

PRINCIPALS' RESPONSES TO MORAL AND ETHICAL DILEMMAS
IN CATHOLIC SCHOOL SETTINGS

by

Kevin W. Roche

A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education,
Department of Theory and Policy Studies in Education
The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
of the University of Toronto

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ABSTRACT

The vagaries of the postmodern world present a moral dilemma for school administrators, acting in the face of increasing moral confusion and ambiguity. Frequently, a plethora of confusing and conflicting values preclude the determination of any clear choice, action or decision. Daily, school administrators confront moral and ethical dilemmas which demand a response. How do school principals actually respond to moral and ethical dilemmas that they confront within their professional role?

No less than other administrators, Catholic school principals are faced with taking action in a context characterized by moral and ethical ambiguity. Changes within the Church and society in recent decades have served to destabilize the once definitive Catholic values, beliefs and teachings. For school principals charged with the responsibility of developing and maintaining a distinctive Catholic culture, moral contradiction, conflict and uncertainty have become common place. Ironically, the Church

and society have rising expectations of the moral authenticity of school leaders despite the widespread cultural, social and economic diversity which challenges and complicates the leadership task.

The purpose of this study was to determine how principals in Catholic schools actually respond to moral and ethical dilemmas within their professional role. Through the use of hypothetical case scenarios and a consideration of actual situations, this study investigated how five Australian Catholic school principals respond to moral and ethical dilemmas. Principals were found to use a variety of responses including avoidance, suspending morality, creative insubordination, and their own personal morality. Although moral and ethical dilemmas occurred at the transrational level of values, principals chose from varying implicit and explicit values held at rational and transrational levels. Ultimately, the question of whose values prevail in the resolution of values conflict was linked to the degree of discretionary power held by the principal in particular situations. Contrary to the findings of some earlier studies, evidence collected suggested that school principals consistently operate from a clear moral framework which includes but is not restricted to the application of rational personal and professional values.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It was with a great deal of excitement and some trepidation that this international graduate student undertook doctoral studies in a country far removed from the “Land Down Under.” Yet, the richness of the entire Canadian experience for my whole family will stay in our hearts for a lifetime, just reward for an adventurous spirit.

The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) proved to be well worthy of its high international reputation. I remain indebted to the members of the Department of Educational Administration (now the Department of Theory and Policy Studies) for their contribution to the doctoral program which I was privileged to undertake.

I am greatly indebted to my thesis supervisor Professor Paul Begley. His academic acumen, guidance and expertise proved an invaluable asset to my doctoral journey. In particular, his personal interest, encouragement and sensitivity to my circumstances served to circumvent the many thousands of kilometres separating supervisor and student.

I acknowledge and thank my thesis committee members, Professor Ken Leithwood of the Department of Policy and Theory Studies, and Professor Frank Crowther of the University of Southern Queensland, Australia for their valuable contribution to the study.

A special thank you to my four sons, Fabian, Jeremy, Marcus, and Kristian, all of whom contributed in untold ways. I remain ever blest by the love of my life, Trish, who inspired me to higher academic heights and encouraged me to persevere in times of self-doubt. During my doctoral program Trish has worked tirelessly as teacher, mother and wife to support her husband and family; she stands now beside me at the journey's end.

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CHAPTER 1: THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

PREAMBLE

Over the last decade, social theorists have begun to describe the increasing social impact of phenomena such as pluralism, technological innovation, societal fragmentation, the de-centering of the traditional majority population, and the disconnectedness of particular individuals and groups. During this time, school administrators have also confronted these practical realities of postmodernism on a daily basis, often in the 're-structured' environment of decentralization and school based management. Vandenberghe (1995: 33) describes the situation facing principals as a "turbulent policy environment, characterized by a set of unclear goals, ill-defined expectations ...(and)... constantly changing requirements and administrative rules."

Despite the onset of postmodernity, or because of it, the principal's unenviable task becomes the determination of which and whose values, beliefs, knowledge and understandings are to prevail. W. Greenfield's (1991) argument that in these times of uncertainty, teachers, students and parents demand that school administrators be conscientious moral actors poses a new dilemma for school principals in the necessity to choose between:

a confusing plurality of values, some particularist, some claiming a universal validity, but each rooted in different traditions, histories and theoretical and political trajectories, and many of them in stark contradiction, one to the other. (Weeks, in Squires, 1993: 189)

To the uninitiated, it might appear that the Catholic school principal faces a less daunting task afforded by the apparent luxury of commonly held values, a self-selected community and the support of a 2000 year old church. However, the forces unleashed by the Second Vatican Council (1962-1966) and the unprecedented social upheaval of the 1960s and 1970s have plunged Catholicism into a state of chaos which continues to this day, “a source of immense depression to some and hope to others” (Arbuckle, 1993: 37). In recent times, the revolutionary spirit of Vatican II to re-instate the Church in the contemporary world contrasts sharply with a centrally-led, restorationist movement towards a return to pre-Vatican II values, structures, theology, and liturgy. The intense struggle for either a new or a restored Catholic ideology continues unabated, characterized by movement and counter-movement, trends and counter-trends, conflict and controversy, optimism and despair (Arbuckle, 1993).

As official agencies of a church in chaos, Catholic schools have been unavoidably affected by the intended and unintended changes of recent decades. Specifically, the very existence of such schools has been challenged by widespread internal concern as to the cultural erosion of their distinct Catholic identity (The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977, 1983, 1988). For a Catholic school the question of culture lies at the very core of its being. When this culture fails to embody Catholicity, then a “stark divorce seems sometimes to exist - making nonsense of the *raison d’être* of the place” (Neal, 1972: 272). Collins (1970: 28) argues that “unless a religiously oriented school....is intrinsically viable and somehow unique....it cannot exist by definition. If it is not distinct it is unnecessary.”

