

May 1, 2009
Date

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John P. Campbell

May 1, 2009

Acknowledgements and Dedications

For all those who labor in the fields of the Lord.

Abstract

Spiritual Not Religious: What the Catholic Church in America Must Do To Become Relevant Again In a New Generation

As we approach the close of the first decade of this new millennium, some two-thousand plus years after the birth of Christ, we find the religious tendencies of our world changing once again. Many studies have been undertaken to assess the religious mindset of the American population, breaking it down into a variety of demographics and nuances. What has become apparent is that the institutional religions, and in this case, the Catholic Church, is losing their hold on their constituents. The result is not that people are flocking to alternative institutional religions, but to a more nebulous brand of faith that is being called, Spiritual, not religious. What I will explore in this thesis is how this movement has been spurred not only by changes in society, but by the failures of the religions, especially the Catholic Church, to react to these societal changes and actively pursue the undertaking of educating their faithful in the authentic tenets of the faith. What I will propose is that the Church begins to make it their priority to urge its members to a conversion of heart and mind through a discipline of study, prayer and action, by putting the concept of continued conversion of its members at the forefront of all it does. Only by this conversion can the Church reclaim its primacy in the lives of its faithful.

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**Spiritual Not Religious: What the Catholic Church in America Must Do To Become
Relevant Again In a New Generation**

Forward

Growing up in the seventies we had a good idea of who we were and who our neighbors were. We identified by economic status, who were the “rich kids” and who were “not so well off”; by nationality, the Irish, Italian, Greek, Slavic, French, African-Americans, Puerto Ricans, etc., were all easily identifiable by and proud of their ethnic backgrounds; and by religion, we knew who was Catholic, Jewish, Protestant, etc. Whenever I was asked a question about any of these three areas of my life I had a clear cut answer; I am White, Irish/Italian, middle-class and Catholic, and everyone else I knew could just as easily self-identify. Today, we have much more nebulous lines drawn between economic, ethnic and religious status. Many more of us are of mixed ethnic backgrounds, (growing up Irish/Italian I was viewed by some as “not really Italian, or not really Irish”), and our economic status may differ based on where we live as much as in how much money we make as a family, but the biggest change comes in religious affiliation with more and more of us, especially those in their late teens and twenties, not identifying with any specific religion at all. In fact in recent surveys conducted at Universities and by news organizations, we find as many as 30% of respondents self-identifying as unaffiliated or the new term of “Spiritual, not religious” (1) As much as this seems to be a quandary for those who identify themselves this way, a mix of “I believe, but don’t hold me to it”, it is also a quandary for the major religions. At a crossroad already because of dwindling participation and lack of institutional knowledge, including that of core beliefs and practices, by self-described “members” of their Churches and Synagogues, the major religions now face the issue of not only catechizing those who claim to be their own but

also of trying to woo back those who have walked away, not because they don't feel a kinship to the spirituality of religion, but because they don't want to commit to a set of standards that identifies them too closely with the stated beliefs of a particular faith. The concept that what a religion stands for, (and most surveyed are not clear on what that really is), is not inclusive enough, or just the opposite, that it is too stringent, can allow only a half-hearted belief, yet still be called a belief system, or can become an amalgam of different ideas to form one's own unique belief system, has become more prevalent in our society today than ever before. That the major religions are just coming to terms with the fact that they have to find new ways to educate their own faithful on the tenets and practices of their faith because they are so lacking in core knowledge is quickly becoming overshadowed by the fact that they now must shift even further and find new ways to present themselves in the public square to those who have now stopped self-identifying themselves with this religion and now call themselves "Spiritual, not religious"!

So much great work has been done over the past ten years to bring this issue to the forefront and show us how much of a shift has actually occurred. Some of these works have been around generational research and on how our culture has changed and what affects this has had on spirituality and religion. Other works have been specific to religion and spirituality and where it fits in people's lives, and has also been broken down on generational lines. Still other works have been even more specific to the Catholic Church or to some of the Protestant faiths or to the Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist and Hindu faiths. Each of these works shows more precisely where we have come from and where we seem

to be going when it comes to how we think of ourselves as individuals in a specific faith tradition.

The core issue that this paper would like to explore is the question, how do the religious institutions, and most specifically, the Catholic Church, move toward the future in both catechizing their members and presenting themselves in the public square given this new level of perceived commitment (or lack thereof) by this “Spiritual, not religious” segment of our population? That this segment seems to land squarely and most pronouncedly in the young adult population, generally starting in the college years, is another issue to explore. How does the Church find ways to bring its message, its Catechism and its history to those who are already Catholic yet seem to not be very interested in what that really means? How do Christian churches continue to make the Bible, its teaching and their preaching viable options for their flocks? Is it really a generational issue or does it just show-up in this young adult generation because they, unlike older Catholics and Christians, are more willing to self-identify away from what has been the faith of their childhood? To look even deeper, could it be that this younger generation is hiding behind a less stringent concept of faith to allow themselves to participate in behaviors that they can’t reconcile with what they learned as children as “the right thing to do” but are surrounded by in their new environments? When we delve deeper and listen more closely to those who self-identify as Spiritual, not religious, do we hear remnants of the religious values they grew up with buried below the surface of a “try on and try out” cultural world view? How can Christian religions face this new reality and keep the integrity of their beliefs and not somehow “water down” the faith to stay pertinent in today’s world view?

What has brought us to this place where religion and spirituality seem to be so important to so many people, (where people identify in the ninety percentile in most surveys that religion and/or spirituality are important parts of their lives), yet many organized religions aren't flourishing? How have we come to a place where we see what most would call misguided religious fervor in the Islamic world and in some Evangelical Christian churches as a fierce political issue, one that threatens the stability of our economy and the security of our people, yet don't see that translate into true passion about religion in the everyday lives of most individuals and their own religious affiliation? Wasn't the message of Jesus and the Prophets inspiring and doesn't it call their followers to radical thought and action? Shouldn't the Jewish, Christian and Catholic faithful be energized and have a strong desire to know and continue to live out the tenets and practices of their faith? How have so many been moved to discard them for this more nebulous notion of "Spiritual, not religious"?

In order to get an insight into some of these questions, we need to examine some of the research that is out there to see why the major religions are in this situation. Is it of their own doing, or does it have deeper implications in our society as a whole? Can the Christian faiths, especially Catholicism, which holds specific principles and core beliefs as "truths", be expected to change with the times and adapt to patterns that today's world dictate? In the past what religion a person was helped form their world view and was an important factor in how they learned everything in life. At school, on the playground, with friends and family, as one grew and went to high school, college, into the work force, got married had families, all that one learned was filtered through the beliefs of their faith. If

this is not the case today, and people are learning and shaping their world views through different more secular, (for lack of a better word), lenses, can religion be expected to influence how people think and act as much today as in the past? Does a mindset of “Spiritual, not religious” actually become a legitimate world view if the major religions lose that influence?

As we look at these issues let us stay aware of the concept that truth is what the Catholic Church declares. In the Catholic tradition, the Creed (2) lays out the basic truths of the faith and all are to be believed and lived by the faithful. If we live in a time when the concept of truth is diminished, in a spirit of “*all people are created equal*” and we are to respect all belief systems, can religions that claim their beliefs to be the ultimate truths flourish? If some of the beliefs of the faith that are at odds with popular political, economic and social issues of our times are being ignored by many, does that open all beliefs to being ignored as well, or at least set up a “pick and choose” atmosphere? Once people start down that slippery slope, can “Spiritual, not religious” be far behind? To put it another way, can the major religions still influence how people think and act, or has their influence been subjugated by the relativism of our time. (But more on that later)

Let’s take a look at some of the research that is out there and see what is being discovered, and what these discoveries show us about religion in our world, today. We may be surprised at what we find and there may yet be hope for the major religions of the world!

Chapter 1

In their groundbreaking work *Millennials Rising*, (1) Neil Howe and William Strauss set a course for the next great generation. In describing what this new generation is about, Howe and Strauss talk about image; “Over the next decade, the Millennial generation will entirely recast the image of youth from downbeat and alienated to upbeat and engaged ... with potentially seismic consequences for America.” (2) This upbeat image of young people who were graduating from high school at the end of the last Century and beginning of this new one was then and is now a startling conclusion to draw for many. Howe and Strauss describe a generation raised by Baby Boomers and Generation X’ers who themselves were the “forgotten generations” (3) of kids whose families put everything but family first, but who now, as parents, vow to “... make our commitment to our kids absolute, our involvement in their lives total.” (4) The effort to raise children that “won’t turn out like us.”, has produced a generation of teens who think of themselves as unique, special and deserving of good things. They are a confident generation and aspire to hopes and dreams that go beyond themselves, things like saving the planet and changing the world. This is the first generation of kids who are more technologically savvy than their parents and who have a sense that they belong in this world as equals to everyone else. In terms of religion they have drawn back to some of the attitudes of their Grandparents generation. They like religion to be a part of their lives and don’t mind going to Church. As Howe and Strauss point out, “Millennials think and talk more about faith, and do more with it, than older people realize. It matters to them. In one poll, teens cited religion as the second-strongest influence in their lives, just behind parents.” (5) This shift was helped

along by our societies renewed acceptance of religion in the public square. Banned by many public institutions in the '70's and '80's, public displays of religion and prayer became acceptable again in the '90's, (due to the rise of the Evangelical Christian Churches and their political influence), and this allowed more young people access to seeing people in a religious context. While their parents grew up in a time when the media declared God as dead and religion was put on the back burner this new tolerance sparked renewed interest by them and helped young people see it as much more main stream. As much as society shied away from religion and schools were "... helping kids seek scientific answers to religious questions" (6) when Boomers were growing up, the Millennials experienced "growing up in a spiritually driven era, when newsweeklies announced that God is back ... and when adults help kids seek faith-based answers to secular questions." (7) The disconnect arrives as Howe and Strauss explain because of this new world view of the Boomer generation, "While boomers were young, adults viewed religion as a public ritual that was not intended to provoke argument, at a time when faith was less a destination than a starting point. Now in mid-life, Boomers have transformed religion into a personal and often incendiary credo at a time when faith is supposed to reveal life's true meaning. Having come to age in a spiritual vacuum, they propelled an awakening whose aftermath left them in control of faith-related issues ... our narrative is all that matters in the grand scheme of things. We like to think that the story is ours to write and we attempt to advance the plot according to what we think we deserve." (8) As you can see, we are finding a shift toward a more personal, "what's in it for me" view of traditional religion. Coming out of the vacuum, the old tenets are being reshaped to fit a world view that will help Boomers

insert their new families into a religious context without the strain of abiding by all the rules and precepts they remember as burdensome from their youth.

Meanwhile, Millennials are taking the message of religion to heart, especially when it comes to how to behave, but with their own subtle twist, “Religion matters most to them when they can apply it in the usual Millennial manner ... by organizing it themselves, by forming clubs, by bearing witness collegially, by focusing on team deed-doing ahead of solitary spirituality.” (9) The age of service projects, mission trips, large group gatherings like the Catholic World Youth Day or National Catholic Youth Conference are at their height and kids are proud to be there and happy to show the world what they believe. From “What Would Jesus Do” (WWJD) wrist bands and bumper stickers to “100% Catholic” t-shirts and more, these young people declared their faith publicly and without trepidation or embarrassment. While many Boomers can link their rediscovery of religion to getting married or to the birth of their first child, these Millennials are that first child and have no reason to be “born again” because they have had a good feeling for religion all of their lives. We look back to their attitude of confidence and feelings that they deserve something good and understand how they are so at peace with faith in their lives. Everyone has had faith in them and they have been the center of attention in their family life so of course they are able to see a place for religion in their lives. So we start to see the formation of a quagmire for organized religion, Boomers who had a limited taste and more limited understanding of the religious tradition they were raised in are now reviving that faith, having personalized it, taken what they liked about it and thrown away the rest, and are passing it on to a new generation as is. This new generation is running with the

experience and embracing what they perceive the religion is all about, the version their parents have passed on to them. You see later that they start to explore older traditions of their faith; for Catholics the Rosary, Benediction, and Stations of the Cross became more popular. They also start to see that what is being passed on to them is not the “authentic faith” (10) and they begin to search for a deeper meaning that they know must be there.

Here is where it gets even trickier; Howe and Strauss conclude that, “Boomers wanted religion that challenged them spiritually more and institutionally less, while Millennials seek the reverse.” (11) If this momentum continues, it could be a sign of hope to institutional religions that this new generation is coming back and accepting them and their traditions and teachings and that a new dawn may be on the horizon.

Having spent eleven years as Director of Youth Ministry for the Catholic Diocese of Bridgeport, CT, (1995-2006), and being there during this millennial time frame, I remember the spirit of optimism that prevailed. All of our programs were brimming with participants and the enthusiasm of the young people for everything we gave them was extremely gratifying. The young people were very serious about their role in the programs and sought leadership positions. They also flocked to the more traditional things we did, like Benediction (12) and Morning Prayer (12) and were eager to learn more about the traditions and tenets of our faith. Our service projects and mission trips were also full with high school and college aged participants and they all knew they were there for more than just serving their fellow man; they were there to meet God and to concretize their faith through action. As we moved into the new century we continued to plan expanded events and more

and bigger projects. Parishes saw an upswing in Mass participation and Religious Education programs saw an increase in registrations. It seemed that the millennium had sparked a conversion of sorts in the faithful. But this was a short lived wind-fall. As we moved into the beginning of the new century, participation started declining back to pre-millennium levels and enthusiasm for programs and catechesis, though still popular among some young people, seemed to lose some of the enthusiastic tenor of them. Kids were still happy to gather to praise God, (especially with “praise and worship” music), but groups were smaller and parents were more apt to send kids than for them to come on their own.

Howe and Strauss identified a “next, great generation” but that generation was short lived and seemed to be sparked by a unique set of circumstances, (post ‘60’s, Vietnam, Watergate, Reagan era, and ‘90’s economic optimism) among which the importance of the turn of the century (and Y2K concerns) should not be underestimated. The work was centered on the generation as a whole but they were able to take a glimpse at the implications for religion and spirituality. Other works from that era looked more specifically at the thoughts and practices of the young adult population in regards to religion and their insights give us a fuller understanding in this regard. Young Adult Catholics: Religion in the Culture of Choice, (13) focuses mainly on the Catholic faith, but draws insights into other Christian faiths as well. The authors, like Howe and Strauss, build a historical context to frame their discussion and give readers good insights into what brought us to this time and place. The Church in America was built up largely by immigrant populations and was persecuted in this country in its early existence. As it grew in numbers, it experienced growing pains as diverse groups of immigrants formed

“National” Churches and worshiped in their own languages and styles. There was no “one voice” of Catholics and those intellectuals who spoke for the Church in America were at odds with the Vatican and most Catholics as a whole. As Catholic’s moved up the social ladder in our country, specifically after World War II with the implementation of the GI Bill which allowed thousands to attend college, their economic and political influence grew. American Catholics were starting to apply American ideals like freedom and equality to their faith. As the Vatican had contended, (with mixed results), with modernization since the middle of the previous century, these new ideals of the American Church, which for the most part had kept a strong adherence to the faith, were another signal that their influence on the faithful was slipping. The Second Vatican Council (1962-65) was called, in large part to address modernization and bring about an “updating”, and the world wide Church saw its biggest changes since the Reformation. Essentially the Church asked the faithful to look at themselves as “the people of God” and as a “pilgrim Church” and to view the world more positively, to become more culturally sensitive, and to live out the faith in a more collegial way. This sent shock waves through the American Church and essentially changed the way Catholics viewed themselves in the world. As Catholics tried to implement this new world view into their everyday lives, battles over Church authority and the autonomy of the laity caused many to become hardened in their views and a cultural divide occurred within the Church itself. Liberal and conservative camps emerged, (mirroring what was happening in the larger society), and this caused many, who were not interested in battling over these issues, to move to the sidelines or in more extreme cases to walk away from the faith all together. This trend became more dramatic as time went by with even those who identified as Catholic admitting that they

didn't practice their faith as much as in the past. Once at over 50%, Mass attendance dropped to the low 30 percentile in the late 1980's. (It sits at about 27% today) An even deeper consequence was that Catholics were not interested in being catechized, and their institutional knowledge was at an all time low. There was also a marked decline in Vocations, men and women interested in religious life, and converts, those interested in becoming Catholic. Add to this the social changes the 1960's and 70's brought, (in race relations, questioning of authority, the anti-war movement, free love), the Space Program which helped "de-mystify" the universe, advances in science (medical, psychological and historical) and sociology which brought more scientific concrete answers to age old questions, and the continued increase of the educational level of the Catholic faithful left the Church's influence in the sphere of the origins of the universe in question as well. It is no wonder that Catholics, and people of many other faiths turned their attention and devotion away from their religions to look at all that was going on around them. This "lost generation" of Catholics are now the parents of this new generation of young adults.

Having been raised in a religious malaise, this young adult generation is now looking at what they missed with renewed interest, some enthusiasm, some trepidation, but ultimately at where they fit in the faith of their parents. Religious identity, so important to my community growing up in the late '60's, early '70's and seemingly lost over the past 25 years or so, is now making a comeback. The question seems to be, what am I? Am I a Catholic? Well, let's take a look. Am I a Christian? Maybe that's where I fit. I better look at Buddhism, TM, Islam, Judaism, Wiccan, and Rastafarian just to see if that is where I fit. I'll read a book, take a course, attend a seminar, go to a service, pick someone's

brain, Google it, but I'll get the information and see if it fits. And, it's easy to do. In this world of the new millennium with the internet, global economy, ease of travel, a pluralistic attitude has emerged in this generation and racial, social and economic lines are blurred as never before. Again, to "try on and try out" new behaviors is easier now than ever before because everything is so accessible and nothing is off limits. So, as the new Century starts to develop a trend emerges, one that Hoge and friends call "Religious Individualism". (14) Based on historical context, we have arrived at a place, not only for Catholics but for other Christian faiths as well, where the individual feels right at home worshiping as they see fit. As Hoge and friends point out, "It is widely recognized today that although religion and spirituality have traditionally been the province of institutional religion, they are increasingly viewed as individual and private matters with few connections with communities or institutions... large numbers of people now experience the sacred outside the sanction of religious institutions. Spirituality has become increasingly uncoupled from religion." (15) As you see, we are moving that much closer to today's trend of "Spiritual, not religious".