The call from within and beyond the Church for Catholic school principals to develop an authentic, distinctly Catholic culture on which the school's very existence impinges, despite the overarching confusion of a parent Church in disarray seems cruelly ironic and unjustifiably idealistic. The Vatican's Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education (SCCE) posits that a Catholic culture is developed when the principles of the Gospel "become the educative norms since the school then has them as its internal motivation and final goal" (1977: 83). Hence, the school's culture is built on the Christian spirit and gospel values which permeate all areas of learning and school life "so that there is a consonance between the Christian values it espouses and its actual practice" (Queensland Catholic Education Office, 1979: 82). The primary basis for taking action in the Catholic school lies in the compatibility of various options with the gospel values as held and explained by the Church (SCCE, 1988). Yet, the once single voice of a universal Church no longer clearly articulates how these values are to be interpreted in a pluralistic society, awash in the postmodern moment of our time. The ambiguity of the situation confronting Catholic school principals is aptly described by Fekete:

it is no exaggeration to say that the oceans and continents of value, though much traveled remain almost uncharted in anyway suitable for the navigational contingencies of postmodern itineraries. (in Squires, 1993:189)

THE SETTING

Catholic education exists at various levels and in different forms in each of the Australian States and Territories. The importance of the role of Catholic schools in the

eyes of the Catholic Church has been affirmed by the Vatican's Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education (SCCE, 1977: 13-14):

(The Church) ... establishes her own schools because she considers them as a privileged means of promoting the formation of the whole man, since the school is a center in which a specific concept of the world, of man, and of history is developed and conveyed.

The Catholic school forms part of the saving mission of the Church, especially for education in the faith ... It is precisely in the Gospel of Christ, taking root in the minds and lives of the faithful, that the Catholic school finds its definition as it comes to terms with the cultural conditions of the times.

Thus, just as the Church's fundamental mission is evangelization, the Catholic school forms part of the saving mission of the Church. In Australia, as in many other parts of the world, the Catholic Church chose to establish the Catholic school as a formalized medium for its fundamental mission and message.

The Declaration on Christian Education (1965) was one of the last documents of the Second Vatican Council. Subsequently, the Vatican, through the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education has produced three explanatory documents relating to Catholic Schools, namely: *The Catholic School* (1977), *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witness to Faith* (1982) and *the Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* (1988). These official documents present high ideals for these schools and those who administer them. The task of the school is to create a synthesis between culture and faith, thereby creating a distinctly Catholic school which finds its definition by coming to terms with the cultural conditions of our times (SCCE, 1977). Despite the high idealism, Fitzgerald (1990) observes that the documents do not explicitly address the issue of leadership. Nonetheless, the documents have been readily accepted by the Australian Church,

providing a theoretical base for the formation of the post-conciliar Catholic school in this country (Dwyer, 1986).

Australia's Catholic school system was developed in the 1870s as a direct response to the withdrawal of government finance. In a concerted effort to provide a place in a Catholic school for every Catholic child, bishops and parish communities pledged their full support to the development of an independent Catholic school system. These schools were almost exclusively staffed by Religious Orders who assumed responsibility for their operation. Daily religious practices, a proliferation of religious objects throughout the classrooms, the distinctive garb of the nuns and brothers, and the close involvement of the parish Church served to establish the parish Catholic school as a symbol of Catholic culture (Fogarty, 1957).

The influence of pre-conciliar Catholicism greatly strengthened this traditional symbol of the Catholic Church. The diocesan bishop had the final authority for the schools, whilst the clergy, religious and laity believed obedience to their bishop was a fundamental duty. For the bishop primarily concerned with building 'God's kingdom on earth', the Catholic school was the chief means of protecting and defending the faith of his 'flock'. For parents, the cross on top of the building signified that the education of their children was in safe hands (Flynn, 1989).

Although the overt role of the Catholic school in reproducing Catholics has been one official justification of their existence (Young 1972; Bourke 1972), others such as Leavey (1972) argue that a Catholic education was cherished by the poor, Irish minorities of Australian society as their path to upward social mobility. Whilst in recent decades, the

identification of Catholicism with Irishness has faded, Angus (1984: 3) observes that the essential role of Australian Catholic schools remains as it always has been: “to maintain and develop a sense of Catholic identity, both social and religious.”

The Australian Catholic school has been no less affected by the changes in society and Catholicism since Vatican II. Typically, today’s Catholic school:

is staffed predominantly by lay teachers;

is administered by a lay principal;

has an increasing percentage of non Catholic or non-practicing Catholic teachers and pupils;

serves a cosmopolitan clientele of European and Asian descent;

is no longer as visibly ‘Catholic’ as in the past;

is often the only contact with the Church for many of the families it serves;

is characterized by high levels of parent support and participation;

operates under the auspices of a Diocesan Catholic Education Office, the Parish Priest, and ultimately, the Bishop;

competes against an ever-increasing Church concern for adult education, social welfare and justice action;

is dependent on government funding to the extent that it could not exist without it;

seeks to espouse the teachings of a Church with a changing, often inconsistent ecclesiology.

In the Australian context, the debate has focused on the cultural identity of the Catholic school where the absence of religious personnel has particularly eroded its visible distinctiveness. Since Vatican II, numerous other internal criticisms and concerns as to the authenticity of Catholic schools have surfaced, indicative of the existing confusion and

ambiguity about the religiosity of Catholic schools because of changes in society, education and the Church (Editorial, *Catholic School Studies*, 1985). Whilst a proliferation of mission statements, policy documents, and Catholic Education Office publications have been issued in response to this concern, it has only been in recent years that any appreciation of “the problematic nature of the Catholic religious identity” (Degenhardt, 1992: 52) has developed. Despite the complexity and difficulty in achieving a genuine Catholic culture, the Church urges each school to cultivate a distinctly Catholic identity as a matter of utmost importance and urgency (SCCE, 1988).