If we return back to a point made earlier, the fact that most who do self-identify as Catholic today do not have a good knowledge of the tenets of the faith or of institutional practices, we see how this religious individualism occurs. Hoge calls it "Consumer Catholicism", (16) picking and choosing a belief system that is a far cry from any "institutionally validated" one, since institutional knowledge is missing, and has been disappearing consistently by generation. What makes it more of a disconnect for this new generation is that for the most part, the lack of religious education in the past generation

was tempered by an institutional memory of practices and precepts remembered from their youth. Even though they eventually walked away from the practice of their faith, today's parents witnessed their parents and grandparents practicing the faith and have early childhood memories of going to Mass, or Confession, maybe to a Funeral or Wedding Mass or Stations of the Cross. They may even remember watching an older relative praying the rosary or even attending a Latin Mass. Old hymns come back to them, and they recall the smell of incense or the sound of the bells fondly. Most probably said bedtime prayers and grace before meals when they were young and many attended Catholic Schools where they wore uniforms to class and were taught by an army of nuns dressed in traditional habits and formulating a version of the faith that they might not be hearing at home or living in their everyday lives. This new generation doesn't have those memories, so there is nothing for them to hold onto or look back to that will lead them to a strong sense of Catholic identity. Even if they go to Catholic school, there are few nuns left and most teachers there are lay people who are teaching a very different version of the faith than Sister did. Most were not raised with bedtime prayers or grace before meals, and prayers like the Stations of the Cross or Rosary, though making a comeback in some groups of Catholics, especially in prayer groups, are not familiar to them. All the bells and whistles that are part of the Catholic lexicon are not in their collective memories and they have not been able to form that corporate memory that past generations of Catholics have. As Hoge and friends point out, "Many do not perceive their Catholic identity as an inherited tradition per se, but, like other forms of social identity, as a self-constructed process of choosing among religious-spiritual options." (17) In a real sense this generation

of uncatechized, unpracticed Catholics has come to this point of young adulthood with no sense of what it means to be Catholic. They must literally be converted to the faith.

Chapter 2

As we see the historical and social reasons that have led us to this place where institutional religions are being superseded by individual choice, we need to look at both areas more deeply. What is there about institutional religion that has Americans turning away, and what is it about the individualistic yearnings of this generation that has led them to look for more or different ways to vision the ultimate truths in their lives? Have institutional religions held to tenets that are no longer “true” or is it simply that these tenets just don’t resonate with this new generation? Has this new generation been so influenced by modern society; the breakdown of the nuclear family, the breakdown of respect for any authority, the ease and immediacy of information, the depth of education and the affluence that has been their youth, that anything institutional, especially strong held beliefs, have to be challenged or rejected? To delve deeper, let’s look at what goes into building a self-identity, and what a good definition of an institutional religion is. More importantly for this discussion, let’s look at what goes into the religious identity of the institution and what goes into that of the individual.

The comedian George Carlin has a wonderful routine where he talks about growing up in a neighborhood in New York City. As a boy, part of his self-identity came from where he was from and what that meant to those he encountered. Was he from a place that would garner respect from others or would he be looked down upon for living in a sub- par area? In this case he refers to the “badness” or toughness of the place he lived. He said that he always respected people from tough sounding neighborhoods like Harlem or

the Bronx and was a little cautious about telling people where he was from. Since he was from the neighborhood next to Harlem, which was pre-dominantly black and considered very tough, he and his buddies started calling their neighborhood “White Harlem”. Carlin says, “... all the kids from Harlem were bad and everyone knew it, so when we ran into people from other neighborhoods they would ask where we were from and we’d say ‘White Harlem’ and we would get respect. Of course the actual name of our neighborhood was Morningside Heights, but that sounded so wimpy!” (1) Carlin and his friends wanted to be identified as being tough and being from a tough sounding place helped them to be tough. This was part of building their self-concept which in reality is what identity is. How do I view myself and what gives me that sense of self? As a teen, Carlin and his friends valued toughness, (at least as an outward sign), and so it was key to them to create ways to be tough. They built constructs that would make them feel like they were tough, convince each other that they were tough, and, hopefully, they would be tough, (though not really always the goal).

Hoge and friends provide a more formal account of identity formation and bring some salient points to the forefront. They describe (based on their research of numerous social studies that are available) how a self-concept comes about, “Investigators agree that the self-concept is composed of numerous elements and that each person needs to coordinate or integrate them in some way in order to achieve a sense of unity.” (2) They describe two contexts where these elements fall, “consensual” and “sub-consensual”. Consensual elements are those which are “unchangeable” while sub-consensual elements are “easily changeable”. When asked, people will list these elements of self-identity in a hierarchy,

with consensual elements listed first. This hierarchy is a good indicator of what helped form a person's self-concept, and what they will use to make decisions in their lives. In my earlier example of how I described myself growing up, "I am White, Irish/Italian, middle-class and Catholic", I list the top elements of my hierarchy, (which some call the "master identity"), which helps organize the rest and shows what has formed who I am. In most studies, people will self-identify upwards to twenty traits, (elements), with the top six to eight most likely consensual and the rest sub-consensual. Hoge points out that his studies show that, "Religious identity, such as Catholic, is normally considered a consensual response not open to change." (3) Which begs the question for this generation, "where does being Catholic fit into the total self concept"? (4)

Here is where we get some clues about this generation. Most people start to form this hierarchy based on what they perceive as valuable to them. Value is based on what many of us today call self esteem and it differs among people. Value can also change over time and what seemed valuable to a person as a youth will change as they mature or circumstances in their lives change. In the Carlin story, as teens they valued toughness and that was high in their hierarchy, but suffice it to say, some of that group moved past that as a value, and toughness fell or was maybe eliminated completely from their list, while others may have kept that as a high value and still today see being tough as important. When toughness was a high value, they constructed their lives around being tough, for instance calling their neighborhood White Harlem instead of Morningside Heights, and it helped form how they made decisions in their lives. It even affected how they walked and how they talked; as he continued in his story, all the kids would try to sound tough, and in

their eyes black people were tough. He said, "Put a bunch of white kids and black kids together and all of a sudden the white kids are walking and talking like the black kids, it's never the other way around. You'll never hear a black guy say, "Oh golly, we won the big game today, but you'll hear a red headed, freckle-faced kid named Duffy say, "hey brother what's happening?". (1) The hierarchy is what helps inform the things we do in everyday life. How many of those kids he described are today walking and talking like that? Probably not many, because their hierarchy has changed and that change has changed their actions as well.

There is much survey data available that shows that young adults start to move more toward religion when there are life changes on the horizon. In his work After the Baby Boomers, (5) Robert Wuthnow states, "If maturing, marrying, and becoming parents encourage church involvement, these developments seem also to encourage interest in spirituality." (6) Think about how most people change when they get married and start a family, or when a loved one gets sick or is dying, things that were, or seemed, important in their self-identity now prove to be insufficient, so their hierarchy changes. The question is do the elements at the top, that so called "master identity", change or do they remain constant, but shift in importance amongst themselves? In my case, the "white, Irish/Italian, middle-class, Catholic" values which make up my master identity would be put to the test. What does it really mean to be white? In this country or at least in the neighborhoods, schools, jobs and social settings I have been involved in there is a certain reality that being white entails, or at least one that I have attached to it. It would take too many pages here to sort through all of that, but it is safe to say that all of the decisions I make in my life are

certainly affected by my sense of what it means to be a white male. It's the same concept with Irish/Italian; I'm sure you can ask one hundred people what it means to be Irish/Italian and you might get one hundred different answers, but the meaning I have attached to it is real to me; there has been a lot written about so called "middle-class values" in America and as part of my hierarchy that has a meaning to me as well; and for me, being Catholic is rich with meaning, rich with history and experience, it is part of my family, part of my culture, something I know and feel deeply within me and something I have studied and worked at and deemed valuable to my life. This "master identity" portion of my hierarchy is the foundation of who I am, but the order the elements fall in can change at different times in my life. While in high school being white, Irish/Italian was very important because we used heritage as a way of defining each other, but today it seems far less important to me and my place in the world, but being Catholic and middle-class still holds its importance to me, yet all of these elements are still part of my identity and, in a deep seeded way, inform all of my choices. This brings us back to the current generation and how we have described their world. Is religion a part of this "master identity" for most? Will it, "have the power of organizing and rearranging other elements in the hierarchy toward greater consistency and unity?" (7) This is what institutional religions would strive for and call a "religious identity" or in my case, "Catholic Identity". Based on research we will look at later in this work, we'll see a mixed answer.

When talking about religion shaping behavior, or as said above, "organizing and rearranging" elements of self-concept, we must look at where it fits as an element in our modern culture. In my example, what do I hold more centrally as an element of who I am

my gender, race, ethnicity, economic status or religion? Is it always the same, or does my “master hierarchy” use different elements as central for different types of decisions? How do these central elements form? Most studies show that an integration of time, place and relationship help us form these central elements. For the purpose of this study, we are talking about previous generations in America and the families and communities where they were raised and comparing them to today’s generation and the same criteria. As we have learned so far, those differences in time, place and relationship have shaped the difference in the centrality of religion in the different generations. In their work, American Catholics Today, (8) D’Antonio, Davidson, Hoge and Gautier talk about this centrality and how it effects Catholic Identity, “This dimension of Catholic identity refers to the degree to which people identify with the Catholic faith in relation to other identifications. In other words, how important is it to that person to be Catholic?” (9) They also talk about “content” or core beliefs and peripheral beliefs; what actually do we hold to be essential about the Catholic faith and what is less essential? Catholic Theologians would also use the word hierarchy for this and use the phrase “Hierarchy of Truths” to distinguish between the most essential tenets of the faith and those less essential. The final point D’Antonio and friends make on this point is about the relationship between our identity and the identity of others. “For our purposes, this dimension has to do with people’s sense of how Catholic faith relates to other faiths. Do Catholics think their faith is the “one true faith”, or do they think that it is no more valid or true than any other religion?” (10) If believed to be the “one true faith”, a person will have being Catholic as an important element in their self-identity and deem it worth learning more about.

In having this sense that being Catholic is important and being able to identify why, those who hold their faith in their master hierarchy still must decide at what level of commitment they participate. If, in my case, I hold my Irish/Italian heritage as important and have a good sense of why that is, does that mean that I will participate in Irish events, or wear green, or eat Italian food? Not necessarily, but it will mean that I value the attributes of those things and know that they are part of who I am. Whether or not I choose to do any of those things doesn't diminish the fact that I am Irish/Italian. There is a sense that the same concept works with religious identity. Hoge and friends, (through personal and phone interviews), identify three types of Catholic identity, "parish Catholics", "spiritual Catholics" and "contingent Catholics". (11) Parish Catholics have a strong Catholic Identity and parish life, the sacraments and institutional authority are all central to their beliefs; spiritual Catholics also have strong Catholic identity, but they don't attend Church functions or take part in the Sacraments except for special occasions, like weddings, funerals Christmas and Easter. (These are closest to "Spiritual, not religious" Catholics); contingent Catholics are those who don't attend Church and are not spiritually tied to the faith but identify as Catholic because that is what their family is. So, we see that though present in their master hierarchy, being Catholic can mean very different behavioral outcomes for different people. The fascinating part of this is that all three types will self-identify as Catholic and all take that part of themselves seriously and find it as central to who they are, yet the way it is displayed in their lives is radically different. One might be a daily Communicant, who prays the rosary and the Office (12) everyday, volunteers at the soup kitchen and lectures at their parish every Sunday, while another enjoys sunsets, is a good listener, helps others when needed, and wears their best clothing to go to Mass on

Christmas and Easter, and still another wears a cross necklace everyday, makes the sign of the cross when they drive past a cemetery, and will tell people they are Catholic when asked, yet never enters a Church and yet all three will self-identify as Catholic, and mean it from the bottom of their hearts.

As we have described above, it is a complex set of criteria that makes up a persons self-identity and leads them to their religious identity, but is it the same for an institution? Does an institutional religion have a self-identity? What factors does an institutional religion take into account in how it presents itself in the public square? Is there a hierarchy of elements and is there a master hierarchy that defines them? As we spoke of above, the Catholic Church has what theologians would call a “hierarchy of truths” which allows the faithful to see what the Church says are the most important tenets of the faith. Other institutional religions do as well; in the Jewish religion there are precepts, laws, rituals and commandments that are used to give their faithful guidance in living out the faith; most non-Catholic Christian faiths are Bible based and use different passages from both the Old and New Testament as cornerstones to leading their faithful to a living a Christian lifestyle; most Baptist, Congregational and Evangelical churches follow the latter scheme and it is the Pastor and church elders who decide what is to be emphasized and how the hierarchy will fall; the Episcopal and Lutheran faiths are more like the Catholic Church and have stricter adherence to certain church laws, (though some Episcopal congregations are testing their Diocesan authority over the issue of gay ordination), and also have a hierarchy of faith tenets. As we take a closer look, we will see that as a person builds a religious identity

through the factors we described above, institutional religions used similar criteria to build their tenets and hierarchy of elements as well.

The building of the Catholic institutional self-identity was complex. As we all know Jesus was a Jew, a very devote Jew who read the Torah, went to Temple and followed Jewish Law. In the early parts of three of the Gospels we see that his parents followed Jewish customs and there are stories of his birth, Presentation in the Temple, pilgrimage to temple, and attending temple. For all intents and purposes he was a good, practicing Jew in the tradition of his parents and their family. His first followers were Jews and all that occurred in his adult life, his teachings, service, miracles, death and resurrection were all formed by this Jewish upbringing. There is nothing about his life and what he stood for that can be separated from that Jewish upbringing. It made him who he was and led him to where his life eventually ended. Christians believe that all of the New Testament is a fulfillment of the Old Testament, the Jewish law and, as some would say, the continuation of the Jewish faith. The New Testament is what all the Christian faiths are inspired from and what they use as the basis for their belief system. Most of it was written in a form that looked at Old Testament prophecies and told stories in a way that would prove those prophecies as coming to fruition in the man Jesus. Story after story and Parable after Parable relates to a verse or sequence from the Old Testament or from Jewish Tradition and is shown to be fulfilled or superseded by Jesus as the Messiah. Written years after his death and the early formation of what is now the Christian faith, the Gospels and other New Testament letters from Paul, James and Peter also set out to answer specific questions that had arisen in the young Church and used not only personal exhortations but references

to “old” laws made anew through Jesus. As the Church grew and flourished the sense of rootedness in the Jewish faith faded and eventually abated to the point of strong animosity between the faiths at several historical junctures. The new faith continued to be formed by means of the “word”, the Bible, and “tradition”, the moving of the Holy Spirit in the world. As the young Church continued to evolve through history, it set up a structure that would keep the faith consistent from generation to generation. This structure grew over the centuries and became what we now know as the Catholic Church. Its authority over the faithful and its layers of judicial and teaching offices are legendary and the institutions effect on our world is almost as comprehensive as that of Jesus himself. The great Protestant Reformation in the fifteen hundreds was a reaction to and rejection of the institution of the Church and led to the following of Jesus’ teachings and the New Testament in other ways, most of them less structured, but some as, if not more, structured than the Catholic Church. As these new churches evolved they too set up hierarchies of beliefs as we described above. As we move into this new century some 2009 years after the birth of Jesus, the Church still evolves based on the “word” and “tradition”, and other Christian faiths evolve based on different interpretations of the Bible as it fits in our world, today. To bolster this description of forming institutional identities, a look at how Judaism adapted in America may help. The Jewish faith has evolved with some similarities to the evolution of the Church as Hoge and friends point out, “Both have a history of immigration to a predominantly Protestant country, so both have had long experience as outsiders. Both came at the same time and the international diversity of both groups was similar. Today both groups have integrated into American life so fully that members of neither community feel like outsiders.” (13) Today, Jews in America fall into three distinct groups, Orthodox,

Conservative, and Reformed. Their differences lie in the level of adherence to the Law of the Torah. Orthodox follow the law completely, while Conservatives do somewhat and the Reformed will use them as a guide but will follow more modern tenants in their everyday lives. This sounds very similar to Hoge and friends three types of Catholic Identity we looked at above. As they have adapted to and grown to their new realities, these three distinct branches of Judaism have formed self-identities. American society has helped create these different denominations of Judaism and has also stirred the fastest growing new denomination, no denomination at all, (non religious Jews that fit into our category of Spiritual, not religious). By examining how Christianity formed its self-identity over the centuries and how Judaism evolved in America, we see a correlation to how we have described the formation of a personal self-identity.

This brief, and very simplified, explanation of the history of these faiths serves as a point of perspective as to what institutional religions today are built on. Christianity is built from a foundation of the Jewish faith. The hierarchy of elements that are present in individuals begin with the foundation of time, place and relationship and as we see, from our description above, that is how the Christian faiths began. From there, individuals decide what is most important to them from that framework; is it family, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, personal well being; and build these elements into their master hierarchy. They then complete the rest of their hierarchy of elements with things that matter to them but are of less importance. The same is true for institutions. Once the Christian faiths formed their foundation, they started building that master hierarchy. Once Jesus was hailed as the Messiah and the Apostles and disciples, inspired by the Holy Spirit,

began preaching Jesus Christ crucified and risen from the dead and people started to gather in his name, the foundation was laid, Christianity was born. The faith was built then through the “word” and “tradition”, (and something called the “will of the faithful”). As time went on and the Church split, other Christian faiths, less global, more local, used other criteria to build their hierarchies.

As we have put a unique spotlight on the institution of the Catholic Church so far, let’s take a closer look at their hierarchy of elements and their master hierarchy. In addition to the Bible which most Christians believe to be the inspired word of God, (some go so far as to say the actual word of God, while the Jewish faith recognizes only the Old Testament), Catholics have the CCC, Catechism of the Catholic Church (14), and the GDC, General Directory for Catechesis, that are official teaching tools of the Church and outline the tenets of the faith for the faithful. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops is the organization that discusses and recommends ways to form the faithful in America and they have published their own version of the GDC, the NDC, National Directory for Catechesis. (15) In it they talk extensively about how to pass on the faith from one generation to the next. They start with a historical context in which to place Catholicism, discuss what the faith actually is and then ways to teach, propagate and infuse the faith to all segments and generations of the faithful and to evangelize the “unchurched”. The NDC presents nine criteria for “The Authentic Presentation of the Christian Message”, (16). Remember, this is not the criteria of the message that the Church is presenting in the public square, but the criteria **for presenting** that message. Of the nine, the one we will concentrate on here says, “Offers the comprehensive message of the Gospel and respects its inherent **hierarchy of**

truths.” (16) So we see this hierarchy being stated so as to start to define what the institutions self-concept is. The NDC states that, “the ‘organic hierarchical character’ of the Christian message is another vital criterion for the presentation of the Gospel. The harmony and coherence of the Christian message require that the different truths of the faith be organized around a center...” (17) The NDC does not use the same language as we used in our discussion of self-concept, but it is saying the same thing. In this case, the center is the concept of the Holy Trinity, three persons in one God. In an individual, that center would be what the person holds most dear to them, most likely the concept of family or the love of another person like a parent or sibling and later a spouse or child. As these truths are organized around the center, they become that master hierarchy and like an individual can name and rank their elements: love, family, faith and friendship, so the institution names and ranks theirs. “In the Catholic doctrine there exists an order or ‘hierarchy’ of truths, since they vary in their relation to the foundation of the Christian faith.” (17) As individuals order theirs based on that foundation of time, place and relationship, so the institution orders theirs. At different times in its history, the Church has held councils, i.e. the Vatican Councils, the Council of Nicea, to redefine its dogmas in the face of certain heresies and to reflect modernity to help re-order their elements. Just as all that individuals do in their lives, their actions, decisions, thoughts, words and deeds come through the perspective of their hierarchy of elements, the Church filters all of theirs through the hierarchy of truths. “All aspects and dimensions of the Christian message are related to these principle truths.” (17) To see what the Catholic Church names as its master hierarchy see pages eighty-four and eighty five of the NDC.

Other Christian churches may or may not be as formal in letting their faithful know what their master hierarchy is, but stated or unstated, it is there and it steers all that the church is about and all that it will accomplish. The more dedicated members of the church will have an innate sense of what it is and may even be able to put language to it, but all institutions and especially religious institutions have a hierarchy of elements and a master hierarchy. The more successful and profitable churches are the ones that are able to identify it, put language to it, share it in the public square and ask others to join them in the pursuit of these goals. This is what has made Scientology (18) such a popular “religion” among the rich and elite. They have done a great job of illuminating their Hierarchy of Truths and asking others to join them in their pursuit of them. The Catholic Church, however, teaches that theirs are the ultimate truths which brings us back to a point we made earlier about religious identity, do we think that our religion is the truth or just one of many truths in the world?

The Catholic Church claims truth and calls on their faithful to accept their teachings as so. The Jewish faith, in their three distinct American denominations, doesn't go as far as claiming truth, though the Orthodox branch would say that what they believe and the Law they follow has been divinely imparted to them. Other Christian churches do not make the same claims of truth and often can find a following just by being able to articulate their goals and show them to be the same as those in their community. A good Pastor or hard working Minister can be very effective in building a church by using sound presentations and persistence in laying out their master hierarchy and this goes a long way in winning people to their congregation. As the NDC states as its Conclusion to its section on the

Criteria for the Authentic Presentation of the Christian Message, “Sound catechesis, however, involves more than the presentation of the content of Christ’s message according to the criteria outlined above. The effective presentation of the content of the faith also depends on the methodology employed in the transmission of the Good News.” (19) What is the best way to “pass on the faith”?

Chapter 3

In America we are blessed to have a very good education system. Public schools are available in all communities and those who have the where-with-all to do it can send their children to private schools that serve many different constituencies. Most Americans have grown up attending school from kindergarten through high school, (the graduation rate in public schools for those who earned a regular high school diploma was 70% in 2006.) and a larger percent than ever is attending college. (4-year graduation rate was 36% nationally in 2006.) We are accustomed to going to school and being taught by professionally trained teachers in a variety of subject matters. Most schools use “classroom style” teaching techniques and as they grow, American kids learn the do’s and don’ts of surviving and flourishing in that setting. If a child is fortunate enough to come from an encouraging environment, they will be able to see and learn things at school that complement and add to the experiences they have at home or in their family life. Most educators will agree that experiential learning helps cement knowledge in a student and that the more you can match what a child is learning in school to what they are doing in their everyday life the better chance you will have to successfully educate that student. We could spend paragraphs here citing statistics about peak educational performance and techniques in educating our young, but suffice it to say, though sometimes maligned in the world-wide press, the American education system has done a good job in preparing many students for the future. Having stated this, however, there is an overall downward trend in high school graduation and “college readiness” rates over the past decade (1) and some of what is steering this phenomena may be part of the equation when we discuss religious education.

As we discussed earlier, the Catholic and Jewish religions took similar paths to assimilating and being accepted in our national culture. As a religious people who were settling into a predominately Protestant Christian country, both faiths experienced trials and tribulations in their early years in America. This forced leaders to look for ways to keep community members together and safe and also make sure their religious traditions were being passed on and not lost to the enculturation of a new society. One of the best ways to do this was by setting up schools that not only educated their children in the fundamental academic disciplines but also in their faith. The Catholic Church started their efforts much earlier as an evangelization tool in the "new world". They knew that by offering general education to Native Americans and those Europeans who were coming to America that they could mix in Catholic ideals and faith formation and start to convert people to the faith. Led by Priests and Sisters from religious orders as well as lay people, these efforts helped bring many converts to the faith in the early days. As the National Catholic Education Association, (NCEA) states:

But exactly when and where the first Catholic "school" began in this country -- or the names of the teacher and pupils - remains a mystery: A Spanish Franciscan with a few children in a mission outpost?; A member of an early French exploration party, quietly teaching and preaching?; A chaplain holding class for young ship's apprentices on the beach where some 16th-Century vessel had just anchored?; it's hard to say. What is clear is that Catholic education goes back deep into U.S. history - to at least 1606. That year, expressing their desire "to teach children Christian doctrine, reading and writing," the Franciscans opened a school in what is now St. Augustine, Florida. Further north and a bit later, Jesuits instructed such dedicated Native American students as Kateri Tekakwitha (1656-1680), who became a Catholic in New York and taught Indian children in a Christian settlement near Montreal. By the latter 1600's, English colonists had set up their own, publicly supported schools. (2)

As America began to be settled by predominantly Protestant Christians, the publically supported schools became more Bible based and exceedingly more anti-Catholic. As more

and more Catholic immigrants arrived in the 1800's, they found "public" schools to be detrimental to the education of their faithful, and the Catholic school system that we know today found its roots.

The middle of the 19th Century saw increasing Catholic interest in education in tandem with increasing Catholic immigration. To serve their growing communities, American Catholics first tried to reform American public schools to rid them of blatantly fundamentalist Protestant overtones. Failing, they began opening their own schools But such successes sparked a bigoted backlash, fomented by such groups as the Know-Nothing Society, committed to wiping out 'foreign influence, Popery, Jesuitism, and Catholicism.' Mobs burnt a convent and murdered a nun in Massachusetts in 1834, destroyed two churches in New England in 1854, and, that same year, tarred-and-feathered, and nearly killed Father John Bapst, a Swiss-born Jesuit teaching in Maine. Such attacks notwithstanding, the First Plenary Council of Baltimore in 1852 urged every Catholic parish in the nation to establish a school, ... with the Second Baltimore Council in 1866 repeating the call for parochial schools and the Third Baltimore Council in 1884 turning the plea into a demand that all Catholic parishes open schools within two years. (2)

So, we see that Catholic Parishes throughout the country were urged to start local schools for both general and religious education that would solidify their ability to pass on the faith to all Catholics in an efficient manner and link their faith to what they did in their everyday lives. This is an important point, that general education and religious education happened in the same place, and became a norm for thousands of young people. Not only were they seeing the faith lived out by their parents and extended families and neighbors at home and in the community, but they were being acculturated as Catholic everyday in school as well. As generations moved on and the different races and religions in America began to homogenize, Catholic schools began to grow in number and become accepted parts of their communities.

In 1900, an estimated 3,500 parochial schools existed in the United States. Within 20 years, the number of elementary schools had reached 6,551, enrolling 1,759,673 pupils taught by 41,581 teachers. Secondary education likewise boomed. In 1900, Catholics could boast of approximately 100 Catholic high schools, but by 1920 more than 1,500 existed. For more than two generations, enrollment continued to

climb. By the mid-1960's, it had reached an all-time high of 4.5 million elementary school pupils, with about 1 million students in Catholic high schools. (2)

This was a great success for the Catholic Church in America and gave them a very effective means of keeping people grounded in the faith.

As the Catholic school system adapted and grew in America, Jews also found success in forming religious schools. According to the American Jewish Desk Reference:

In the United States, education in the traditions of Judaism has had a complex history, which has been dominated by numerous shifts in its orientation and goals. From the colonial period, when the small Sephardic community established its first private school, to the congregational schools established by the German-Jewish community in the mid-19th century, to the community-based Talmud torah schools that served the Eastern European immigrants of the early 20th century, Jewish education has attempted to parallel and complement the American educational system and to create lasting institutions that preserve and sustain Jewish life as a vital force for the next generation. Jewish education has been used both for Americanization and for preserving European Jewish culture and tradition.(3)

However these schools did not last and by the late 1800's most Jews were satisfied with public education and thought that creating separate schools would only focus society on their differences and that it would be more detrimental to Jews in most communities than if their children went to public school. "By the late 19th century a growing number of German Jews began to believe that Jewish day schools would create an unhealthy division between Jewish and gentile communities at a time when Central European immigrants and their children were themselves becoming part of the American mainstream. American culture and integrated schooling were embraced as a tool of socialization." (3) This led to schools that focused mainly on Jewish religious education and left general education to the public school system.

As the next wave of Jewish immigrants arrived they were hungry to maintain the traditions of their homelands and so tried to start schools that would offer both general and religious education. This worked for a short time, but caused dissension between the older immigrant Jewish community and the new arrivals. Most of these new attempts failed and these newer immigrants saw wisdom in allowing their children to attend public schools and assimilate into American culture. These Talmud Torah schools, which kept the native Yiddish tongue, were seen as obstacles to becoming full-fledged Americans. As generations continued to roll on, many attempts at forming cohesive Jewish schools occurred with some successes. Men like Samson Benderly and Louis Brandeis attempted to link modern culture and traditional Jewish beliefs and create new schools or upgrade some of the existing Talmud Torah schools. These attempts had some successes that still bear fruit today. Also, the education of Jewish girls was not a priority until the 1920's and new schools were organized to educate boys and girls separately. The biggest boost to Jewish schools has been the burgeoning conservative movement that has helped create a new set of schools with the belief that public school education is no longer necessary to help Jews assimilate to the American culture.

The Reform movement has begun to develop day schools, although they represent only [a small percentage] of the overall total of these programs. The proliferation of these schools can be traced to the belief among many Jewish families born and educated in America that it is no longer necessary to send their children to public school to acculturate them as Americans. These parents want a Jewish educational system for their children because they want to imbue them with Jewish thought and values.(3)

Protestant education in this country has even deeper roots. Christian education claims its roots in the traditions of ancient Greece and Greek thinking. According to Ben House:

From the time of Plato the Hellenic paideia [system of instruction] was a humanism in search of a theology . . . The new Christian culture was therefore built from the beginning on a double foundation. The old classical education in the liberal arts was maintained without any interruption, and since this education was inseparable from the study of classical authors, the old classical education continued to be studied. But alongside of--and above--all this, there was now a specifically Christian learning which was Biblical and theological and which produced its own prolific literature.(4)

This gets to the essence of what religious institutions believe they can offer their faithful, a classic education, the same, if not better than in any secular or public system, while also providing the benefit of religious education, the passing on of their master hierarchy, linked to the everyday world through the delivery system of general education. In fact, what we call secular education today, the public school system is based on the “Old Deluder Satan Act” passed in Massachusetts in 1647 requiring that all children be taught to read and write so that they could understand the Bible. To take it further, of the first 108 colleges and universities founded in America, 106 were founded as Christian schools. That Christian religions, which had a big influence on the founding and development of this country, would also have a huge influence on the public education system as well is not a surprise. What is surprising though is that pre-dominantly Christian schools have not had the influence, longevity or wide-spread effectiveness, at least in the K-12 category, as the Catholic School System. It seems that the presence of an institutional master hierarchy has enabled Catholic schools to grow while the absence of one for Protestant or Christian schools, for the most part, has hampered their ability to grow and flourish. In fact, some Protestant churches that tried to keep up with modernity suffered a “withering of creedal certitude and moral fervor” (5), which struck at the core of their education system. R.R. Palmers, in *A History of the Modern World*, says, “Protestants also had always set special emphasis on the Bible as the source of religious belief, and as doubts accumulated on the

literal truth of Biblical narratives there seemed no other source on which to rely.” (6) It seems the more conservative and committed Christian churches would have a better success rate in catechesis than the more liberal ones would, but that is not always the case. Even in the discussion of Jewish schools, we saw that a committed local community could only go so far in forming and maintaining a school and that the lack of a stable, committed community on the larger, (national, inter-national), level had allowed movement by, dissension within, or loss of commitment by that community to let the school close. By being part of a world-wide network of parishes with governance from Dioceses and the Vatican, all with a connected master hierarchy, and hierarchy of elements, the Catholic school system had a built-in structure that was able to overcome many obstacles and still be successful. Local communities had institutional support on the regional, national and international levels, believers could be transient and still find a Catholic school, with the same values and tenets in whatever community they moved to, money was rarely an issue because of institutional support and, in their biggest growth spurt from the 1920’s-60’s, there was an inexhaustible, inexpensive labor supply of educators, the nuns.

Looking at how these major religions used the “Old Deluder Satan Act” to align themselves with general education and build on that through many obstacles throughout the history of the United States, we cannot ignore the large number of believers who did not send their children to religious schools. As stated above, in the 1960’s there were 5.5 million K-12 students in Catholic schools and many more in Christian, Jewish and other religious affiliated schools in America. That, however, left many million more attending public or other type private schools some of which may have offered some religious education, but most private, and all of the public schools had no formal religious education

included in their curriculum. “However, even at their peak ... no more than half of all (Catholic) parishes had a school, and fewer than half of all Catholic children were enrolled in a Catholic elementary school.” (7) This left the religious institutions with the responsibility to find ways outside of the general education system to form their young believers in the faith. As we also saw above, Jewish congregations were mostly educating their children outside general education with mixed success, leaning more toward enculturation to the American way of life in the general education context and more private religious instruction like Hebrew School or Torah classes. Christian day schools were successful in some communities, but many had to build programs through their local churches. This “Sunday School” model is well known, and has done a wonderful job in educating young Christians in thousands of communities through out this country. It is usually a Bible based program and it made sure that young people knew the Ten Commandments, the Golden Rule, and that Jesus was Lord and Savior. Many congregations would also provide a Vacation Bible School that would run in the summer when school was out and combine Bible lessons with community building experiences. This is how most Christians are educated in their particular denominational faith.

Catholics who did not attend Catholic elementary school received their religious education at parish based programs. Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, or CCD as it was called in the past, (now most commonly called the Religious Education Program), occurred at the parish center, in the church basement or at peoples homes. It was taught by priests, nuns and lay people. (In today’s Church it is mostly taught by lay people due to the shortage of priests and women religious) Kids would come after school on weekdays, or Saturday mornings, (very rarely on Sunday’s), and it was mostly a classroom model of

students, broken up into grade level, at desks, teachers in front of the class teaching from a text book. Sacramental preparation occurred in a similar format, with second or third graders being prepared for Reconciliation and First Holy Communion, and middle or high school students, (depending on the Diocese) preparing for Confirmation. (8) These “rites of passage” were normally performed in groups with preparation being one or two years in conjunction with the regular religious education curriculum for that age group. In high school, most parishes had a Youth Group or later a Youth Ministry Program, some with a professional Youth Minister, most with either a priest, women religious or volunteer or part-time paid lay minister, or some combination of all. Some functioned as separate entities from the parish religious education program while others were part of the program and worked closely with the Director of Religious Education, (DRE). Youth Ministry is usually more of an experiential ministry with less formal education, (rarely will you see classroom style), and more hands on style events like rally’s, service projects and mission trips, social justice workshops and projects, retreats, trips to conferences and pilgrimages to shrines and other religious places or events. Some parishes will provide high school graduates with information on Catholic happenings or events in the local area or at their college including Newman Clubs and parish mass schedules and some have Young Adult groups that meet at the parish or in regional settings and discuss issues pertinent to their lives, hold retreats, talks or workshops about vocations to the priesthood or religious life, sexuality issues, and other such topics. There are even Catholic singles groups and events called “Theology on Tap” where Catholics over 21 can come and enjoy a cocktail and listen to a speaker talk about an issue of the Church. All of this falls in the realm of Catholic Religious Education and most Dioceses have professionals who manage their own

specific areas and train parish based lay people to organize these educational experiences at their parishes and who will provide programming so parishes can come together for common, large group experiences of faith formation.

Before Vatican II, the main elementary level catechetical text was the *Baltimore Catechism* which every Catholic over the age of fifty has had some experience with. “Religion classes, for Catholic school students and public school students generally involved the memorization of tenets of the (Baltimore) Catechism in question and answer format. It is still possible to hear one of those former students, forty or fifty years later, recite key tenets of the faith: ‘Why did God make you? God made me to know, love and serve Him in this world and to be happy with Him in the next’.” (9) After Vatican II the first *General Directory for Catechesis*, (GDC) was published (1971) and the Catechism of the Catholic Church followed in 1994. As mentioned earlier, the revised GDC was published in 1997 and was quickly followed by the first *National Directory of Catechesis*, (NDC) in 2005 (USCCB) which concentrates on Religious Education in the United States. These provided new insights into methodology and content structure and changed the way most parishes educated their children.

This brief history of how these institutional religions succeeded in forming education systems for their faithful helps us frame the issue of why religious institutions are losing their influence and “Spiritual, not religious” is becoming so popular. By following the path these institutions took in forming structures that helped them grow in numbers and form their faithful so that they were knowledgeable in the tenets and practices of the faith, we can see what practices and behaviors allowed this to happen and look to see if they are still

present today and simply not working anymore or if they have disappeared from the landscape and their absence has caused the issues we are examining. There is some good research on what is happening in religious education in the Catholic Church that we can look at to give us some insight into this and that is where we will concentrate our efforts from this point forward. I hope our look at the history of Jewish and Christian education can help us to frame where the strength of the Catholic school system lies, in its unity of message and institutional governance that has led to its seeming success and highlight for us why not having that unity hinders a strong education system. Whether that unity has led to as successful an effort as the Church would like to see is another issue and we will look at that, as well, moving forward.

As we discuss the past success of the Catholic school system in America, we see that the number of students attending those schools peaked at about 5.5 million in the 1960's. Today, the NCEA shows the numbers to have dropped significantly. "Four decades later, total elementary and secondary enrollment is 2.6 million. Although the strong commitment by church and lay leaders alike to Catholic education remains constant, changing demographics have had a major impact on enrollment." (2) Could low enrollment be one cause of the diminishing institutional knowledge of this generation? The research is not very conclusive. Most point to a consistent level of Catholic education among the generations when you include both Catholic schools and parish programs. It doesn't look like the current generation has had less of an opportunity for religious education as previous ones did, it is just not taking advantage of those opportunities at a similar rate. The numbers show that there is a slight increase in institutional knowledge for those who attended Catholic school throughout their school years including elementary school, high

school and college, but that doesn't always translate into "following the rules". "In general, we have found a relationship between greater levels of Catholic education and both higher commitment to the Church and less reliance on Church authority in moral decision making." (10) This is a mixed blessing at best for the institutional Church.

If we look more closely at the numbers, we see that attending a Catholic elementary school does make one more likely to attend a Catholic high school and then more likely to attend a Catholic college. If our statement above is correct, those that do this will have a higher commitment to the Church (though not all of its teachings).

Attending a Catholic elementary school, however, does increase the likelihood that one will go on to attend a Catholic high school. More than half, (52%), of those who attended a Catholic elementary school went on to attend a Catholic high school. Among those who attended a Catholic high school, nearly nine in ten, (89%), said they also had attended a Catholic elementary school. Nearly as many Catholic college or university attendees, (79 %), said they attended a Catholic elementary school, and about two-thirds, (65%), had attended a Catholic high school.(11)

In fact, "eight in ten Catholics say it is important to them that the younger generations of their family grow up as Catholics" (12), and based on these numbers, attending a Catholic school, especially an Elementary school, helps make that happen.

By correlating strong faith formation with strong institutional loyalty we see that when Catholics know more about their faith they tend to rank it higher in their master hierarchy and it helps inform the decisions they make more acutely. That it helps them agree with everything the Church teaches is not always true, but at least their impression of belonging to an organized religion is strong. We will see the affect of this in our next chapter.