In describing the Australian Church’s concern with the development of a Catholic culture, Flynn (1989: 23) argues that a Catholic school has its own unique culture which:

however fragmented and poorly articulated, has a far-reaching influence on students, staff and parents, and, in a real sense, is the Christian message as it is experienced by the school community.

There is common agreement in the Australian Catholic school literature that administrators in Catholic schools have a primary duty, specific task and fundamental responsibility to create, maintain and develop a genuine Catholic School culture (Chapman 1984; McDonald 1993; Flynn 1989, 1993).

PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

High idealism aside, Australian Catholic school principals are faced with a myriad of competing and conflicting demands, ‘fluid’ administrative constraints, and often incompatible assumptions and beliefs which emanate from the Catholic Education Office, the Parish Priest, the Bishop and the official statements and documents published by the

worldwide Church. The increasing diversity of the needs, expectations, values and circumstances of the individuals and groups in the school community exacerbate an already complex situation. Moreover, principals possess an assortment of personal, professional and religious values which also influence their perceptions, understanding and attitude in any given situation as they carry out their role. Differences in opinion, debate as to the correct interpretation of Vatican II and conflict over issues of authority and responsibility often characterize the relationship among those involved in the administration of the school. Typically the Catholic principal is expected to operate in an administrative style based on participative, consultative decision making as advocated by the Second Vatican Council (Slattery, 1989). Unfortunately, as Leavey (1984: 22) observes, Catholic school principals cannot copy such participation and subsidiarity from the administrative practices of the Catholic Church because “they are conspicuously absent anywhere else in the Church.”

With regards to education in general, Greenfield (1975), Foster (1986) and Sergiovanni and Corbally (1984) have argued for adopting a cultural perspective which recognizes that the culture of a school is continually negotiated, constructed and contested. Similarly, the official documents of the Church since Vatican II boldly assert a new understanding of reality as being socially constructed. Catholic school culture is continually being formed, influencing society and, in turn, being influenced by it. The Catholic school is charged to live the message of Christ according to the issues, concerns and situation of each age, since culture is continually created and perfected (SCCE, 1983). Non-prescriptive church documents as to how this culture is to be achieved or what form

it may take affords a discursive space in which individuals, bureaucratic structures and the Catholic Church hierarchy compete for authoritative legitimacy.

In a post-Vatican II climate, the Australian Catholic school principal is faced with the task of developing a Catholic school culture even though the parent church is in a state of internal confusion and turmoil. Somewhat paradoxically, the disposition of principals to action incurs an inherent moral dilemma: it is not only a question of whether they are ethical administrators or not, it is that they must choose one value or set of values over another. Often it is not obvious what or who is right or wrong, or what is the truly moral or ethical response among many. Even at times when principals are confident of the appropriateness of a particular response, their morally preferred course of action is often precluded by contextual factors. Despite the onset of postmodernity, or because of it, the principal's unenviable task becomes the determination of which and whose values, beliefs, knowledge and understandings are to prevail.

In the face of multiple legitimacies, principals make decisions, solve problems, and take actions which impinge on the school's culture. Yet, murky water is the harsh reality for Catholic principals, once sitting comfortably on the 'rock of St. Peter', but now adrift in a sea of moral ambiguity, cultural confusion and ecclesiastical turmoil. The vagaries of postmodernity present a new moral dilemma for school administrators faced with taking action when moral confusion and ambiguity preclude the determination of any clear choice. However, the presence of a confusing and often conflicting plurality of values in no way lessens the necessity of action and decision making. No less than other principals, Catholic school leaders are in a precarious situation in their task of cultivating an authentic

school culture. The intense struggle over a definitive Catholic ideology continues unabated to this day. Postmodern phenomena have greatly increased the complexity of the role of all school principals caught in a constellation of competing and often conflicting values. For Catholic school principals answerable to the multiple legitimacies of school community, parish priest, Catholic Education Office and bishop, the task of developing a genuine Catholic school identity is problematic at best.

Given that research findings on Australian Catholic schools are very limited, investigation into the complex role of Catholic school principals is desperately needed to fully understand the nature of the task at hand. Although current indications suggest the chaos within the Church may continue in the decades ahead, principals confront moral, ethical, and religious dilemmas which demand daily responses. What do principals do in order to foster a genuine Catholic school culture? How do principals resolve the conflict and confusion that arise within the overall determination of what form the school's culture is to take? In the face of multiple legitimacies, which and whose authority prevails in the determination as to what is to count in the school's culture?

Since Thomas Greenfield's (e.g., 1975, 1986, 1993) attack on the long standing scientific perspective of social reality, there has been a growing appreciation, if little agreement, as to the pivotal role played by values in school administration. Yet, Willower (1994) is struck by the anomaly that while values are universally acknowledged to be critical in educational administration, they are not a major focus of scholarly attention. Logical positivism as proffered by the likes of Simon (1957) has perpetuated the myth of objective, value-free administrative action evident in the effective schools research and

school level improvement strategies of recent times. The contributions of Greenfield (1986, 1993), Schon (1987) and Hodgkinson (1983, 1991) have forged what now appears to be common theoretical agreement that:

Consideration of moral value and obligation are embedded in practically every administrative action and decision as well as in many if not all organizational and educational policies and procedures in schools. (W. Greenfield, 1991: 18)