Chapter 4

Now that we have looked at how the institutional religions have come to the place they are in this country, how they educate their followers in the tenets of their faith, and the way it has impacted different generations, it's time to look at some of the most recent survey work completed in the area of youth and young adult attitudes about religion and how those attitudes are impacting religion in our country today and what better education can do to effect them.

The most comprehensive study of youth and young adult attitudes on religion in American was completed by Christian Smith of the University of North Carolina. "Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers," (1) reports the findings of the National Study of Youth and Religion, (NSYR), which is the largest and most detailed study of youth and religion ever taken. The study is a statistically representative, national telephone survey of over three-thousand three-hundred young people between the ages of thirteen and seventeen, and their parents and over two hundred-fifty more in depth, face-to-face interviews, (pool taken from the 3,370 telephone interviews), conducted between July 2002 and April 2003 by researchers at the University of North Carolina. Smith and his colleagues present a rather startling portrayal of religious attitudes among our teen and young adult population. Though not as far removed from previous analysis's as some might expect, there is not a lot of good news to be found for the institutional religions. Smith seems to be heartened by the normalcy of most young people and by their perceived adherence to the faith of their families and to the traditions they bring with them, but when the researchers scratch the surface and look a bit deeper,

the faith these young people are adhering too has little resemblance to the “faith of our fathers”.

Smith’s starting point is the fact that most studies on religion today focus either on the institutions themselves or the attitudes of their members, almost entirely their adult members. As Smith points out, “American adolescents between the age of 10 and 19 represent about 14 percent of all Americans, a population deserving the scholarly attention of sociologists of religion as much as any other group.” (2) He points out that this is a time in life where influences can have life long effects and that religious conversion is likely to take place in this stage of life. To study the religious inclinations of teens would seem to be a way to learn about how family religious values are passed down, how peer interaction helps sway this behavior and how any values that are passed down help shape decision making during a time when riskier, (try on, try out), behavior is more of a norm. Smith also sees a broader reason for the study, a view of American religion as a whole. “This book thus represents in part an attempt to describe and evaluate the shape and texture of American religion broadly by viewing it through the lens of the religious and spiritual practices of religious and non-religious American youth.” (3) As we have described above, the generational divide has roots and reasons that go beyond age and Smith seeks to find, through shaping questions that address the profound changes in Americans view on religion, to seek answers, or at least insights, from this younger generation.

One conclusion that Smith draws is that there is not only one youth religious culture to speak of, but in fact, a wide variety of beliefs, emotions and experiences when it comes to religion and young people. Just as it is troublesome to speak about any culture in a

monolithic way, it is likewise difficult to point to a definitive youth culture. There are just too many variables and too many different ways for young people to evolve in all aspects of their lives to think that in their religious inclinations there would be a formula that would fit neatly. Smith did find a significant number of young people for whom religion and spirituality were “defining features” (4) in their lives, (though that doesn’t necessarily mean they know the content of the faith), and that religious practices are part of their everyday experiences and help form them not only in their faith, but in how they live their lives day to day. This would seem like good news to the institutional religions that have seen the number of people who actually participate in the rituals and practices of the faith drop over the years, but Smith also found that there are a larger number of young people who know nothing about the faith they claim as their own. “If there are indeed a significant number of American teens who are serious and lucid about their religious faith, there is also a much larger number who are remarkably inarticulate and befuddled about religion... **one finds little evidence that the agents of religious socialization in this country are being highly effective and successful with the majority of their young people.**” (4) This goes right to the problem that the institutional religions are facing in this country and one we will address in more depth in the next chapter, how to educate an inarticulate, uncatechised flock. Even with the success we described above of the Catholic school system and efforts by some Protestant and Jewish communities to educate their young, Smith’s research still shows that the true tenets of the faith are not reaching their targets in a way that will ingrain them as life long beliefs and attitudes.

Teens and young adults are usually more social beings than adults and it is largely assumed that this peer socialization is the biggest factor in forming their attitudes during these years,

but Smith found that this is a bad assumption. In fact, his research finds that parents and other significant adults, “exert huge influences in the lives of American adolescents... whether for good or ill, and whether adults can perceive it or not...when it comes to religious faith and most other areas of teens’ lives”. (5) That this older generation influences the next in how they view religion is not surprising based on all we have discussed in this work, but that this older generation has not reacted more forcibly to this notion and that the institutional religions have not yet taken steps to make this work to their advantage is surprising. In fact, the question should be, as Smith points out, not “whether adults exert influence, but what kind of influence do they exert.” (5) Are adult laissez faire attitudes toward religion rubbing off on the younger generation and inadvertently adding to the dilemma that the institutional religions have? If adult influence matters, then adult attitudes on religion will matter to this current generation as we see illustrated here in the popular Doonesbury comic strip that appeared in many newspapers in the mid 1990’s: (6)



We will talk about potential steps that the institutional religions can take to remedy their dilemma later in this work, but this notion that **attitudinal change in the older generation can affect the younger** is important.

To fill in this point even more, and bring it to a different level, Smith concludes that those teens who are more religiously active and who believe being religious helps them to be a better person, are, in fact, **doing better in life** on a variety of outcomes than those who don't take their religion as seriously. If it is true that being religiously active helps a child to be a better person, and it is also true that today's adults want nothing but the best for their kids, and it is also true that adults do have a great influence on the behaviors and religious attitudes of the younger generation, **than why isn't more being done by these adults to strengthen their religious affiliations?** If the well being of their children is greatly influenced and increased by believing in and practicing their faith, then why are not more parents leading their children to this path by their own personal example? Statistics show that the "religious practices and commitments of parents remain an important influence on the religious practices and commitments of their teenage children." (7) If parents practice their faith and kids see this, it has a positive effect on their attitude toward religion, and thus may help them become better human beings. Smith uses the term "agents of religious socialization" (4) to describe those who work in the institutional religions to pass on their faith tenets and spread their message, but when we look closely, isn't it mostly the believers who step forward to do this? In the Catholic faith the people in the pews are the Church, the "people of God", and it is they who step forward to teach religious education and be youth and young adult ministers; in conjunction with ordained ministers "Sunday School" is often taught by Protestant laity who are mostly parents of the

children who attend; Jewish Hebrew schools are run by parents of kids in the classes as well, so aren't the "agents of religious socialization" in reality this generation of parents? If so, then **they are badly underestimating their role in forming the faith of their children.** In fact, Smith points out that in particular, Catholic parents have not done a good job in modeling participation in their religion, "... perhaps the relatively lower levels of Catholic teen religiosity simply reflect relatively low levels of Catholic parent religiosity. Perhaps the issue is not U.S. Catholic teen religious practice at all, but overall U.S. religious practice generally, as engaged and modeled by adults." (8) I think the lack of a well educated adult modeling of religious behaviors is perhaps the biggest obstacle to the religiosity of young Catholics.

When we discuss involvement in the institutional religions, we are not only referring to religious services, but to other church related events as well. The life blood of Catholicism in America, as we have said, is the parish structure and though parental involvement in services seems to be the most measured indicator of religious activity, participation in other parish events is also a major factor in the religiosity of American Catholics. As Smith points out, "The U.S. Catholic parents of teenagers, in other words, are less involved in the community lives of their parishes outside of religious services than are U.S. Protestant parents of teens" (9) This lack of participation in other aspects of parish life creates social networking variables as well, and as we look at this aspect of teen involvement, may help to further illumine our dilemma.

We have essentially looked at Protestant, Catholic and Jewish institutional religions to discuss these emerging trends in religious attitudes and Smith's survey tells us we are on

the right track, with 76.5 % of teens being affiliated with these three faith groups. Protestants make up the largest percentage with 52% followed by Catholics with 23% making 75% of teens in America Christian. The Mormon religion, (which most surveys include under Christianity), makes up 2.5% while Jews make 1.5% and ten other faiths are listed and make up about 2.6% while “Don’t know/refused” makes up 1.8%. Beyond our 77.5% Christian, (including Mormon) the next largest group identified is “Not Religious” at 16%. These numbers tell us that almost 94% of teens in America are either Christian or not religious, quite a juxtaposition!

The numbers above match the adult population, where based on the 2002 Pew Global Attitudes Project, 76.5% U.S. Adult citizens identify themselves as Christian and 15% to have no religious affiliation at all. Interestingly enough, Smith’s survey, (10), found that within the 52% Protestant, the breakdown of specific denominations mirrored quite closely the adult population as well, with the largest denomination, the Southern Baptists at 17.3% and “just Christian/just Protestant” at almost 13%, Methodist at almost 5%, Lutheran at 3.5% and Independent/Nondenominational at 3%. All others, (34 total denominations listed including “don’t know/refused at 3%), were under 2% with most well under 1%. Based on these numbers Catholicism at 25% is the single largest Christian denomination.

Even though “not religious” does not mean exactly the same thing as “no religious affiliation”, the 15 or so percent that identified as “non religious” in each population seem to mirror each other and it looks like a similar situation for teens and adults. Smith makes a point to say that even though they identify themselves as non-religious, some of the 16% of teens still “believe in God, attend church, and pray: thus there must be something in the

way they understand the term “religious” that causes them to identify themselves as not religious...” (11) This may help us later when we discuss solutions.

Another point Smith makes is that there is a lack of alternative religions in play like Wicca or Paganism. It doesn’t look like, as some like to report, that young people are flocking to new wave or alternative religions. It seems to be that, since the percentages in the teen and adult surveys are very similar, that the younger generation is following in the older generations’ footsteps and, in fact, almost three-quarters say just that in this survey by following the traditions of their mothers or fathers, (12), and when asked about Parents as a team, (13) conservative Protestant, Mormon and Catholic are well over 80% and Jews over 75%. Teens don’t seem to be switching from their parents religion which reinforces the notion of parental influence in matters of religious attitudes.

When we look at religious service attendance rates we see these numbers start to drop. (14) For Conservative Protestants 77% say they attend once a month or better and 55% say once a week or better, while 60% of Catholic teens attend once a month or better and 40% once a week or better, and 29% of Jews attend once a month or better and 8% once a week or better. These numbers are consistent with adult numbers as well. Gallup International indicates that 41% of American citizens report that they regularly attend religious services. However some dispute these numbers as being too high because Americans may exaggerate their Church attendance due to “wishful thinking” or perceived intent, and a 2006 online Harris Poll of 2,010 U.S. adults (18 and older) found that only 26% of those surveyed attended religious services “every week or more often,” 9% went “once or twice a month” 21% went “a few times a year,” 3% went “once a year,” 22% went “less than once

a year,” and 18% never attend religious services. An identical survey by Harris in 2003 found that only 26% of those surveyed attended religious services “every week or more often,” 11% went “once or twice a month” 19% went “a few times a year,” 4% went “once a year,” 16% went “less than once a year,” and 25% never attend religious services. This may or may not be closer to the true statistics for teens as well, but our point that teens mirror their parents/families religious traditions still holds. We see that this generation is a lot closer to the last generation in religious affiliation than we might have expected but what does that mean in their day-to-day lives?

The survey shows us that about half of teens report a “strong subjective importance and experiences of religious faith in their own lives” (15), which means the other half does not, (16), yet 85% believe in God, (17) with about half believing in angels, miracles, demons and life after death. The numbers also show that about a third of teens do not think God is a personal God who gets involved in their everyday lives. That could be why the number of those who believe in God is greater than those who experience religion in their own lives. What this tells us is that teens are loyal to their families faith tradition, are influenced more by their parents than their peers when it comes to religion, like to be involved in some way shape or form in their institutional religion perhaps as much as a social network then for reasons of faith, yet perceive their involvement and commitment as more than it really is. What is important to most is that they have a sense God is involved in their life, to what degree differs immensely, and they are happy to be identified as a member of their particular religious institution.

The ‘get involved’ attitude of this generation that we discussed earlier may play a role here as well. Smiths’ research and the Harris survey both found that most young people who are heavily involved in their faith community are also heavily involved in activities like sports, clubs and other organized activities. The idea that being heavily involved in organized religious programs fits in to a socially beneficial network of activities that help form the overall person is not unimportant. As parents look to get their kids involved in positive programs, (as we discussed above), religion fits that profile, and teens and young adults who are searching for positive peer and other adult encounters often gravitate to religious programs as much for that as for the spiritual elements they also find there. The what-came-first scenario seems to be present here; do young people who are heavily involved in religious programs come to them because of a strong faith and find a strong social network, or do young people come because of the strong social network and then find their faith? Smith’s work points to the latter. With teen and young adult social patterns leading them to find organized settings to gather and if religion has proven to be a positive social network location that puts them together with friends and like minded peers, they will be present. That doesn’t mean that they are only there for social reasons, but the main draw is the gathering with others in a safe and fun environment. That faith is discussed and sometimes planted and nurtured is a positive bi-product of the social environment. Those few teens that arrive at these gatherings with faith on their minds first and socializing second seem to be in the minority.

Going back to our point about parent religiosity and how it effects teens, specifically about the lower level of Catholic parent participation in other parish activities aside from religious services; is there a correlation between adult lackadaisical attitudes toward their

church community and teens getting involved in these parish social networks? Smith sees this as so, “the lower levels of church attendance by U.S. Catholic teens compared to their mainline Protestant peers can be significantly explained by the lower levels of religiosity of their parents. The differences among teens, in other words, disappear when we account for the differences among the parents.” (18) We see, again, that parents have a central role in the religious attitudes of their children, and more importantly that the attitude of other adults can have an enormous effect here as well.

The picture is becoming clearer and if, “the best general rule of thumb for religious adults considering the possible faith outcomes of their youth is, ‘We’ll get what we are’” (19), and the fact remains that the majority of adults in all of the surveys and research we have looked at are at best lukewarm to religion and at worst shying away from it, we now see clearly what we are; and when we consider the past generations inability in passing on the faith to the next generation what Walt Kelly once wrote in his comic strip *Pogo* has come pass, “we have found the enemy and the enemy is us!”

Chapter 5

One easily overlooked period of religious attitudinal development and change are the college years for teens and young adults. Since parents have such a big influence on the religious attitudes of young people, and their example and modeling help frame those attitudes, leaving home and going away to college would seem to be a major testing point for those attitudes. Not only is student adherence to religious practices, going to services, attending educational classes, bible study, prayer group or service/social justice events, put to the test, but other less specific tenets and moral and social codes are as well like dress, sexual preferences and activities, dietary needs, the question of right to life, women in religion and more. Without the everyday influence of parents and family and with more prevalent influences of peers, professors, other religions and with many pressing responsibilities, some that are theirs for the first time, college aged young people are put to the test in every aspect of their belief systems which most surely includes religious beliefs. Most of the institutional religions have programs and educational tools and experiences for young children and school aged students which we have discussed extensively, and have over the past ten years increased their efforts among the post-college young adult population with an eye toward vocations to the ordained or professional ministry, marriage preparation, reproductive tenets, family raising ideals, dating, ethical behavior in the workplace and service and social justice activities; most also have educational programs for young adults who want to convert to their faith, become more involved in their faith or train to become ministers in their faith. But, college aged teens and young adults, who are experiencing a vastly different set of life circumstances than any of these groups, don't fit

into those defined categories and usually fall through the cracks when institutional religions are looking at segments of their faithful and ways to connect with them. College campus ministry programs and churches or synagogues in college communities make attempts to meet the needs of this group, but most campus ministry attempts are understaffed and underfunded with some being multi-denominational, and churches and synagogues in those communities usually must first and foremost serve their own local, town faithful before attempting to serve the college community as an add on effort. Most don't succeed as well as they would like. This in essence leaves college students, except those at colleges that have the financial means or are specifically geared toward a specific religion, at a time and place in their lives when they are asked to question everything, open their minds to new ideas and different ways of thinking, learn as much as possible and change from dependant children to self functioning adults, on their own when it comes to their attitudes toward religion and spirituality.

Like most of the other segments of the religious landscape, studies are now starting to be completed about the religious lives of college students. The attempt to lump college aged teens and young adults into either the youth ministry or young adult profiles have not fit and this ever growing portion of our population is now being treated as its own entity. What would seem by popular perception to be a slam dunk, that college students become disillusioned during their time away from their families and run as fast as they can from any form of institutional religion, in fact, is not the case. Most survey work suggests something in the middle, a combination of espousal of family beliefs, attendance at least at some worship experiences, a penchant for retreat, service or other one time or semi-frequent programs and a loss of institutional memory, (or lack of institutional knowledge),

when it comes to sexual and other moral beliefs. To put it more openly, they say they are part of the group, they come out and participate occasionally, but mostly ignore the everyday rules and tenets put forth by their institutional religion.

As we have already stated, Christian Smith's research shows that teens and young adults generally follow the same patterns as their parents when it comes to religious affiliation. As they move on to their college years they, for the most part, self-identify with their old, tried and true institutional affiliation. But most studies show a slight twist to this self awareness of these students; a shift toward recognizing a more "spiritual" side of themselves and a less "religious" side of themselves. This may take the form of being open to new ideas about faith, trying new customs or foods, getting involved in meditation or yoga, or for some, experimenting with drugs that help their minds get to "a new level". To say that it is the college experience that brings this about has some merit to it but is not completely true. There seems to be some inherent reflection of their parents or families religiosity as they drift more toward a less institutional and more "spiritual" mindset. They are simply echoing a religious indifference that appears to be prevalent in most adults. As Smith points out when writing about the lax attitudes of American Catholic teens, "... it appears that the relative religious laxity of most U.S. Catholic teenagers significantly reflects the relative religious laxity of their parents." (1) As they go off to college and start to live on their own, this laxity, which most research shows is not exclusive to Catholicism, starts to sway these teens and young adults to look for ways to practice spirituality but lessen the moral and spiritual hold the institutional religions have, yet still stay in the realm of their families faith; in essence without "throwing out the baby with the bath water".

Spirituality in Higher Education: A National Study of College Students' Search for Meaning and Purpose (3) was conducted at UCLA to "Bring to light the beliefs, behaviors and attitudes of American college students". Started in 2000 and surveying different components of campus life at over 230 colleges around the country about their spiritual and religious attitudes and experiences through 2007, this study sheds more light on this age group. One of its first conclusions echoes what we have been discussing. "The study reveals that today's college students have very high levels of spiritual interest and involvement. Many are actively engaged in a spiritual quest and in exploring the meaning and purpose of life. They are also very engaged and involved in religion, reporting considerable commitment to their religious beliefs and practices." (3) What is interesting is that the report then describes a shift in attitudes and practice as these students progressed through their college years with third year students showing a dramatic drop in religious service attendance. "The data reveals demonstrable changes across three years of college. One of the most dramatic shifts occurred in religious service attendance...over half (52%) of the sample reported attending religious services frequently the year before they entered college, but less than one-third (29%) attend frequently by their junior year. Furthermore, only 9% report that their "religiousness" is much stronger since entering college, and only 13% say their spirituality is much stronger." (4) The report goes on to say that though attendance is down at religious services, the data reveals an increase in those students who self-identify that it is important for them to integrate spirituality into their lives. The shift from going to services and not integrating the meaning of the faith, which we saw in the teen years, to not going to services but looking more closely at meaning, or at least perceiving that you're looking more closely at meaning, takes place over that three year

period and, according to this study, “the students’ overall level of spirituality, as defined by the researchers, increases.” (4) This may be that students self-profess that they think about spirituality more, or that how they perceive they view the world is from a more mature or spiritual perspective.

One caution that comes up in all of the research that’s been looked at that deals with the college years is that when questioned, most respondents blur the line between spiritual and religious and sometimes they mean one while saying the other or both words mean the same thing to them. Measuring religiosity by asking questions about attendance at services and events or about prayer and devotional practices is very straight forward and easily measured by numbers but measuring spirituality seems less exact. When asked about this Alexander W. Astin a leading researcher in this field and author of the UCLA Study explains their starting point, “Spirituality has to do with the students’ search for meaning and purpose, with their values development and with their self-understanding. Spirituality is primarily an interior quality, so most of our spirituality measures have to do with values, attitudes and beliefs.” (5) (And, apparently nothing to do with religious institutions). He goes on to say that they identified categories of values and set up measuring criteria based on these that included, ‘equanimity’, ‘ethic of caring’, ‘ecumenical worldview’, ‘compassionate self-concept’, ‘spirituality’ and ‘spiritual quest’. By combining and comparing these attitudinal categories, they were able to come up with a measure for spirituality and were able to match it with the more empirical data gathered for religiosity.

By comparing the data from the method described above, the research teams was able to measure student’s level of spirituality as incoming Freshman and compare it to that of third

year students. In trying to explain the apparent contradiction between a more highly spiritual student and a less religiously practicing one, Astin seemed to think it had to do with the college experience, "It's important to realize that we don't equate religiousness with spirituality; there are students who are highly spiritual but not necessarily religious. The finding surprised us, however, because the two measures are related: Spiritual people tend to be religious and visa versa. If one declines, you'd expect the other to decline as well, but that didn't happen. We're looking for explanations of the apparent contradictions in the college experience and we've settled on two likely possibilities. One is the fact that many of these students are away from home for the first time, and we suspect that, for some students, religious observance before college is influenced by the presence of the family. The second explanation has to do with the academic demands of the college experience: A greater deal of time is invested in studies during college than before college." (5) This echoes Smith's findings on the influence of parents on young people's religious affiliations and also supports the theory that the college years are a complex experience in a person's life and provide a set of circumstances that are different than those of people of the same age that do not attend college and of the teen and young adult phase of life that the college years fall between. It also underlines the fact that this segment of the faithful is not being adequately addressed by the institutional religions and is being left to make these important, life changing decisions without their support and guidance on campus.

At the University of Texas, a study (6) was undertaken that looked at the declining religiosity of those in the "early adulthood years" which they loosely defined as the

immediately pre, post and college years. They not only looked at college students, but those in the same age group who did not attend college. They were using the assumption that one of the main reasons people of that age start to lose their religion is because of the more open minded, free to do-as one will climate on college campuses. Their research proved that to be a mistake. “Many Americans exhibit declining religiosity during early adulthood. There is no consensus about why this occurs, though longstanding assumptions suggest the secularizing effects of higher education, normative deviance and life course factors. We evaluate these effects on decreasing frequency of religious practice, diminished importance of religion and disaffiliation from religion altogether. Results...indicate that **only religious participation suffers substantial declines** in young adulthood. Contrary to expectations, emerging adults that avoid college exhibit the most extensive patterns of religious decline, undermining conventional wisdom about the secularizing effect of higher education. Marriage curbs religious decline, while cohabitation, nonmarital sex, drugs and alcohol use each accelerate diminished religiosity – especially religious participation – during early adulthood.” (7) Just like those mentioned earlier, this study also observed a decline in religious participation in this age group, but saw all other standards of religiosity and spirituality remain at a constant level except for those whose behaviors seem to contradict the tenets of their faith. This was a dilemma that others had reported on, the fact that those who are exhibiting behaviors that go against their faith tradition stay away from services and self-identify as less religious because of those behaviors and their apparent dissonance with their stated faiths belief system. If living with your significant other outside of marriage, engaging in casual sex, taking drugs and drinking are things that a person feels go against their religious beliefs, they will say that they are less religious than

they were before they started participating in these behaviors because they equate the behavior as being a sign of being non-faithful. (Which at some, most likely sub-conscious level, shows that perhaps they are actually more faith filled, or at least faith knowledgeable than most because they are reacting to a strong sense of their faith tradition realizing that they are not following the tenets and would rather self-identify as less religious than let people think that their behavior is a sign of a faithful person or their religions tenets.) As Mark Regnerous, one of the Authors of the Texas study states in an article titled, How Corrosive Is College to Religious Faith and Practice? (6), “Religiously problematic behaviors—such as drug use, excessive drinking, and non-marital sexual behavior—are also positively associated with diminished religiosity during early adulthood. They are lifestyle patterns that are not easily maintained alongside a vibrant religious faith and practice.” (6)

The fact that this University of Texas study found that only religious practices are suffering a decline in this age group seems to buffer Smith’s conclusions. We see that even though their practice of the faith declines, they are still happy to self-identify as the faith of their parents (86%) and as a religious person, (82%). That college attendance does not seem to be the culprit in diminished religiosity except for attendance, and that those who do not attend college do decline in all three measurement areas of religiosity, begs some further questioning. In fact, college life style and institutional religions lack of effort to serve this community may be as big a factor as any in this decline in practice. If the college lifestyle is fast paced, late-night, fluid and filled with chaos can an institutional religion adapt programming that can serve them “where they are”? If not, what is a student

to do? It is not in their frame of reference to seek out these services and go the extra mile to participate. If all their life they had a church very close to their home and parents who constantly reminded them and expected them to be present at services and now they have neither, they will be less likely to attend. If churches and synagogues located near campus continue to schedule their services at hours, normally weekend mornings, when college students are not apt to be awake or available to attend and gear those services to the age groups they normally serve, kids, school-aged students and adults, they will not serve the college population well. Suffice it to say, those campuses that have services on Sunday evenings, and make them young adult user friendly will tend to do better with attendance than those that don't. The other factor is that most college kids will self-identify as religious or spiritual on a survey or in a conversation with an adult but will then down play that feeling in peer groups. The attempt to seem "not too religious" is a factor as well in attendance at services. When back home with parents and family those same non-attending college students will more likely attend a service.

Another important point that this study makes is that most college students today, as opposed to in the last 30 years or so, are more apt to disengage from the intellectual rhetoric of college life and only engage in the process of learning what they need to know to pass the exam, get the degree and get a good job after graduation. In this way, their faith is never challenged and they have little reason to question the beliefs of their childhood and can simply continue to believe and identify with their chosen faith. That certainly can explain why the retention numbers are so high attitudinally while the attendance numbers suffer. As the report states, "What is not contested, then, cannot be lost. Faith simply

remains in the background of students' lives as a part of who they are, but not a part they talk about much with their peers or professors.” (7) This echoes some of Smith's conclusions about the place of religion in the lives of most teens. A further point that is made by the Texas study is that since most people of that age are so under catechized, they would hardly recognize a challenge to their faith if confronted by one; they simply do not have the institutional knowledge to sense a challenge or put up much of a fight to a challenge and most would take the same attitude they do about learning about their faith in the first place, it's not worth the time to think about it and certainly not worth fighting over. The exception is those students who are highly engaged in their faith life; these are the ones who would challenge other students on faith issues and would look for a good religious dialogue. They would also challenge Professors and Administrators on faith issues and on substance in the courses they teach and in how the College presents itself in the public marketplace. They would be the ones who led pro-life rallies and might picket the Women's Center or a visiting lecturer who was speaking on a controversial topic or a Play or Musical that was anti-religious or overtly sexual in nature that might be presented on campus. Unfortunately, they probably wouldn't be the ones leading the food drive, or the protest against the war or the genocide in Darfur; social justice issues usually aren't their top priority, matters of faith, as described above, are. They are more conservative, in the minority of their age group, but usually find each other and can engage in the behaviors that they expected to engage in while at college, that is defending their faith and trying to convert others to it.

Finally, there seems to be a movement on campuses today for more religious tolerance, the free exchange of religious ideas and dialogue and a commitment to the spiritual

development of students both in the class room and in campus life. This has led to some of the institutional religions starting to staff colleges more effectively with Campus Ministry personnel and putting money behind some of their efforts. There is a more positive attitude toward all things spiritual and most colleges now provide space for groups to meet and hold services, non-denominational service projects and meetings of ecumenically diverse religious groups which has fostered a good climate on campus to help students maintain their religious affiliations. As Harvard professor Peter J. Gomes pronounced in the *New York Times*: “There is probably more active religious life now (on campus) than there has been in 100 years.” (8)

As we touched on earlier, the main area where students today seem to have religious dissonance is around sexual issues and the use of drugs and alcohol to excess. As the Texas Study tells us, these behaviors have an adverse effect on both the perceived religiosity of the individual and attendance at services for those who participate in them as they judge themselves through the lens of the tenets of their institutional religion. Donna Freitas studies this phenomenon in her book Sex & the Soul: Juggling Sexuality, Spirituality and Religion on America’s College Campuses. (9) She asks a simple question, does sexual activity lead college aged people away from the institutional religions? “Evidence also demonstrates that America’s teens and college students are exceedingly sexually active – anywhere from 73-85%. Since most religions forbid sexual activity outside of marriage, it is difficult not to wonder whether there is a correlation between the drift of college away from traditional religion - especially in practice – and their immersion in a sexually active college culture.” (10) Freitas calls this sexually active college culture

the “hook up culture” (11). She goes on to explain that all colleges, no matter what affiliation, save Evangelical Christian schools, fall under this umbrella of “hook up culture”. In fact when she compared all college types, religiously affiliated, secular, and Evangelical Christian she found that the religiously affiliated schools were much more like secular schools and that the only campuses that avoided the “hook up culture” were Evangelical Christian schools whose culture espoused (even idolized) and upheld the quest, (sometimes to the point of self-righteousness) for purity, chastity and “saving it for marriage”.

While discussing the institutional religions ability, or lack-there-of, to pass on their faith traditions to their followers, we looked at how the previous generation, the so called baby boomers had not been given as much of an opportunity as past generations to learn their faiths tenets and that has led to them being unable to effectively pass them on to their children. We also saw that parents influence on the religious life of their children was still strong and that young people were staying loyal to their family’s faith traditions even though they were inarticulate about those traditions. This seems to be the driving force when it comes to how this phenomenon described by Freitas effects this age group. Her research shows that religion has at best a marginal effect on how college students live their sexual lives on campus and if this is the case, based on Regnerous’ research, reinforces the notion of a reason that this populations religious service attendance drops dramatically. Freitas blames what she calls, **“the inability of most religious affiliations to effectively empower youth to resist the sexual excesses of both college and hookup culture and mainstream American pop culture.”** (12) Is this part of the problem that has been

created by the lack of institutional knowledge that most teens and young adults have about their religion or is Freitas asking the major religions to do more than educate the faithful in the tenets of their faith? Even though all of the institutional religions that we have discussed here have tenets against sex outside of marriage, where do those tenets fit into their institutional hierarchy? **Can institutions that are having little success educating their faithful in the highest levels of their hierarchy of truths be expected to concentrate on these lower hierarchical tenets for this teen and young adult population?**

The apparent contradiction here has its roots in something we mentioned earlier; if young people know that sexual activity outside of marriage is against their institutional religions tenets, and they are simply ignoring this known tenet, then how are the institutional religions to be blamed for their “inability to empower youth to resist” sexual temptation? As Freitas says, “I suspect that what is appealing about “spirituality” as opposed to “religion” is precisely that it is undefined – **spirituality appears to be a symbolic label adopted to free oneself from the moral obligations and rituals of religion.**” (12) But to free one from these obligations and rituals must indicate knowledge of them to start. Is it then the case that young people who have grown up in families where religion and religious service attendance was part of their life only lack institutional knowledge of most of their faith tenets and that when it comes to tenets about sex they were paying attention, did learn and do retain that knowledge? Is it because young people might deem those discussions relevant to their everyday lives and paid attention? This would be the only way to explain the implication that young people self-identify as

“spiritual” because they want to avoid the restrictions of the sexual tenets, which they are obviously aware of, of their institutional religion. Based on the research, and my experience, I tend to agree with this sentiment.

As we look deeper into where the disconnect is between sex, and for a lesser part the excessive use of drugs and alcohol, and practicing and self-identifying as religious while on campus, we are faced with an age-old dilemma; what came first, the chicken or the egg? Is it that those who abstain from sexual activity have a good institutional knowledge of their faith and choose to abstain because of that knowledge and commitment and feel no need to pull away from practicing faith, and that those with a poor knowledge of their faith, and who are either not practicing it or are marginal practitioners are more likely to participate in these activities because of that poor knowledge and commitment, or is it that all things being equal, whether religious and practicing or not, these sexual activities will occur anyway and they themselves will be the cause of pulling people away from practicing their faith? In other words, is it that unreligious kids who only went to services because it was a family tradition, but had no real commitment to it are also the ones, because of that lack of commitment to engage in these sexual behaviors, and their presence at religious services would have dropped anyway because they were away from those family traditions? In their highly enlightening study of religion and sexual attitudes of college students (13) Henry D. Beckwith and Jennifer Ann Morrow found that the higher a person’s religious belief is measured, the less likely they were to participate in these activities. “Pluhar and colleagues (1998) examined the relationship between religiosity and sexual attitudes and behavior of college students. Results showed that participants who were considered as most

religious and claimed that their religious beliefs had guided their sexual behavior were more likely to hold conservative attitudes regarding premarital sex, use abstinence or withdrawal as a means of contraception use, and were the least likely to have had sexual intercourse. Other studies illustrating this relationship in college students have shown that low religiosity will predict greater sexually permissive attitudes (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1987a; Strouse & Buerkel-Rothfuss, 1987), less conventional values, (McLaughlin, Chen, Greenberger, & Biermeier, 1997), and less traditional values (Young, 1986) or roles (Huffman, Chang, Rausch, & Schaffer, 1994) regarding sex or sexual behavior. In summary, it is evident that the religiosity of an individual is significantly related to predicting or shaping one's sexual behavior, attitudes, or experiences.” (13) This sentiment is echoed by a 2002 study at Bowling Green State University completed by Nicole A. Murray–Swank and her colleagues who found that, “...religiousness inhibits premarital sexuality. Namely, greater general religiousness (i.e., church attendance, frequency of personal prayer, self-report religiousness and spirituality) was linked to lower frequency of sexual activity across the entire sample.” (14) The twist is that this study found that when sex was linked to sacredness, a measure that goes beyond the realm of religiosity, college students who self-identify as highly religious and also reported being in love actually participated in sexual behavior at a higher level. “... we found that college students involved in sexually active, loving relationships engaged in more frequent sexual intercourse as their perceptions of the sacredness of their sexual activity increased.” (14) In fact, throughout all levels of the population, including college aged young adults, this notion of “sanctified sex” skewed the numbers that otherwise consistently linked higher religiosity to lower sexual activities. Whether in a marriage or in a pre-marital relationship,

the concept that God looked kindly upon two people sharing their bodies in a loving, mutually respectful manner led to an increase in activity and perceived pleasure. “Sex and the sacred can not only coexist, but sexual union, in the context of love and consent, can be an avenue of spiritual expression and experience. We are now beginning to untangle the complex relationships between religion, spirituality, and sexual functioning.” (14)

As we look at this more closely we see that those young people who feel like they are more religious, (and self-identify as), and have a strong knowledge of that religion will act in a way that is different than those who don't; their faith has a bearing on how they act in their everyday life. Regnerous links this pattern to not only specific religions, but to any faith as long as it is a strong faith, “What really matters is not which religion teenagers identify with but how strongly they identify. After controlling for all factors (family satisfaction, popularity, income) religion matters much less than religiosity.” (7) Those who take their faith seriously, self-identify it as ‘highly important’ in their lives, (master hierarchy), and “walk-the walk”, will try to find like-minded people and live out their faith, even if it is at odds with those around them, and will flourish within their institutional religion. As Hanna Rosin states in her review of Regnerous’ work, “Among the mass of typically promiscuous teenagers in the book, one group stands out: the 16 percent of American teens who describe religion as “extremely important” in their lives. ... they mean it. One study found that ...the ideal conditions are a group ... who form a self-conscious minority that perceives itself as special, even embattled.” (15) Being the minority actually helps these young people solidify their religious values by putting them on the defensive. They must learn more about the tenets and philosophies of their faith and be able to

articulate them well when discussing them with others. It becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, that is, their strong religiosity causes them to want to become even stronger so not only can they be sure of what it is they believe, but that they can be sure that what they are passing on to peers is as authentic (16) a version of the faith as they can come by. We have already discussed how unauthentic a version of faith is passed down by most parents to their children and generally by this past generation to the newest one, so these young people truly want to interpret and explain what they believe in as authentically a way as they can. The most visible way of doing this for many of these young adults is through their sexual practices. They can, by their example of chastity in the most extreme cases, and lower incidence of sexual activity for most, show others in a tangible way, what they believe. Some will declare it publicly through programs like “True Love Waits”, wear a “promise” ring like the Jonas Brothers (17) do, yet others in conversations in peer groups or in editorials to campus newspapers or on their “Facebook” page or one on one with friends or potential dating partners, but this public stance in the sexual arena hits young adults where they are most intent yet fragile and allows those who wish to make a faith stand for all to see do so. The bonus being that those young people who do this will, in most cases, develop life skills that will help them fare better than their peers in most areas of life. The only exception is if you fall in love, then, in some cases, highly religious college students turn their fervor around, and sex with the person one is in love with becomes an expression of more than just deep faith, it becomes an expression of the sacred.

As we can see by our discussion, the lives of this generation are impacted by how the faith of their families is passed on to them. Religion passed on lovingly and authentically,

(18) (statistically), diminishes adverse behavior and makes a positive difference in children as they grow into young adulthood and move into the college years.

Chapter 6

Having toiled through these pages looking at just how the institutional religions came to this place where their influence on the everyday lives of their faithful, and in particular their teen and young adult faithful, has waned, we see that the studies all seem to point to a consistent issue, the ability to pass on the authentic faith (18) and have it take hold in the lives of the faithful. What seems to magnify this issue is that it has also been consistently shown that those families that practice their faith do pass it on to their children. In every study we have looked at, a high percentage of young people follow the faith of their parents and take it with them into their young adult years. What's more, those families who passed on an authentic faith, who do learn the tenets, buy into the institutional master hierarchy, participate in the communal aspect, perform service to the community and try to live it in their everyday life, have raised kids who, as young adults, seem to do better in life than their peers that don't have a strong religiosity.