Greenfield (1986: 59) has persistently argued that the empirical study of educational administration has traditionally ignored value and sentiment as “springs of human action.” Apart from the bulk of literature related to decision making and problem solving which views such processes as purely prescriptive and essentially rational, Leithwood and Steinbach (1995) acknowledge a small but significant body of new research which recognizes the critical role of values in administration. In particular they argue that:

the most interesting and practically useful focus for subsequent study concerns the resolution of conflicting values [since] such conflicts are part of the everyday work world of school leaders. (Leithwood and Steinbach, 1995: 194)

Responding to moral and ethical dilemmas, the most significant of value conflicts, is a difficult and complex problem for the Catholic school principal charged with the primary responsibility of ensuring the Catholicity of the school’s culture (its *raison d’être*) amidst competing and often conflicting claims as to what Catholicity might mean in the postmodern world. Nonetheless, the majority of empirical studies in educational administration have resisted a comprehensive consideration of the role and influence of values, regarded by some to be the “murkiest of organizational phenomena” (Hambrick & Brandon, 1988: 30). Research that seeks to determine how particular Catholic school leaders resolve moral and ethical dilemmas enriches the efforts of those whose interests lie

in determining the nature and role of moral and ethical values on administrators' actions and decision making. Further, such research contributes to the general study of educational administration as well as to the specific interest of those concerned with the ongoing existence and development of Catholic schools.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

What do Catholic principals do when faced with moral and ethical dilemmas that arise because of the multiple moral legitimacies within the Catholic Church and society? This study investigates how Australian Catholic school principals respond to moral and ethical dilemmas that arise when there is conflict among the legitimate authorities associated with the Church and school; that is among what the official Church documents say about education, the expectations of the Catholic Education Office, the Bishop's imperatives, the demands of the local parish priest, the values and opinions of the teaching staff, the various interests and expectations held by individuals and groups within and beyond the school community, and the personal and professional values of the principal.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The overall purpose of this research study is to investigate the nature and describe the variety of responses of Catholic school principals to moral and ethical dilemmas within the context of the overarching belief and value system of the Roman Catholic Church. Specifically, the purpose of this study is three-fold: (1) to describe the responses of particular Catholic school principals to personal, professional and/or organizational moral

and ethical dilemmas; (2) to determine which and/or whose values prevail when moral and ethical dilemmas are resolved by these school principals; (3) to ascertain whether there are consistent patterns in the way that school principals operating within formal Catholic Church structures resolve to moral and ethical dilemmas. Specifically, the research questions are:

(A) Principals' Responses To Moral and Ethical Dilemmas

1. What are some of the moral and ethical dilemmas experienced by Catholic school principals?
2. How regularly do Catholic school principals perceive themselves as dealing with moral and ethical dilemmas?
3. What are the responses of Catholic school principals to particular moral and ethical dilemmas?

(B) Prevailing Values in Resolution

4. Which or whose values prevail when individual Catholic school principals are asked to resolve moral and ethical dilemmas that arise because:
 - a.) their own personal and/or professional values conflict with those expressed by individuals and/or groups (e.g., teachers, parent bodies) in the school community?
 - b.) their own personal and/or professional values conflict with those expressed by a formal authority (e.g., parish priest, Catholic Education Office, bishop)?

(C) Consistency of Principals' Approaches to the Resolution of Dilemmas

5.
 - a) Can the Catholic school principals in this study articulate a general rule, strategy or set of guiding principles they employ in order to resolve moral and ethical dilemmas?
 - b) When there is difficulty in resolving moral and ethical dilemmas, who or what do school principals in this study recognize as the final authority?

- c) Does the practical resolution of such dilemmas actually reflect i.) the application of a general rule, strategy or set of guiding principles; ii.) the legitimacy of the nominated final authority?
6. a) Are there differences in the approaches of Catholic school principals in this study to the resolution of moral and ethical dilemmas?
- b) How important is it to the Catholic school principals in this study that their approach to the resolution of moral and ethical dilemmas be consistent with those of other Catholic school principals?

TERMINOLOGY

Research studies concerned with the nature and role of values in educational administration are few in number. Nonetheless, a growing body of literature acknowledges “for administrators, what is considered common sense for people, more generally: that values are a critical aspect of thinking and problem solving” (Leithwood & Steinbach, 1995: 172). Researchers such as Campbell (1992: 3) note the inherent problems of “innumerable varying and often competing definitions” that pervade value inquiry, reminiscent of the warning by Hambrick and Brandon (1988: 30) that “to study executive values is to delve into the murkiest of organizational phenomena.” In order to overcome at least some of the problems of conceptual ambiguity, this section seeks to clarify a number of terms that are central to the research problem under investigation.

For the purposes of this study, the following definitions apply: A *value* is an enduring belief about the desirability of some means, action or end state. *Values* are standards held by an individual or group which guide one’s actions and thoughts, for influencing the actions and thoughts of others, and for morally judging oneself and others

(Kluckhohn 1951; Rokeach 1973). More simply, values are “core beliefs which motivate our actions” (Josephson, 1990: 68). A person’s *value system* is a learned set of rules for making choices and resolving conflicts (Rokeach, 1973). *Value conflicts* occur when two or more competing values are encountered (Leithwood, Begley & Cousins, 1994). This study incorporates the three categories of values identified by Hodgkinson (1978, 1991). *Subrational* (Type III) values constitute the individual’s personal preference structure. *Rational* (Type II) values are based on reason, whether it be the will of the majority or an analysis of perceived consequences. *Transrational* (Type I) values are grounded in principle, invoking the will of the individual through faith or commitment. Transrational values involve more than a person’s reason or preference, taking the form of ethical codes, injunctions or commandments.

Morals and *ethics* are terms often used interchangeably to describe values which concern principles of right and wrong in conduct. In this study, *morals* refers to the accepted principles held by an individual of what is right, virtuous, or just behavior and *ethics* refers to those principles held by the group (Rich 1984, Campbell 1992).