Whether Protestant, Jewish, Catholic or any other religion, there is an inherent inability of the institutional religions to effectively pass on their faith tenets, in their fullness, to a faithful who don't necessarily want to be burdened by them or live up to their demands. In some cases it seems that they have been learned and somewhat enculturated only to be ignored or misused, while in other cases the true tenets have been passed over for a more 'gentle' version of the faith and still in other cases they have been passed on as what was thought as the correct version of the faith but in reality do not resemble their faith in the slightest.. What this has produced is a religious landscape that statistically is not far

removed from past generations but one that describes what these “faithful” believe in as a far cry from what the religions institutionally stand for and teach. As Smith observes, “... a significant part of Christianity ... is actually only tenuously Christian in any sense that is seriously connected to the actual historical Christian tradition.” (1) This has led to a more apparent separation between the most strongly, some would call conservative, religious and the rest. Clergy especially seem to be more apt to proclaim the fullness of the faith to their congregants and this has illuminated the widened divide between what they would call the faith and what people in the pews believe is the faith. In a time when Protestant “Super Churches” are growing in record numbers, the Catholic Church is creating documents about the growing role of the Laity in the running of the Church, and people everywhere are declaring their belief in God and religious and spiritual things in record numbers, the gulf between what official institutional religion declare as tenets and what their followers believe are two totally different things. This begs the question, which we stated earlier, should the institutional religions change or put less emphasis on their true belief systems to help close the divide or should a more intensive effort be made to educate their faithful about what the beliefs and practices of the faith are and how that should translate into the actions of their everyday lives? Let’s look to see if the institutions, specifically the Catholic Church, are in a position to change or compromise their belief systems, then see how they can do a better job at presenting their tenets so that more of their members can learn them, accept them and live them or as the old Baltimore Catechism stated, “... know God, love God and serve God”?

This paper so far has **discussed several institutional religions in America which has allowed us to frame where Catholicism stands among them**; in so doing we can now look to see how the Church can move forward into this new Century. The Catholic Church is the only of these institutions that is truly one organization. From the Pope to the people in the pews, the Catholic Church is organized as a single faith, with all called to serve the same creed and, as we spoke of earlier, master hierarchy. Catholics make up about 23% of America's religious affiliation. Though the Protestant churches make up about 52% of America's religious affiliation, they are broken into many different congregations, (2) with the largest being Baptists who make up 17.3%. If we lump (for lack of a better word) the Mormon faith into the Protestant category, as most scholars do, then the third largest is Judaism with 1.5% (though there are seven Protestant congregations with a higher affiliation percentage). To look at the Protestant congregations or as discussed earlier, Judaism as one institution is impossible, so as we consider how the Church can alter the way its catechizes its faithful, remember we are looking at the largest (percentage wise) single religious institution we have.

Self image goes a long way in helping a person decide how they are perceived in the world. Confidence in how well they know themselves, what they know about the world around them, and how they are perceived in the world goes a long way in helping them decide what they will reveal about themselves and how they will present that to those they encounter. It is the same with an institution, how well an institution perceives itself will go a long way in how they present themselves to the world. The Nike "swoosh" is a modern examples of how this works. Nike commercials, which is the way they present themselves

to the public, are very simplistic and usually say nothing about their products; it is simply a random sample of a perceived lifestyle that Nike feels their customers would like to live which ends with the “swoosh” appearing on screen; simple but forceful. Nike’s self-image is so clear and their confidence so high in how the world perceives them that they don’t have to use words in telling people who they are, they just use the “swoosh”. Other companies, like McDonald’s, Wal-Mart, Starbucks and Microsoft, have used a similar strategy to get their message across; we know who we are, we know you know who we are, come on in and buy our stuff. There are several reasons why this strategy works for these institutions; the main being that the public perceives that they need this product to make their lives better, (easier, safer, more profitable, etc.), the product is superior to others, and the institution can be trusted and is looking out for the best interest of the customer. Whether any of that is true can only be tested over time, but that the perception that these things are true is there makes these institutions successful. It is only when other things start to occur, when the public starts to perceive that they don’t really “need” that product, or maybe that there are others out there that are just as good, or that maybe we can’t trust this company and they are really only out for their own best interest, that people start to turn away and sales start to diminish. In Nike’s case it was when it was reported that their products were made by under paid child laborers in China; for McDonald’s it was competition, (Wendy’s, Burger King, Subway, etc.) and the knowledge that their meals were not really healthy and that kids were becoming obese from eating too much fast-food; for Wal-Mart there was also an issue about who was producing some of their products and an issue about how they treated their own employees and handled their health insurance issues; for Starbucks it was competition and over pricing and for Microsoft it was the fact

that they became a monopoly and used hard handed tactics to try and eliminate any competition that arose. All of these issues led to the diminishing of these institutions public image, a loss of business, (profit), and the lessening of their influence on the lives of their former adherents. We could chronicle the hold that the tobacco companies had and still have on peoples lives and how what were once beloved corporate entities have become reviled corporate villains because they did not live up to the publics perceived trust. Today banks, mortgage companies, insurance companies, Wall St. brokers, and to many, the federal government have become villains for the way they have “duped” or mistreated the American public. These once great institutions are all under public scrutiny for sins against the public and the watchful eye of America is looking closely at all big institutions to see if they will be next. Our institutions are being held to what the public perceives as a “higher calling”, and some are not holding up well under the scrutiny.

As the above scrutiny has damaged some institutions credibility in the public arena it has also forced these companies to change the way they do business. Many have addressed the specific issues that put them at odds with public perception and have found their way back into good standing with their customers. Others have changed mission statements, corporate structures and symbols to either disassociate themselves with their own past or to show that they have truly changed, some to success and others to mixed results. Still others have steadfastly remained who they are and have continued to suffer losses in employees, profits, public perception and market viability. These companies believe in their products, believe in their usefulness to the public and believe they are good corporate neighbors yet the public has not agreed. Look at companies like the big auto makers, in some sense the

tobacco companies, some of the old great restaurant and department store chains like Howard Johnson's and Sears, all have remained steadfast in their business plan and have suffered for it. In these cases the ability to see the market and change accordingly in a timely fashion or to avoid scandal and lose public trust, has eluded them. Their company self-image has suffered and their master hierarchy doesn't seem to be resonating with the public. They have let the world around them change without changing with it and have suffered the consequences of that inaction; lower public acceptance and lower participation in their products and services. As we have shown in this thesis, this is similar to what has occurred in this country to religious institutions and specifically the Catholic Church. The change in perception after Vatican II coupled with changes in the mores of our society and topped off by the loss of public trust after the clergy sex scandals of the late 1990's have put the Church in a position similar to the businesses we have described here, and the Church has been slow to react to this change. What is different about the two examples is that these corporate entities are in business to make a profit while the Church and other institutional religions claim to hold the truth about creation, life and death, heaven and hell, and God above.

The Catholic Church asks for obedience to the faith and guarantees its truth, "To obey in faith is to submit freely to the word that has been heard, because its truth is guaranteed by God, who is Truth itself." (3) This revelation has been the cornerstone of the institutional Church for two-thousand years. Everything else it proclaims, every tenet it lays out, all of its creedal declarations, its social justice stances and public and private exhortations have their foundation in this claim; we proclaim the truth revealed to us by

God! Where do you go from there? While corporate institutions can change their image, mission statements and public persona based on their own forecasting, market changes, availability of natural resources and a myriad of other reasons, because they have the latitude and willingness to do so, and truly have only a claim to profit, the Church's claim to truth holds them to be consistent with their message and with their faith tenets because changing the truth of any tenet throws all tenets of the faith up for discussion and diminishes the Church's authority by diminishing the legitimacy of its laws and tenets and thereby peoples obligation to follow them. "The Church cannot change her answer because this answer is true It is true because the Catholic Church, instituted by Christ to show men a secure way to eternal life, could not have so wrongly erred during all those centuries of history.... The Church could not have erred ... even through one century, by imposing under serious obligation very grave burdens in the name of Jesus Christ, if Jesus Christ did not actually impose those burdens.... If the Church could err in such a way ... the faithful could not put their trust in the Magisterium's presentation of moral teaching..."

(4) Their only avenue is to change **the way** they present this message of truth to their followers and to the world. As a further comparison, the major Protestant congregations fall into the same category; they have claims to biblical truths as well, like the Creation Story, the Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes, the Gospel's and others. These claims hold them to a similar standard as the Church, a higher standard than the public is holding corporations to. As the Hebrew National (hot dogs) commercial of old stated, "We're Kosher, we're held to a higher standard". Think about the scandal that would occur if the Catholic Church was to declare that they had been wrong all of these years and that their tenets were not based on the truth but on a perceived 'best practices' for living a good life

model. This, conceivably, would satisfy those who think that religious affiliation among some Christians has suffered because of their claims of ultimate truth in a world where perception is reality and relativism is prevalent at all levels of education, government and many religious circles. Even the Ecumenical movement that the Christian faiths are encouraging amongst themselves draws them into discussions about limiting truth claims of one faith above another and therefore, the Church can only go so far before they must be halted. The premise that the Church can compromise its belief system, its institutional master hierarchy, is false and can not be seriously considered here. Though the public responded well when they saw change in corporate institutions that was spurred by public displeasure and might do the same if they saw a religious institution respond in a similar fashion, it is not a viable option for the Catholic Church or for that matter their Protestant brethren. In my opinion, the only viable road that the Church can take to regain their prominent position in the lives of their faithful is to better educate them in their faith beliefs and match those beliefs to the hopes and struggles they face in their everyday lives in this place, at this time. To become influential again the Church must prove their relevance in peoples lives in today's world.

Trying to make the Church more relevant in today's world is not an easy task, especially here in America. We are a nation of abundance and people who have most everything they need don't need God, at least not in their everyday lives. What they are looking for is a watcher, someone who can protect them, help them when they are in need, help them to make good things happen in their lives and be there to turn to when all else has failed. Smith touched on this phenomenon and came up with a very succinct label for it,

“moralistic therapeutic deism”. (5) This description concretizes the level of commitment that most believers of the major faiths have and is the main obstacle that institutional religions, in this case Catholicism, must overcome before education and proving their relevance will have a chance to succeed. In the absence of a strong religious education and a strong reason to commit to their tenets, Smith’s sees teens and young adults opting for this; “... it appears that only a minority of U.S. teenagers are naturally absorbing ... the traditional substantive content and character of the religious traditions to which they claim to belong. For, it appears to us, another popular religious faith, Moralistic Therapeutic Deism, is colonizing many historical religious traditions and ... converting believers in the old faiths to its alternative religious vision of divinely underwritten personal happiness and interpersonal niceness.” (6) If young people today, as we have reported, follow in the footsteps of their families when it comes to identifying their religious affiliation, in this case as Catholic, but then adopt beliefs in a “faith system” that unbeknownst to them is not that of the Church at all, but one passed on to them by their family and enculturated into them through their interaction in our modern society, they don’t know that what they believe is not Catholic and will still self-identify as “religious” and as Catholic. They believe that because they have gone to Mass or religious education classes, participated in service projects and youth group, and they and their families call themselves Catholic, that they are following the tenets of the faith. It is simply not true and because those who practice this version of the faith still call themselves Catholic, it skews how the rest of society views Catholicism as well. This brings us back to the need for education and a sense of relevance in people’s lives, because if young people think they know enough about their faith to be a “good Catholic” and that it is relevant and does make a difference in their

lives, as they now believe it, then they see no reason to learn more, (even though they would never claim to know their religious tenets well, they know enough), or to commit more of their everyday lives to exploring ways to live out these tenets more fully. They are, in their own minds, already getting enough out of the religion for their own needs. **The first order of business for the Church is to convince their faithful that true Catholicism goes much deeper than what they are practicing and that conversion needs to be an ongoing process in their lives** and that if they undertake this they will live more fulfilling and ultimately happier, safer and more secure lives. Only after this occurs can education take hold because only then will people feel they are learning something that will change their lives.

This call to conversion may sound similar to being “born again”, a notion that dates back to Colonial times that became popular again at the end of the last Century. Christians became born again when they accepted Jesus as their personal savior. The famous bible quote *John 3:16* (7) was the most publicized passage and a call to be born again; when a Christian accepted this into their heart, they were born again in Christ and “saved” from their sins and would live in everlasting life with God in heaven; nothing more is necessary, just belief that you are saved. This is not what we are talking about here. Conversion in the Catholic sense centers on a growing relationship with God and action in everyday life, consistently over the course of a lifetime. This is not a moment in time, a lightning bolt like the one experienced by Saul, (soon to be Paul), on the road to Damascus (8); this is a life long pursuit of salvation through a continued call to conversion. Through a life of

prayer, participation in the Sacraments, good works and piety, a Catholic believes that they will one day arrive in heaven to spend eternity with God, the angels and saints.

Chapter 7

The Church has methods to help people begin again a life of continued conversion; a reawakening so to speak, that will put them back on the road to living a Christian lifestyle. It centers on putting Christ first in all that we do by using this tripod approach.

Encounter

In classic Catholic Youth Ministry, as propagated by the Catholic Bishops and the professional youth ministry community in this country, the best way that parishes have to evangelize their teens is to have them raised by committed, educated parents, who love and practice the authentic Catholic faith and pass it on in its fullness to their children; through a supportive parish community that includes solidly grounded religious education with a strong commitment to the Sacraments that models Christian values and helps raise the child in the faith, (it takes a village); that is served by Priests who are involved and engaged in parish life, preach the truth of the Gospels from the pulpit in a way that touches peoples lives, where they are, and moves them toward continued conversion; dedicated Lay ministerial professionals who are formed, trained and compensated by a grateful Church; and Lay volunteer ministers who give of their time and talents to keep the parish running and engage it with the surrounding community. Unfortunately, these types of parishes are far and few between. (1) In the absence of all these elements, the next best tool that parishes may turn to is the Encounter Retreat Weekend.

The Encounter Retreat follows a Thursday/Friday-Sunday schedule and uses the modeling of the Paschal Mystery format of “dying to self and rising to new life in Jesus”. The key ingredient is to show young people that they are loved, by God, their families and the community around them, and then ask them to respond to that love by teaching them the process of conversion and showing them the benefits of a life spent continually looking to serve God and Church first. The retreats profess a ‘tripod’ approach of **study, prayer and action** to achieve this new life. The fourth day, which is the term used for post-retreat life, will be difficult, but if one stays the course and studies the faith, prays for God’s will to be done in their lives and lives the faith, day by day, they can be happier and more fulfilled. These can be very emotional weekends for the young people as they, many for the first time, take a look at how they are living their lives and how it differs from what their faith is calling them to. Though not heavy on catechesis, they touch on specific faith tenets and ways to self analyze how one fares against these tenets in their own lives and then ways to look to God and Church to help steer one back in the right direction and move forward, in Christ and community, toward a different, better way to live. Also, the adults who work in these programs with the young people walk with them and experience some of the same feelings the teens do and this moves them toward conversion as well. These retreat programs go by different names like TEC, (Teens Encounter Christ), Kairos, (a Jesuit run program), Emmaus, (from the Gospel story of the disciples meeting Jesus on the road to Emmaus and their eyes being opened to him in their lives), Search, (searching for Christ in one’s life), Day by Day Agape or DDA, (Agape being the Greek word for the love God has for humanity and Day by Day, from the like titled song from the musical

Godspell), ACTS, Journey and others. They are sometimes parish exclusive, but mostly are ‘hub’ programs, which invite teens and young adults from many parishes and other programs to participate at a location that acts as the hub of a wheel bringing all the “spokes” together. The benefit of the ‘hub’ method is that it gets participants out of the tried and true roles they play in their local parish or community, whether good or bad, and allows them to become something new and different. So for instance chubby Chuck can become funny, good singing, introspective Charles, or smart but nerdy Pam can become good listening, always fun to be around Pam. Young people can come out of their old selves and into their new selves, a transformation, dying and rising to new life.

There are pitfalls to Encounter Retreats for teens and young adults that must be acknowledged and carefully monitored so that this experience does not prove to ultimately pull people away from their faith. One is that these communities become myopic; that is to say that they can start to believe that they do Church better than the parish does and that they are the only place where true Catholicism is available in the community. They can pull people away from the regular church services and activities and create a “mini-church” within a church or parish. In parish based programs you may see this when Emmaus groups plan their Mass or activities at times when the community has other events and encourages their group to attend their own events instead of community events or when a group of adults approaches the Pastor, or Religious Education Director, Youth Minister or Music Director and demands changes to suit their group because they are doing a better job than the rest of the community in catechizing the teens. This is short sighted thinking and will lead to division and ultimately drive people away. Another pitfall occurs in ‘hub’

programs when young people and adults stop attending their own parish's services and youth ministry programs and do everything with the 'hub' group. They literally disappear from the parish and become Encounter Retreat Program "groupies". Both the parish and the Encounter Retreat program leadership must take safeguards to prevent these things from occurring.

What does work is the witness that these young people and adults provide to their local church. When parents see that their children are "different" and when the rest of the parish sees "their kids" start to make a concrete difference in the community around them, change starts to occur. Sometimes it is slow because there is a lot of resistance to change in parishes by those who hold the power and feel that they are already doing a good job and that change is unnecessary, but with intelligent, mature dialogue, positive feedback and reinforcement, and inclusion of all pertinent parties in the discussion and decision making, change can come and parishes can start to move their faithful into a new life in Christ. Directors of Religious Education will start to recruit and train more teens to work with the younger kids and add life and spirit to their programs. These trained teens will work with other teens to help them develop leadership skills, learn more about their faith and get involved in community projects and events. These "peer ministers" can help change the culture for teens who worship in their parish. Pastors and Priests will start to prepare better sermons and homilies because they will be addressing a more interested congregation, and participation by the congregation, starting with Mass attendance, continuing to more singing and reciting of communal prayers, and larger turnouts at other parish functions, will give the community a more enthusiastic worship experience and more vibrant

experience of their faith which will lend itself to a more Christian attitude as they go off into their everyday lives.

Does it sound hokey? Maybe, but I've seen it work and studies (2) on effective practices in parishes have shown that participation by youth in retreats and continuing education helps change the culture and invigorate parish life.

This Encounter Retreat model works in adult populations as well, though it is much harder to get an adult to take that leap of faith and set time away in their lives to attend a retreat. The busyness of life will always take precedent and adults need more encouragement and enticement to take time to attend something that sounds like a self-help program. While teens and young adults will sometimes attend a retreat as a social function, to be with others that they like or respect, adults need a more compelling reason to do so. They want to know how this will help them in their everyday life and won't look on it as a weekend away with friends but more as an opportunity to rethink their priorities; this is a much harder step for adults to take. The most popular version of adult Encounter Retreat is the Cursillo movement, which some of those youth and young adult retreats we have been describing have been modeled after and dubbed "Cursillo for kids" due to the name recognition and success of this program. "The full name is Cursillo de Cristiandad, meaning 'Short course in Christianity.' The Cursillo movement started in Spain in 1949, under its founder Bishop Juan Hervas. The Cursillo gives those who make it a new understanding of basic Christian truths and the desire to serve the Church. From Thursday evening to Sunday evening, priests and lay people live and work together to gain a deep, permanent, living awareness of the treasure and responsibility of their faith...they leave

full of joyful enthusiasm as brothers and sisters in Christ, determined to extend the kingdom of Christ.” (3) The goal of this retreat is to spark that call to conversion that will start to change a person’s religious outlook.

Many college campus ministry programs offer encounter retreats for their students. Some are denominationally focused, but most are ecumenical retreats with the conversion to Christ and the particular religion one follows as the goal. Whether it is Cursillo for College, or TEC, (Twenties Encounter Christ), or an age specific version of one of the other teen encounter retreats, these programs are effective and help focus participants on the authentic Christian faith and how to live it in their everyday lives. Though I have found no specific study that focuses on this phenomenon in the lives of college students, I have seen it work, and in conversations with colleagues around the country at national meetings and conferences, have heard wonderful stories about the effectiveness of these programs in the lives of college students.