Moral and ethical dilemmas are value conflicts occurring at the transrational level in which two held principles of right and wrong conflict at the same time. They appear to require two equally necessary but mutually exclusive courses of action. Each course of action would fulfill certain moral or ethical criteria but could only be met by denying the other.

The approach to moral and ethical decision-making where a course of action is chosen primarily because of the perceived benefits or the likelihood of achieving ‘good’

consequences is known as *consequentialism* (Strike, Haller & Soltis, 1988).

Consequentialism is a form of *teleology* which refers to those theories in which the end justifies the means (Preston, 1996). By way of contrast, *non-consequentialism* describes an approach based on doing what is perceived to be the right thing, regardless of the consequences (Strike, Haller & Soltis, 1988). Non-consequentialism is a form of *deontology* which describes those ethical approaches in which action is based on a particular duty or principle (Preston, 1996). Deontological approaches are based on the belief that certain duties, rights or principles must be adhered to, regardless of the consequences. Thus, the ends do not necessarily justify the means. Rather, a non-consequentialist approach would be concerned with doing one's duty and/or what is intrinsically the 'right' thing.

In summary, morals and ethics are values grounded in the determination of right and wrong. Moral and ethical dilemmas occur when transrational principles of right and wrong conflict; when to honor one principle is to dishonor another. Teleological or consequentialist approaches seek solutions based on a determination of what is 'good' in terms of the perceived outcomes. Deontological or non-consequentialist solutions are based on the perception of what is the right thing to do, regardless of the consequences.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This qualitative investigation into the responses of particular principals in Catholic school settings does not identify the values held by Catholic school principals, nor does it explain why they take the actions they do in order to resolve moral and ethical dilemmas.

Instead, this study seeks to investigate the nature of the principals' responses to moral and ethical dilemmas. In other words, the study attempts to uncover how, not why, some Catholic school principals respond to transrational value conflicts which arise because of multiple legitimacies within the Catholic Church in the postmodern era.

Hopefully, the results of this study will enhance what is known about how principals respond to moral and ethical dilemmas. Given that the study is limited by specific conditions within a particular context, the findings are not generalizable to a wider population. Nonetheless, others may benefit from the descriptions of the issues at hand in that common aspects may have some relevance to their particular situation.

It is not the intention of this study to judge, criticize, condone or condemn the actions of the principals who chose to be respondents. Rather, its focus is on the actual responses that principals make in order to resolve moral and ethical dilemmas, the most difficult value conflicts that they encounter. In this way, the study seeks to investigate how some principals in Australian Catholic school settings respond to the moral and ethical dilemmas which occur within the complex environment in which they operate.

OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this introductory chapter has been to present the research problem in terms of the setting and circumstances in which it exists. A detailed explanation of the purpose and significance of the study provided a backdrop against which the six research questions were set. In this way, the research project's focus on principal's responses to moral and ethical dilemmas in Catholic school settings was clearly delineated. For the

sake of clarity, any context specific terminology used throughout the study was identified, defined and explained.

Chapter Two encompasses a review of the relevant literature. Beginning with a broad historical perspective, the general context of the research problem is explored in terms of increasingly specific issues relating to the nature of moral and ethical dilemmas and the manner in which school administrators respond to them. Included in Chapter Two is the conceptual framework upon which the study is based; the chapter itself culminating in the presentation and explanation of the Response Classification Framework developed from the literature specifically for this study.

The methodology is explained in Chapter Three, beginning with a detailed rationale for the research design used in the study. Chapter Three outlines the nature of the interviews conducted, including the actual vignettes which were pivotal to the study. Ultimately, this chapter identifies the sources of data and explains the procedures for the collection, management and analysis of data.

The study's findings are presented in Chapter Four. A feature of this chapter is the presentation of the research findings in the form of 'first order constructs' (Hughes, 1990), the use of the 'first person' format reducing researcher bias and enhancing validity. Member checks provided the respondents with the opportunity to verify the responses that they themselves had given. Chapter Five consists of the analysis and interpretation of the research findings in line with the study's stated approach to data analysis, namely Elliott's (1985) three step procedure for the analysis of dilemmas used in conjunction with the Response Classification Framework.

The final chapter, Chapter Six offers a discussion of the results, identifies a number of implications and presents a summary conclusion of the research study. In particular, Chapter Six makes a number of links between the study's findings and the existing body of knowledge previously outlined in Chapter Two, the literature review.

SUMMARY

School administrators function in a difficult, often turbulent environment in which a multiplicity of values compete and conflict for validity and recognition. No less than other principals, Australian Catholic school principals confront confusion, inconsistency, diversity, contrast, and conflict among the values, expectations, and demands that have voice within the situations in which they operate.

Despite the rapidly changing context and situation of Catholic schools, their principals are charged with the responsibility of contributing to the development of a definitive school culture through their decisions and actions about which there is little moral certainty, even within the Church itself. Not only is it onerous on the principal to act morally in the face of increasing ambiguity, it is an imperative of the Catholic Church that the principal's actions contribute to the ongoing formation of a distinctly Catholic school culture. The focus of this study is to determine how principals in Catholic school settings actually respond to the moral and ethical dilemmas they encounter within their professional role.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents a review of the literature pertaining to the research problem and the context in which it exists. Due to the infancy of the field of value inquiry in educational administration there has been little direct consideration given to the problem of how principals respond to moral and ethical dilemmas in the post modern era. Nonetheless, the nature and influence of values and the significance of value conflicts for school administrators are gaining prominence in the work of those concerned with understanding the complex nature of schools and the interactions that occur within their walls. In this latter regard there is a vast amount of existing peripheral literature relevant to the research focus of this study.