In advocating Encounter Retreat type programs to spark conversion in our Catholic parishes I realize the pitfalls. Though many might, with an increased effort by Catholic leadership to encourage it, agree to attend a weekend retreat, the majority would probably find an excuse as to why they could not participate in such programs. What parishes can do is **find ways to incorporate this call to conversion into every aspect of their operation.** All parish functions and correspondences must include a call to conversion and **examples of concrete ways** that people can start to practice this in their everyday lives, in the places they live and work, amongst the people in their community. Parishes and

Dioceses should specifically target parents of participants in their religious education and Sacrament programs and Catholic schools so that they can learn the authentic faith to pass on to their children. This conversion must begin to take place and it must be diligently led and fostered by the leadership in the Catholic Church in America.

Study

This leads us back to the problem we have identified through out this work, the inability of the Catholic Church to catechize their followers and the problems that follow when parishes lack a well educated congregation. If conversion is the spark that will lead people to want to learn more about their faith, the Catholic parishes, school, ministries and movements must be ready with a well functioning education system containing these elements: **authentic content and sound methodology; presented in formats that are user friendly and using all available modern delivery systems; age appropriate and doctrinally sound; in a variety of times, places and circumstances to meet the varied needs of the congregations; delivered by well trained and enthusiastic teachers; with opportunities available for students to try on and try out what they have been taught so that their knowledge can be experienced and lead them to life long change. This life long change in those who participate, in turn, will spark change in others through the witness of those changed, so that the fruits of this education system will spark conversion in others and lead them directly to participate in the system.** The question that needs to be answered is how can the Church provide the level of education that is

needed so that all those who seek to study the faith have opportunities to be effectively catechized?

The Catholic Church must rekindle its successful Catholic School model and reinvigorate its Parish Religious Education Programs. The good news for Catholics is that all the ingredients are present today to rekindle and reinvigorate their education programs. There has been much research completed on the Catholic population as a whole which has led many to re-think how education is done. The official Church in America has taken this research into account and the USCCB has issued documents over the last fifteen years that have laid the groundwork for a renewal in Catholic education in this country for all age groups and constituencies. The new research that has been completed since some of these Church documents have been written has been incorporated into, and in some cases supplemented nicely, these “best-practices” type documents. The reality is that the Church in America has the concepts and practices, the “how to” part of the equation ready to go.

Financially there are issues to overcome, especially in the cities where there has been a decrease in the number of families who attend many formerly large parishes and schools and some of these buildings have fallen in to disrepair. The Catholic population in some areas has moved to the suburbs where there is a lack of school and worship space and the reality of building new parishes and schools with the glut of older ones pressing Dioceses financially seems daunting. Many Dioceses have begun to look to more affluent communities to “partner” with or “adopt” these inner city schools and parishes and help them financially to maintain their buildings, pay their teachers and provide tuition

assistance for needy children. This has helped in some areas but more needs to be done to make sure this Catholic education system can survive and thrive financially. Many school systems have created separate development offices to raise money specifically earmarked for schools and religious education programs and many schools are forming Alumni Associations that are asking former students, now in the work force, to invest in the schools that helped them to “get where they are today” by giving money to fund drives, participating in golf tournaments and “Homecoming” festivities or setting up and funding tuition scholarships in their names or the names of loved ones. Some schools have gone as far as asking alumni to remember the school in their last will and testament! These efforts have made a difference and if the Church can find new, unique ways to raise money and can continue to update its buildings, provide adequate pay for their teachers and tuition assistants for those who need it, the education system can flourish.

If the Church has the concepts and practices ready to go and is taking positive steps in creating sound financial backing to allow schools and religious education programs to grow, then what they now need is the enthusiastic, full-fledged commitment of the faithful, in spirit and in presence. If the faithful would commit their time, by attending classes and workshops, sending their children to Catholic schools and parish programs, witnessing the faith in their family setting, praying for its success; and their money, by making a financial commitment to these programs both locally and in places that need their help the most, it would jump start progress even faster. If conversion is the tool to do this **then those who are already converted must take the lead and start this ball rolling.** If those who are ready will step forward, then little by little they will inspire more to join their ranks and as

the ranks grow, more schools and parishes will be made viable and the Catholic Church in America will be ready to educate their faithful.

Let's now look at the specific elements of a well functioning education system to see what this readiness looks like and see how an enthusiastic faithful can make it come alive in their schools and parishes.

Authentic Content and sound Methodology: The English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* for the United States of America, (CCC), was presented to the faithful by the United States Catholic Conference in 1994. Pope John Paul II, who authorized its publication, called it, "... a statement of the Church's faith and of Catholic doctrine, attested to or illumined by Sacred Scripture, the Apostolic Tradition, and the Church's Magisterium. I declare it to be a sure norm for teaching the faith and thus a valid and legitimate instrument ..." (4), and it states that its aim is at, "presenting an organic synthesis of the essential and fundamental contents of Catholic doctrine, as regards both faith and morals ... (and) is intended primarily for those responsible for catechesis ... as an instrument in fulfilling their responsibility of teaching the People of God." (5) This is the authentic content of the Catholic faith and it is laid out in a format that can be used as a teaching tool for all of the faithful. There are always other, supplemental, sources to use to help pass on the faith, things like secular sources that illumine the teachings of the Church, other Church documents on specific issues, writings of saints or theologians, the Bible and its rich cache of stories and proclamations, but the Catechism brings all of these together and is the ultimate source of Catholic teaching and tradition.

The *National Directory of Catechesis*, (NDC), approved by the U.S. Bishop's in 2003, (which we introduced earlier) is the U.S. version of the *General Directory of Catechesis*, (GDC), approved by the Vatican in 1998, and is the guideline for passing on the Catholic faith in America. This framework for Catechesis, which Pope John Paul II defined as, “*an education in the faith* of children, young people and adults which includes especially the teaching of Christian doctrine imparted, generally speaking, in an organic and systematic way, with a view to initiating the hearers into the fullness of Christian life.” (6), gives Church leaders all of the tools they need to build a comprehensive education program that can pass on the faith to all ages. The NDC describes itself as having “three basic purposes that are aimed at the orientation and general planning of catechetical activity in this country: 1. To provide those fundamental theological and pastoral principles drawn from the Church's Magisterium and apply them to the pastoral activity of catechesis. 2. To offer guidelines for the application of those fundamental theological and pastoral principles in this country in order to continue a renewal of catechesis. 3. To set forth the nature, purpose, object, tasks, basic content, and various methodologies of catechesis.” (7) As we can see, it is all there, institutionally backed and sound content through the Catechism, and institutionally backed and sound methodology through the NDC. The USCCB has also taken this a step further by issuing age appropriate catechetical and ministerial guidelines for specific segments of its population. Their statement *In support of Catechetical Ministry* was released in June of 2000 and shows renewed support for that ministry in the Church of America, *Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us: A Pastoral Plan for Adult Faith Formation in America*, (1999), *Sons and Daughters of the Light: A Pastoral Plan for*

Ministry with Young Adults, (1996), A Letter to College Students From the Catholic Bishops of the United States, (1996), Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry, (1997) (8) and exhortations aimed at other, specific segments of their faithful, have helped Church leaders clarify their vision on how to minister to these areas of their population. By building their educational efforts on this solid foundation the Church has put itself in a strong position to set in motion a renewal of catechesis in America.

The effort now must be to translate the content and methodology, so clearly laid out in these official documents, to the text books and materials produced by Catholic publishers and text book authors, which will be used to teach the faithful, and to train teachers to pass it along to the segment of the Catholic population that they are teaching.

User friendly, age appropriate and doctrinally sound presentation: This is an area where all the tools seem to be in place, but problems have arisen. Catholic publishers have done a wonderful job of presenting the Catechism in unique, user-friendly formats that for the most part are age appropriate; the problem seems to be in incorporating the suggestions, (demands?), of Bishops who are looking for more complete renderings of the catechism in every series produced. This conformity issue has been a struggle for many publishers in all age groups, but especially in the area of high school catechesis where only 26 texts and 5 series presented have earned a conformity status. (9) The problem was outlined in an article from Catholic World News reporting on the inadequacy of all texts circa 1997 and the Bishop's discussion on the problems with high school textbooks at the November 2003 USCCB meeting. After the 1993 publishing of the CCC, the U.S. Bishops reviewed all catechetical texts as to conformity to the Catechism. "After reviewing texts for a year, the

committee ... found that catechetical texts were severely deficient in 10 areas: • the Trinity and the Trinitarian structure of Catholic beliefs and teachings; • the centrality of Christ in salvation history and his divinity; • the ecclesial context of Catholic beliefs and magisterial teachings; • a distinctively Christian anthropology; • God 's initiative in the world with a corresponding overemphasis on human action; • the transforming effects of grace; • presentation of the sacraments; • original sin and sin in general; • the Christian moral life; • eschatology... in other words, catechetical texts were not handing on the Catholic faith as it has been known over the course of 2,000 years. That report was issued in 1997.” (10) The report seemed to spark a revival by publishers who made a more conscious effort to conform to the new standards set by the Bishops for their elementary school series; but when their updated high school series were reviewed starting in the early 2000’s the same problems were being identified and, much to the chagrin of the Bishops, these same publishers were now being slow to make changes and move in the directions that the Bishops wanted them to move. “Publishers who provide catechetical material for grade-school use, reported Archbishop John Myers of Newark, have been ‘quite cooperative and are anxious to be found in conformity’ since many dioceses are strict about what texts are used in their schools and religious-education programs. But “there has been more difficulty in getting publishers of high school series and high school texts on the same wavelength as the committee,” he added. (10) This led to the USCCB adopting stricter guidelines, published in July of 2008, for high school catechesis, including what texts could be used. The document, titled "Doctrinal Elements of a Curriculum Framework for the Development of Catechetical Materials for People of High School Age," (11) describes what elements of faith should be taught in each course. These new guidelines are for all high school

religious education including both school and parish based sacramental, classroom and ministry style programs and are an effort to put everyone from principals, teachers, clergy, catechists, youth ministers, and especially publishers in the correct frame of mind when setting up their programs. This issue has been part of the problem the institutional Church has had in passing on its authentic teachings to the faithful and has helped lead to some of the confusion that is out there and to the weakening of commitment to the tenets of the faith that we have discussed throughout this work. This will continue to be an area that the institutional Church will keep an eye on and their diligence to this matter and the continued clarification of content and methodology in these texts and materials will go a long way in solving this portion of the problem we are facing.

Having discussed the problem of incomplete or inaccurate text books and materials that has hindered religious education in this country let's turn to those programs that seem to be making a positive impact in this area.

In a variety of times, places and circumstances to meet the varied needs of the congregations: One of the big catch phrases in ministry to youth and young adults is “to meet them where they are”, meaning that the Church cannot sit back and wait for this segment of their population to come to them, but that there needs to be an ongoing effort to pass on the faith at times and in places that are not of the norm. The NDC has dedicated its Chapter 7 to “Catechizing the People of God in Diverse Settings” which discusses this issue. Those programs that offer study and ministry opportunities at times when people are more likely available, in places that they can or will go to, and in ways that speak to them

where they are in their lives, will be more successful. That is why youth ministry, high school and college campus ministry and young adult ministry has sparked such a wonderful renewal in attendance at Church services and participation in the life of the Church in this age group. As Smith points out, “religious congregations that offer teenagers organized youth group -- particularly those with full-time, paid, adult youth group leaders – seem to make a significant difference in attracting teens to attend congregational religious services.” (12)

All of these ministries include a component of Catechesis and it has been argued by some that in reality Catechesis, in its fullness, is what all these ministries are about; finding ways to connect with a certain segment of the population so as to pass along the authentic faith of the institution. There are many organizations that have centered their ministry around these specific age groups: *Young Life* is an ecumenical movement that brings young people from all faiths together to talk about the Bible; *Youth 2000* is an Encounter Retreat based program that aims at high school youth; *Life Teen* is a nationally programmed, parish based youth ministry that has been quite successful, especially in the south and southwest; *Campus Crusade for Christ*, *Hillel*, and *Newman Clubs and Centers* are all leading college students back to church or synagogue; *Theology on Tap* is a program aimed at Catholic young adults and features speakers who talk about the faith at a restaurant or bar while participants share a beer and munchies. Finally, *Generations of Faith* (13), a program from the Center for Ministry Development (CMD), has done a wonderful job of weaving family based catechesis into already existing parish religious education programs. It describes itself as, “an integrated and comprehensive approach to faith formation that equips the parish community to become a community of learning by creating lifelong faith formation

that is centered in the events of church life, embraces all ages and generations, and promotes faith growth at home, through parish preparation programs, and, most importantly, through participation in church life.” (13) Unlike the others we described above, this program has specific elements for the different age groups, but puts them on a similar track; that is they study the same concepts in age appropriate ways and then come together as groups or families to concretize their learning. This allows discussion about faith tenets among age groups that may never before have talked about these ideas together. Allowing everyone to learn the same catechetical concepts in separate, age appropriate ways has sparked enthusiasm among those participating in this program. Though new, this program bears watching as a vehicle to re-catechize adults while teaching children and youth about their faith.

The question that arises from what we have discussed then is who has enough knowledge of the faith to pass it on to others? Surely Priests, Sisters and Deacons are well trained and tasked to do this work, but their numbers have dwindled to the point where they cannot do this alone. This brings us to our core problem, how to motivate the laity to help so that the content and methodology can be **delivered by well trained and enthusiastic teachers**: This is another area where the institutional Church has everything in place and only needs people to respond and follow the training to be successful. The NDC calls for initial and ongoing training of catechists (14) and the USCCB and other national organizations have done a wonderful job of putting together programs that train and even certify catechists and ministers that parishes can easily tap into and use to train in their local settings. If you look at most Diocesan websites, you will see a link to their catechist

training workshops or schools, usually under their education or religious education page, and most of these are based on the national models and standards. One of the great pieces of work done in this area is the Competency-Based Standards for Lay Ecclesial Ministers, (15) approved by the USCCB in 2003. This document is the combined effort of three national organizations that represent specific segments of the Catholic population. The National Conference for Catechetical Leadership, (NCCL), the National Association for Lay Ministry, (NALM), and the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry, (NFCYM) met over a 3 year period and discussed and decided on what competencies were common in their three varied professions and put together a standard that all Lay Ministers could be held to. This document led to the development of training exercises and workshops and to Certification Standards that are now used by accredited institutions to certify ministry personnel. Let's not get ahead of ourselves here, there are very few accredited institutions, and no Diocese requires catechists be certified to work at a parish, but these standards have raised the bar in the training of catechists and have trickled down into the initial, advanced and on-going training they receive from most Diocesan or parish programs. Most Diocese are now offering training sessions either by their own professional ministers or by a variety of wonderful, for profit organizations that exist and travel from Diocese to Diocese to train catechetical personnel, in a variety of formats, (gathered, large group at a central location, small group at a specific parish, internet based, video, etc.), and at times that make it convenient for those who work full-time to be trained. This allows for a good combination of trained professional full-time paid lay Church leaders and volunteer catechists to serve parishes.

Having described the multitude of opportunities for training in most Dioceses, what still remains is the call to enthusiastic believers to step forward and serve their church in this capacity. The fact that they have to participate in training seems to cause some to stay away. Today, most parishes insist on some grade level training at a minimum, with most asking for ongoing training as well. Some faithful are willing to serve but feel they already know the faith and resent having to go through the training. Also, after the sex-abuse scandal in the Church, all personnel are required to go through a training program on child safety and the warning signs of sexual predators and this has caused some to back out of their commitment to serve as well. One major flaw in the system is that there are no enforceable national standards for training catechist and so even though nationally recognized standards are available, Diocese can choose not to use them and can offer whatever kind of training their Bishop approves and if their Bishop has not approved standards then most parishes can offer whatever kind of training they see fit for their own catechists. This leads to people teaching to different standards throughout the country and participants learning differing versions of the faith at different places through out the country. Of course, money is always an issue here and it usually works out that those Dioceses and parishes willing to invest in professionally trained personnel, and in the resources they recommend, will always fare better than those who can't or won't. This has a cause and effect ramification on how authentic a faith is being passed on. If the books and material are unauthentic and those teaching from them are untrained and unknowledgeable, an unauthentic faith will be passed on. Church leaders must continue to hire and compensate fairly, professional lay leaders who will push publishers for well written, authentic materials and provide training opportunities so there can be well trained,

knowledgeable catechists in their parishes. Another area that needs to be looked at is the sharing of power in Church leadership. If the laity are empowered only to a certain point, which is to help or serve the clergy in their duties in a Diocese or parishes you will never get the enthusiasm needed. If the laity are empowered, as not only an aide to clergy, but of their own accord, in partnership with, supported by Church leadership; that is, given legitimate authority over their area of expertise, you will see a more enthusiastic pursuit of participation in leadership roles and a more engaged laity.

With opportunities available for students to try on and try out what they have been taught so that their knowledge can be experienced and lead them to life long change:

No matter what age group we are referring to, the ability to put learned tenets into action, practice them in a safe environment, hone them until we are good at them and then use them successfully in our everyday lives to spread the faith and help change our world for the better is a key to being catechized and to the catechesis having a lasting affect on our lives. The days of parish based, after school, classroom style, religious education with no experiential aspect have to end. The days of Catholic school classroom religious education with no experiential component have to end. Youth and young adults do not get the religious experience at home, in their families, in their everyday lives that past generations have. These experiences need to be created and tied to what they are learning in the classroom; and after the experience is finished there needs to be a theological reflection on what just happened so connections can be made between life experience and faith tenets. This is imperative to catechesis holding on as a life long pursuit and leads us to parts two and three of our tripod, prayer and action.

Prayer: The conversion process leads to a desire to learn more about the tenets of the faith and as one learns more about the faith, the desire for prayer, conversation with God, and action, living God's will in the world, becomes paramount. This work is not intended to be a thesis on prayer forms and what prayer means in a person's life, but suffice it to say, prayer plays an important role in the ongoing process of conversion and is the food, for Catholics along with Eucharist, that gives one the desire, ability and strength to serve God and humankind. For this call to conversion to be successful, the Church must foster a spirit of prayer in their faithful and provide numerous opportunities, time, place, circumstance, exactly as we discussed about catechesis, for people to gather in prayer, outside of regular religious services, and have the knowledge and ability to pray on their own, in private. They must also ensure that their religious services are prayerful and don't become strictly social events with lively music, good preaching and fellowship; that element of prayerfulness must be present for it to resonate with the faithful and make it a truly 'religious' experience that will enable people to commit to the faith. As we have seen throughout this work, in the minds of many, religion is now a social activity that is used only when needed by the individual. A strong element of prayerfulness, in conjunction with these other attributes, will help people see that there is more to church than a social gathering. As far as the Catholic Church can go they must to make this happen, but the faithful must also help each other discover this prayer life and the riches it can bring to everyday life. As the NDC states, "Because catechesis seeks to lead persons and communities to deeper faith, it is oriented to prayer and worship. Catechesis for prayer emphasizes the major purpose of prayer... and accompanies a person's continual growth in faith ... **when catechesis is permeated by a climate of prayer, the assimilation of the**

entire Christian life reaches its summit.” (16) Prayer must be a by-product of good study and help lead to action.