Given that the principals in Catholic school settings work for and operate within the overarching world-wide structures of the Catholic Church, this literature review begins with a detailed consideration of the historical context of the Church itself. The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education's (SCCE, 1988) fundamental concern that its Christian faith 'inspire every culture' implies that a consideration of culture is central to any consideration of the Church and its agencies. At the same time, the importance of culture in all organizations has become a major focus of attention within the business and education literature.

In the last five years a number of researchers (e.g., Campbell, 1992; Begley, 1996a; Begley & Johansson, 1997; Leonard, 1997) have identified the importance and the

influence of values in the ongoing formation of school culture. Increasingly, notions of school culture recognize that the inherent complexities and dynamics hinge on “variations in value orientations and value conflicts” (Leonard, 1997: 5). Hence, issues relating to school culture, values and value conflicts are reviewed within this chapter. Ultimately, this literature review turns its attention to specific value conflicts (moral and ethical dilemmas) and how school administrators respond to them. In this way, Chapter Two outlines the conceptual framework which underpins the study, including an explication of a response classification framework developed from the literature specifically for this investigation into principals’ responses to moral and ethical dilemmas in Catholic school settings.

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE CHURCH

Given that only 30 years have elapsed since the Second Vatican Council, its full significance and impact are yet to be realized. Already, the extent of the radical paradigm shift produced by the Council has been such to characterize Vatican II as one of the most significant events in the 2000 year history of the Church. Held in Rome from 1962 to 1965, the Council issued 16 constitutions, decrees and declarations on a wide variety of topics, from liturgical worship to the Church’s relationships to the modern world. For many, such were the effects of the Council that the history of the Church has been permanently divided into two distinct periods, pre - and post-conciliar.

Pre-Vatican II

History belies the oft-repeated observation that the Roman Catholic Church remains forever unchanged, locked in a 'fortress mentality', unable to come to terms with modernity (Muggeridge, 1986). As an organization that has survived almost 2000 years, the Church has adapted, evolved and reformed in response to the internal and external influences of the frequently remarkable challenges of past centuries. As many commentators have long observed (Demereath & Hammond, 1969), Catholicism's instinct for survival has been extraordinary in that the Church has consistently accommodated significant historical influences while defending a traditional core of doctrine. Yet, at times the Church has fervently resisted change, often through inaction, condemning such forces as Arianism, Pielagianism, Monophysitism, Jansenism, the Protestant Reformation, Americanism and Modernism (Appleby, 1984; Greeley, 1979).

In contrast to much of its history, the Catholic Church adopted a resistive, defensive orientation throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Ecumenical Council of 1869-70 (Vatican I) confirmed the Church's well established patriarchal structure, its hierarchical system of authority, papal infallibility, feudalism, the monopolistic control over its members, and the obedience of the membership to Rome as the rightful center of the Universal Church. A 'siege' mentality took hold as the Church 'dug in' against the forces of industrialism, the Reformation and modernism (Rynne, 1968; Hasler, 1981; Arbuckle, 1990).

Pope Pius IX in his "Syllabus of Errors" (1864) condemned "that erroneous opinion most pernicious to the Catholic Church ... namely, that liberty of conscious and of

worship is the right of every human being” (in Swidler, 1986: 317). In 1907 Pope Pius X issued a decree condemning the so-called Modernists within the Church who sought to bring new scientific and technological knowledge into the Church. In 1917, a new Canon Law forbade “Catholics from participating in disputations or discussion with non-Catholics without the permission of the Holy See” (Canon 1325,3). In 1919, 1927, 1948, 1949 and 1954 the Vatican refused to participate in the ecumenical movement gaining momentum in the other Christian churches (Swidler, 1986). During the period between the two Vatican Councils (1870-1962), the Catholic Church developed a bureaucratic centrism primarily concerned with establishing a closed, anti-world, universal conformity, banning books, blocking innovation, and disciplining theologians in the process (Hebblethwaite, 1991).

The ‘Catholic’ alternative to the forces and forms of an increasingly evil (modern) world was proffered to protect the membership. ‘Catholic’ sociology, ‘Catholic’ rules and directives, ‘Catholic’ versions of marriage, sex, family structures and human relationships, ‘Catholic’ solutions to the problems of war, poverty, overpopulation, education and so forth, and Church insistence on obedience (sometimes by coercion and often by sanction) became entrenched as the only safe alternatives if the purity of the Faith was to be preserved. Seemingly oblivious to its own Euro-centric customs, aristocratic orientation and narrow Roman perspective (Arbuckle, 1993), the Church clung grimly to its long held belief that it was for people to be changed by religion, not religion to be affected by people or their culture (O’Malley, 1971).

As the forces of the Industrial Revolution and the Enlightenment gained momentum, the Church withdrew even further. Technological innovation including improvements in communication, transport, the production and reproduction of literature, medical and scientific developments, industrial advances and a host of other technological advancements occurred through the mediation of emerging social structures, themselves created and influenced by technological developments. Wide ranging changes and emerging social structures combined to challenge the basic assumptions of a monolithic Church. Increased recognition of minority groups, improved educational opportunities for ordinary people, the effects of spreading urbanization, worldwide changes in population, the emergence of new nations, and significant developments in ecumenism were but some of the forces that threatened the Church's defensive stance to the world. The varied effects of a number of dramatic historical events including World War I and II, the Holocaust, the civil rights movement, the spirit of new ideologies such as equality, liberty, personal and religious freedom, and professionalism swept the world as the Church struggled vainly to withstand the force of their impact (Siedler & Meyer, 1989).

Predictably, the world's failure to heed the Church's 'Catholic' view of the world:

was seen by numerous popes from Pius IX to Pius XII as the cause of much of its sufferings and disasters ... God as now condemning and punishing the world for its failure to listen to the Vicars of Christ (Arbuckle, 1993:24).

Vatican II

In 1962, Pope John XXIII decided, in his own words, to 'open the windows of the Church and let in some fresh air', by calling the Second Vatican Council. His opening

address paved the way for a radical paradigm shift, a revolution the like of which had never been seen in the Church before:

The council now beginning rises in the Church like daybreak, a forerunner of splendid light. It is now only dawn ... the new conditions and the new forms of life introduced into the modern world ... have opened new avenues to the Catholic apostolate ... Divine Providence is leading us to a new order of human relations (cited in McBrien, 1992: 13).

After a long series of protracted debates, often heated exchanges and frequent papal interventions, the Council finally put its stamp of approval on a very different Church. Vatican II endorsed a new self-perception of the Church as the 'People of God', an imperfect body of people who, like all peoples, shared responsibility for the state of the world and for finding just, equitable and peaceful solutions to its many problems. The Twenty-First Ecumenical Council elevated the importance of the laity, devalued papal authority and infallibility in favor of a more collegial authority, stressed the 'local' rather than 'universal' Church, redefined marriage, family life and procreation, radically revised forms of worship and religious practices, acknowledged the authenticity of other religions, embraced ecumenism, acknowledged the right of the individual to make 'informed' moral decisions, and endorsed a proactive openness to the modern world (Seidler & Meyer 1989; McBrien, 1992; Greeley, 1979, 1981). In condemning the long held view that the Church was outside of history, Pope Paul VI¹ made a public apology for the past sins of the Roman Catholic Church (Arbuckle, 1992).

The Council itself was beset with disagreement, conflict, resistance, political intrigue and subterfuge. Long standing tension simmered both inside the Council and out, causing a gulf to develop between what the literature has come to refer to as conservative

(traditional) and liberal Catholicism (National Catholic Reporter, 1964-65). Subsequent literature has focused on the effects of these forces in the generation of movement and counter-movements as pre- and post-conciliar Catholicism struggled for supremacy over the coming decades.

Although most Church scholars, commentators and sociologists (e.g., Kung, 1976; Swidler, 1986; Rahner, 1974; Greeley, 1981; Berger, 1977) have focused on the differences between the 'conservative' and 'liberal' forces crystallized by Vatican II, others have preferred to emphasize the larger picture of a 'survivor' church which embraces both forms of Catholicism. Regardless of perspective, there is little doubt that Catholic schools exist within a post-conciliar context:

marked at the same time by uncertainty, demoralization, conflict, and alienation, on one hand, and by a remarkable liturgical, ministerial, and spiritual renewal, on the other. (McBrien, 1992: xiv)

Vatican II: The Aftermath

At the time of the Second Vatican Council, the world itself was in a tumultuous phase known as the 'Expressive Cultural Movement' whereby "the world towards which the Church was opening its windows was in an unusually intense cultural upheaval; no value, custom or institution was unaffected" (Arbuckle, 1993: 51). Mixed reception of the various interpretations of Vatican II around the world produced a clash of grief, anger and resentment with joy, excitement and optimism as Catholics sought to understand and implement the new spirit in the Church. In overturning the recommendation of his own theological commission and contrary to the high degree of widely anticipated leniency,

Paul VI's 1968 decree on birth control (*Humane Vitae*) ignited simmering turmoil among the Church membership: "The resultant explosion of expectation and anxiety-created counter reactions startled all with its intensity and ferocity" (Arbuckle, 1993: 50). The Roman Catholic Church plunged into chaos, unable to adapt to or accommodate the radical cultural changes within and beyond its own walls.

Inconsistency plagued the implementation of the new decrees. The increase in authority and importance of the local Church precipitated multiple interpretations of the documents and a wide variation in subsequent teachings and practices. Many conservatives were struck by the apparent urgency by which implementation was to proceed, the overturning of tradition and established ritual both harsh and immediate. The forcefulness of the implementation in the absence of an adjustment phase also startled liberal Catholics, surprised by the obvious contrast between the Vatican II themes and the Vatican expectation of unquestioning obedience and rigid conformity to the 'new' Church. Insightful Catholics began to question whether the Vatican hierarchy was to be exempt from Vatican II. In the face of the enormous disappointment of *Humane Vitae* contrary to the newly espoused values of personal freedom and 'informed' individual morality, large numbers of Catholics apparently decided to make their own judgments and abide by them (Greeley, 1977; O'Connor, 1968).

Meanwhile conflict raged between Catholics at all levels and across a wide spectrum of issues. The diocesan setting became a battleground. Many bishops actively resisted the changes and especially the undermining of hierarchical authority. The bishops' 'business-as-usual strategy' sparked a rebellion amongst the lower clergy (Siedler &

Meyer, 1989). Disobedience, insubordination, confrontation, and resignation became the norm as priests embraced post-conciliar values of consultative leadership and clergy autonomy. Numerous other problems surfaced as patterns of maladjustment or disarticulation (Janowitz, 1978) arose from the confused meshing of the anguishing differences of traditional and liberal orientations (Fickter, 1974).

Pope Paul VI issued a number of decrees designed to clarify, promote and enforce the changes, including the 1971 decree that all dioceses create priest's senates, advisory (pastoral) councils and other collegial structures to ensure that 'sacred responsibility' became a reality. In practice, many bishops and priests often ignored the advice of their advisory councils, causing varying levels of disillusionment and resentment amongst the laity. As the 'official' Church (the Vatican) sought to overturn the long entrenched preconciliar values amongst the diocesan bishops and some clergy, the pre-Vatican II mentality persisted within the Roman Curia² (Murphy, 1981). Ironically, the powerful hierarchical Vatican structures remained largely untouched, used by some to resist changes and by others, perhaps unwittingly, to impose them. The Church became engulfed in yet another crisis, a crisis of credibility.