Action: This action step is different than the one we described above. In the study step, action is directed by a source, the catechist, parish, school or group, and carried out in a quasi-social, quasi-service manner, for the purpose of creating experiences for students to attach meaning. Most do some good work and give students good experiences of service, prayer, and reflection, but do little actual service to the community and in some cases become more of a social event or an overnight getaway for personal growth instead of to serve others. In this third step of the tripod, action is the culmination of good study and prayer, and is a life long commitment to living out ones faith by building God’s Kingdom, in the world, today. It goes back to the old Christian argument about faith and works, does just having faith save a person or must there be good works attached to that faith for salvation to come ones way? In this case, the argument is moot, good works, action, is a culmination of faith and if it is a true faith, catechized and prayed well, there is no other course than good works. The concept becomes a part of ones being and with continued study and prayer, continues to be a part of that being. We often hear people criticize those who after attending Mass cut each other off leaving the parking lot or those who behave badly in other parts of their lives as hypocrites, but these ‘Sunday’ Catholics simply do not have a strong sense of study and prayer and lack the ability to do good works, (action) in an ongoing way. Action must permeate ones life, and truly become part of the everyday existence of a Catholic. Then, even those who aren’t consistent, can return to study and prayer, the sacraments and try again to live a life serving God and others. Study and prayer

give them a vehicle to remind them of what they truly believe and it will hopefully, continue to bring them back to their rightful place.

This call to conversion that we have discussed is truly cemented by the tripod of study, prayer and action. If the Catholic Church can foster a spirit of conversion in their members and show it to those outside their group as well and be ready with a strong education system, authentic and methodologically sound, and lead them to prayer and to good works, the commitment to not only the faith but to the institution will grow and they will find themselves growing and flourishing in the years to come.

Conclusion

But can this really work? I believe it can. One of the important issues to look at is allocation of resources. The waiting list for Catholic schools is long. There is a higher demand for this kind of education than desks to fill. Now, not all of these potential students are Catholic kids wanting to be educated in a religious school. Some are kids in the inner city that want an alternative to their insufficient public schools; others are wealthier kids in suburban schools looking for disciplined education that Catholic schools are known for or for the “prestige” of graduating from an elite, well thought of academic or sports program. In most Dioceses, the challenge is that there are many school buildings in urban areas without a nearby Catholic population to support them, (the demand from the inner city children does not bring with it sufficient financial resources to keep a school afloat), and there are thousands of potential students in suburban areas, (where there are sufficient financial resources to keep the schools afloat and to flourish), where schools have yet to be built. Many in these Dioceses are pushing State and local leaders to come up with some kind of voucher program that would allow tax dollars to go to private schools. This has been met with a lukewarm reception by most. As we have seen, those Catholics that are educated in Catholic schools do better as Catholics for the rest of their lives. This would be one area where forward thinking might help the Church. As we discussed earlier, closing some schools in areas where they are not viable while not shutting out the poor and vulnerable, and finding unique ways to raise money to either build new schools or convert existing buildings into working school buildings in more affluent areas where their viability is higher would be a good first step. Rekindling the spirit and strength of the Catholic

school system, not only to educate in subject matter but also in the tenets and traditions of the faith will go a long way in building life long institutional knowledge for participants in the school programs.

A reworking of parish Religious Education Programs is step two. All parishes need to have a Director of Catechesis (Religious Education) who is responsible for making sure there are well educated and trained parishioners who can act as catechists, mentors, peer advocates and participate fully in helping to provide programs to educate all from womb to tomb in an inviting and welcoming atmosphere. To begin it will need to treat its own like converts, to bring people back to the faith. How many Catholic parishes today set up their religious education programs for kids and treat them as converts? That is what they are at this point, kids who do not know the faith or its traditions. Once we start accepting the fact that we have to start from square one, we can make a difference and start to change the way people view their faith. Only after we use the methods described in Chapter 7 to bring about conversion in adults and then teach our religious education classes as if we are teaching converts can we shift back to what it should be, **a system that helps pass on the faith to families who already know its tenets and is practicing the traditions of the faith in their homes and community.**

The conversion of Church leadership is step three. The Catholic Church in America, as well as other institutional religions, must act now to start to reverse the trend of spiritual, not religious. That so many self-identify as believing in God or a higher power and are happy to talk in terms of spirituality and religion provides a great opportunity for religious

leaders and institutions. By looking to time tested traditions, delivered in new, authentic ways, there is a chance of regaining the influence they once had. How the Church responds over the next generation will tell us if this trend will continue. Will Church leadership adapt the way they approach the passing on of the faith and its place in the world to fit our modern times? Don't be misled, I am not talking about adapting the faith, but only the way it is presented to the world. The Church and its leaders need to become more invitational and welcoming in their proclamation of faith and of how it fits in the world today. They must start to mirror the spirit of Jesus when in John's Gospel he *invited* John the Baptists followers who asked "Master where are you staying?" to "Come and see". (10) If the world is looking for someone to turn to and help them when they are down and to be there for them when they are needed, the Church has that someone and has proclaimed him for nearly two-thousand years. The days of the Church being a church of expectation, one that demands fidelity under the threat of ecclesiastic penalty or worse the "loss of heaven and the pains of hell" (2) have to end. The Church needs to start to invite people in by offering its wealth of tradition and spiritual meaning in a positive, forthright manner. **Instead of demanding fidelity we should be offering a chance at happiness and freedom.** As Pope Benedict stated in a speech in October of 2008, "The Church does not impose but freely proposes the Catholic faith, well aware that **conversion** is the mysterious fruit of the action of the Holy Spirit. Faith is a gift and a work of God, and hence excludes any form of proselytism that forces, allures or entices people by trickery to embrace it. A person may open to the faith after mature and responsible reflection, and must be able freely to realize that intimate aspiration. This benefits not only the individual, but all society, because the faithful observance of divine precepts helps to build a more just and united form of

coexistence". (3) This is exactly the attitude the Church needs; by presenting itself proudly, profoundly, authentically and joyfully, the Church can start, once again, to make a difference in peoples lives. If Church leaders can follow this advice from their Pope, we may yet have a chance to turn this around.

What needs to be done to bring about study, prayer and action from the faithful is the fostering of invitation, welcome, participation and discipleship from Church leaders. If the Church can be inviting to all they meet, welcome all who respond in a spirit of friendship, equality and truth, ask all who respond to participate fully and give them meaningful roles to get the most from the gifts and talents of the entire Church, (the people of God), then once those three things occur we will have a Church of disciples who can be sent forth to change the world in peace and in love. As St. Francis of Assisi once said, "Preach the Gospel in all that you do, if necessary use words".

Finally, all Catholics who have had the opportunity to be well educated in the tenets and traditions of the faith must step forward and **assume the mantle of leadership that is theirs through their Baptism.** When the Church has all of its gifts available for use in the proclamation of its teachings it can only flourish. The time is now for those who love the Church and want to see it grow and succeed to take their place and help make it happen. The more positive, faith-filled relationships that people have in their lives the more likely they will be to be a positive faith-filled person. As Smith states, "It appears that the greater the supply of religiously grounded relationships, activities, programs, opportunities, and challenges available to teenagers, other things being equal, the more likely teenagers will

be religiously engaged and invested.” (4) With this influx of people stepping forward more money and resources needs to be put into education. It is time Church leaders put a moratorium on glitzy and glamorous new Cathedrals, Shrines, renovations to already serviceable churches and other institutions, and started investing heavily in educational resources, buildings, retreat centers, recruitment and training of teachers and ministers, and other areas that will help start this conversion of the faithful. As Smith continues, “Religious congregations that prioritize ministry to youth and support for their parents, invest in trained and skilled youth leaders, and make serious efforts to engage and teach adolescents, seem much more likely to draw youth into their religious lives and to foster religious maturity in their young members.” (4) It goes back to the point of what outcomes we are looking for. Do we want to be a Church that is right (correct) about the truths of life and take us or leave us? Or, do we want to bring people to salvation through Jesus Christ? We can be right but smug and demanding and lose many souls, or we can be inviting and welcoming and walk with people on their journeys of life long conversion. It is up to the institutional Church, yes, the people who make up its leadership to take to heart Smith’s words, “If, as we have said, when it comes to the religious outcomes of youth, parents and adults ‘will get what they are’, we think that it is equally true that, when it comes to youth, religious congregations, denominations, and other religious organizations generally ‘will get back what they invest’ and normally not a lot more” (5) The Church will get back from its faithful what it invests in them and what it is; it is time now for the Church to realize this and make the changes it needs to bring the faithful back, fully, into its fold and to joyfully invite the next generation in to a welcoming, fully participating Church of disciples, changing the world in the name of Jesus Christ!

Notes

Introduction:

1. “Spiritual, not religious”: A term that has become popular in modern lexicon and in media to describe those who say they have a strong spiritual take on life but do not identify with an organized religion.
2. “Creed”: A prayer recited by Catholics, (the Nicene Creed at Sunday Mass and the Apostles Creed for the rosary and other prayer forms), that profess the tenants of the faith.

Chapter 1:

1. *Millennials Rising: The next Great Generation*, Neil Howe and William Strauss, Vintage Books, September 2000
2. Quote taken from the back cover of *Millennials Rising (MR)* and attributed to Howe and Strauss, (H&S)
3. (MR), (H&S)
4. (MR), (H&S)
5. (MR), (H&S) Page 234, 3rd paragraph.
6. (MR), (H&S) Page 235 1st paragraph
7. same as 6
8. (MR), (H&S) Page 235 2nd paragraph. This quote also takes into account a quote from Wendy Murray Zoba’s work *Generation 2K*
9. (MR), (H&S) Page 234 last paragraph
10. “authentic faith”: this describes the Catholic faith as viewed from within the Church. This is a term that is used in Roman Catholic Church documents to show that there is only one, true deposit of faith that all Catholics must believe. It is safeguarded by the Church and its Magisterium, and has come to us as passed down from the Apostles and based on scripture and tradition. See Page 75 of the NDC described in Chapter 2 note 15.
11. (MR), (H&S) Page 236 4th paragraph
12. Benediction is a Catholic prayer service that is based upon the exposition of the blessed sacrament, (Holy Communion, what Catholics believe is the true flesh of Jesus through a process performed by a Priest at Mass called Transubstantiation), and people pray and sing songs of praise. Morning Prayer is the “prayer of the Church” and is said throughout the world everyday from a book called the Breviary.
13. *Young Adult Catholics: Religion in the Culture of Choice*, (YAC) Dean R. Hoge, William D. Dinges, Mary Johnson, S.N.D. DE N., Juan Gonzales, Jr.. University of Notre Dame Press, 2001
14. (YAC) Page 24 quoting from the work of Andrew Greeley
15. (YAC) Page 15 “Religious Individualism
16. (YAC) Page 16
17. (YAC) Page 15, bottom

Chapter 2:

1. From the Album *Occupation: Foole*, George Carlin, Eardrum Records, 1973.
2. (YAC) Page 174, bottom. This is a quote based on the compilation of numerous studies and is probably a fairly accurate generalization.
3. (YAC) Page 175. We see now that this may not always be the case.
4. (YAC) Page 176.
5. *After The Baby Boomers: How Twenty- and Thirty-Something's Are Shaping the Future of American Religion*, (ATBB) Robert Wuthnow, Princeton University Press, 2007
6. (ATBB), Page 134, second paragraph
7. (YAC), Page 178.
8. *American Catholics Today: New Realities of Their Faith and Their Church*, (ACT) William V. D'Antonio, James D. Davidson, Dean R. Hoge, Mary L. Gautier, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2007
9. (ACT) Page 16, top.
10. (ACT) Page 16
11. (YAC) Page 181
12. Office. This is the general prayer of the Church that we described earlier when defining Morning Prayer. The Office also includes prayer at dawn and sunset, evening prayer and night prayer. All can be found in a Breviary.
13. (YAC) Page 191
14. English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* for the United States of America copyright 1994, United States Catholic Conference, Inc. (now the USCCB) Libreria Editrice Vaticana.
15. *National Directory for Catechesis*, (NDC) Copyright 2005 United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
16. NDC Page 75.
17. NDC Page 83
18. Scientology: a body of beliefs and related practices created by American science fiction author L. Ron Hubbard; he developed Scientology teachings in 1952 as a successor to his earlier self-help system, Dianetics. Hubbard later characterized Scientology as an "applied religious philosophy" and the basis for a new religion with the first Scientology church being established in 1953.
19. NDC Page 83

Chapter 3:

1. See Public High School Graduation and College-Readiness Rates: 1991-2002 Jay P. Greene, Ph.D. Senior Fellow, Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, Marcus A. Winters Research Associate, Manhattan Institute for Policy Research for a very detailed discussion of educational issues in America
2. NCEA: A Brief Overview of Catholic Schools in America, website (ncea.org)
3. American Jewish Desk Reference, *the Philip Lief Group*.
4. Ben House: Classical Christian Education: A Look at Some History, CRTA
5. *The Renewal of American Catholicism*, (RAC) David J. O'Brien, Oxford University Press, pg. 80
6. RAC Page 81
7. ACT Page 157
8. Reconciliation, First Holy Communion and Confirmation are 3 of the 7 Catholic Sacraments and 3 of the 4 "Sacraments of Initiation" (the 4th being Baptism) These are public, ritual rites of passage within the Catholic Faith.
9. YAC Page 131
10. ACT Page 159
11. ACT Page 161
12. ACT Page 162

Chapter 4:

1. *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*, (SS) Christian Smith with Melinda Lundquist Denton, Oxford University Press, 2005
2. SS Page 4
3. SS Page 6
4. SS Page 27
5. SS Page 28
6. Doonesbury Comics, Universal Press Syndicate Comics
7. SS Page 115-116
8. SS Page 208
9. SS Page 209
10. SS Table 2 Page 33
11. SS Page 31
12. SS Table 4 Page 35
13. SS Table 5 Page 36
14. SS Table 6 Page 37
15. SS Page 68
16. SS Tables 7 and 10 Pages 40 and 45
17. SS Table 8 Page 41
18. SS Page 210
19. SS Page 216

Chapter 5:

1. SS Page 216
2. *Spirituality in Higher Education: A National Study of College Students' Search for Meaning and Purpose*, (SHE) Higher Education Research Institute, University of California, Los Angeles, 2000-2009, www.spirituality.ucla.edu.
3. (SHE), (Executive Summary, Entering Freshman Survey, 2004, page 1)
4. (SHE), Summary of Select Findings, 2000-2003
5. Interview with Pew Forum February 14, 2008. pewresearch.org/pubs/743/united-states-religion
6. University of Texas Study on Religious Practices: *How Corrosive Is College to Religious Faith and Practice?* Mark D. Regnerus; Jeremy E. Uecker. Published on: Feb 05, 2007 The researchers analyzed data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, which tracked more than 10,000 Americans from adolescence through young adulthood from 1994 to 1995 and from 2001 to 2002.
7. *Losing my Religion: The Social Sources of Religious Decline in Early Adulthood*, Mark D. Regnerus; Jeremy E. Uecker, Margaret L. Vaaler, University of Texas, 2007
8. SS Page 10
9. *Sex and the Soul: Juggling Sexuality, Spirituality, Romance, and Religion on America's College Campuses*, (S&S) Donna Freitas, Oxford University Press, 2008
10. S&S Page 10
11. S&S Page xiv
12. S&S Page 16

13. *Sexual Attitudes of College Students: The Impact of Religiosity and Spirituality*, Henry D. Beckwith and Jennifer Ann Morrow, College Student Journal, June 2005, Project Innovation, Inc.

14. *At the Crossroads of Sexuality and Spirituality: The Sanctification of Sex by College Students*, Nicole A. Murray–Swank, Kenneth I. Pargament, Annette Mahoney, Bowling Green University, Manuscript submitted on October 23, 2002

15. *How Religious Beliefs Do, and Don't, Influence Sexual Behavior*, Web Article, posted May, 2007, Hanna Rosin. A review of *Forbidden Fruit: Sex and Religion in the Lives of American Teenagers*, Mark Regnerus, 2007 Oxford University Press

16. See Chapter 1 Note 10

17. A popular music group made up of three brothers made famous by the Disney Channel.

18. To be more specific about the term “authentic faith” when referring to the Catholic Faith. I am not referring to a conservative or liberal version of the faith; what is being referred to is the faith as outlined, officially, by the Roman Catholic Hierarchy in Rome and interpreted by the USCCB for the Church in America. Some conservative factions will claim this as their version of Catholicism and some liberal factions will read their views into it as well, but in reality, there is a richness and diversity in the official teachings of the Church, from the Catechism of the Catholic Church, to Canon Law, to the General Directory of Catechesis, the writings of the Saints and the Doctors of the Church, and including the Bible, both Old and New Testaments. To pass on the “authentic” faith is neither conservative nor liberal, it is the fullness and richness that humanity brings when interpreting their relationship with God as Trinity. **Its use here is meant to show that the faith is passed down in communion with official Church teachings.**

Chapter 6:

1. SS Page 171
2. SS Table 2 Page 33
3. #144 Page 39 English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) for the United States of America copyright 1994, United States Catholic Conference, Inc. (now the USCCB) Libreria Editrice Vaticana
4. ACT Page 89
5. SS Page 162
6. SS Page 171
7. *John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal light."* *The New American Bible*, Catholic World Press, World Bible Publishers, 1987
8. Acts of the Apostle, Chapter 9 verses 3-8. *The New American Bible*, Catholic World Press, World Bible Publishers, 1987

Chapter 7:

1. Though they do exist and they are extraordinary, see *The Effective Youth Ministry Practices in Catholic Parishes*, CMD/SMP/NFCYM, 2003. secure.cmdnet.org
2. *Excellent Catholic Parishes: The Guide to Best Places and Practices*, Paul Wilkes, Paulist Press, 2001 (also see note 7)
3. Description from the St. Basil, Methuen, MA Website; stbasils.org taken from the International Cursillo Movement literature.
4. CCC Page 5
5. CCC Page 9, number 11/12
6. NDC Page 6
7. NDC Page 17
8. All of these are available to study at usccb.org
9. USCCB Conformity Listing of Catechetical Texts and Series as of July 11, 2008 also available at usccb.org
10. Catholic World News Report, Thomas A. Szyszkiewicz, August 2004
11. USCCB, 2008
12. SS Page 117
13. cmdnet.org
14. NDC Page 236 Section C
15. usccb.org
16. NDC Page 112

Conclusion:

1. John 1:38-39; *The New American Bible*, Catholic World Press, World Bible Publishers, 1987
2. From the “Act of Contrition” a prayer said after the Sacrament of Reconciliation and as a prayer before sleep by school children. “Oh my God I am heartily sorry for having offended thee and I detest all my sins because **I fear the loss of heaven and the pains of hell.** But most of all because they offend thee oh Lord who is worthy of all glory and praise. I solemnly swear that I will do my best to sin no more. Amen.”
3. Pope Benedict XVI Ad Limina Address to the Bishops of Central Asia Rome, 2 October 2008
4. SS Page 261
5. SS Page 262