Restorationism

Since the beginning of his pontificate in 1978 Pope John Paul II has sought "to end the confusion catalyzed by the Council" (Arbuckle, 1993: 58). In seeking to re-establish clear boundaries, definite structures, and formal procedures within the hierarchical framework, the Pope has called for a re-interpretation of Vatican II. Such an

interpretation focuses on the similarities between the pre- and post-conciliar Church, arguing that the perpetuated theme of radical discontinuity is a myth (McBrien, 1992). Central to this stance is that the vast majority of doctrines actually remained unchanged by the Second Vatican Council, itself just one of twenty-one such Councils held in the Church's illustrious history. Hence Church radicals, media representation and the forces of cultural confusion already rampant in the wider society combined to 'derail' the real intent of the Council which was seen as primarily defensive, "not as a springboard for a revitalized mission to the world" (Hebblethwaite, 1991: 1450).

Given the previously impenetrable position adopted by the Roman Curia, the Vatican Church under the long reign of Pope John Paul II has willingly and eagerly led what many commentators refer to as a 'restorationist' movement which seeks to return to:

the uncritical reaffirmation of pre-Vatican II structures and attitudes in reaction to the stress resulting from the theological and cultural turmoil generated by the changes of the Council and the modern world at large. (Arbuckle 1993: 3)

Sociologists such as Seidler and Meyer (1989) detail a long list of actions, decrees, proclamations and sanctions imposed by this Pope, obviously designed to curtail a movement that had gone too far. As conservative forces welcome the centrally-led support for a return to pre-Vatican II values, teaching and practice, liberal theologians (e.g., Kung, 1987; Swidler, 1987; Walf, 1986) argue that the Vatican has betrayed Vatican II. Various critics argue that the Vatican has returned to a pre-conciliar hierarchy, re-established clericalism, undermined collegiality, fostered 'fundamentalist' movements, and centralized authority back in the Roman Church.

Perhaps the clearest expression of the restorationist movement is contained in the 1983 revision of the Code of Canon Law, the 1752 laws which govern the Church. In reaffirming the tripartite structure of the Church (Vatican, diocese, parish), the new laws stress the power and authority of the Pope who ‘by virtue of his office enjoys supreme, full, immediate and universal ordinary power in the Church which he can freely exercise’ (Canon 331). The pope has complete legal power over all aspects of the Church including individual parishes, there being “neither appeal nor recourse against the decision or decree of the Roman Pontiff” (Canon 333, 3). He receives advice and support from the College of Cardinals, the College of Bishops and the Roman Curia (Canon 349, 337, 367). At the next level (the diocese), the bishop has “all the ordinary, proper and immediate power which is required for his pastoral office” (Canon 381). At the third level, the parish priest “under the authority of the diocesan bishop” (Canon 519), “represents the parish in all juridic affairs” (Canon 532). The bishop may mandate that a pastoral council be established in each parish (Canon 536 #1); the council restricted to “a consultative vote” (Canon 536 #2). Despite the promise of Vatican II, many Catholics resonate with Brady’s (1986) question “Has anything really changed?”

Canon Law and the Vatican hierarchy may have added considerable weight to the conservative struggle, but a return to a pre-Vatican Church seems unrealistic, if not whimsical. Sociologists such as Seidler and Meyer (1989) note the general agreement that Vatican II has produced a true social movement (an *aggiornamento*) of modernization in the Church. Monolithic Catholicism has been replaced by an acceptance by Catholics of a variety of multiple legitimacies. The overwhelming cultural influences of the world on the

Church and its Catholics as recognized and endorsed by the documents of Vatican II can not be denied or turned back. For Catholics and for Church agencies such as Catholic schools, the real issue has become “whose interpretations will prevail? Whose reconstruction of old and new elements will stand?” (Seidler & Meyer, 1989: 34).

THE AUSTRALIAN CONTEXT

With the postmodern agenda now a world-wide phenomenon, Australia too has suffered “convulsions in many established organizations such as the churches, police forces, public service, universities, health services and businesses” (Duignan, 1997: 1). Social commentators such as Mackay (1996: 49) argue that Australia is “in the midst of an Age of Redefinition in which all of the traditional reference points for defining the Australian way of life have either vanished, moved or are themselves being redefined.” This new Age is characterized by a complex blend of external and internal forces peculiar to the Australian context.

Australia’s leading sociologist, Hugh Mackay, argues that Australia is seeking to forge a new social and political identity as it reacts and responds to recent radical changes and major emergent trends. In the last two decades Australians have been redefining gender roles and changing previously stable patterns of marriage, divorce, and family structures. Changes to the composition of the Australian household have altered patterns of eating, shopping, mass media consumption, and work and leisure habits. The emergence of the ‘working mother’ as a mainstream social phenomenon has drastically altered the dynamics of family life and the character of the workplace. As Australian

society has become unsettled, unstable and insecure, there has been dramatic increases in domestic violence, drug abuse, youth crime, and teenage suicide (Mackay 1993; Graetz & McAllister, 1994).

As a society and as individuals, Australians are struggling with issues of national identity, multiculturalism, racism, unemployment, recognition of indigenous peoples, environmental responsibility, the information explosion, technological innovations, a declining confidence of the people in the major political parties, institutions, health and education systems, along with a host of other contingencies. In particular, social commentators have begun to describe the alienation and disconnectedness felt by large numbers of Australian youth. Trainor (1990: 5) argues that:

The horrific growth in the suicide rate among people under the age of 24, the increase in drug abuse and drug related deaths, the decline in employment opportunities - all reflect the confusion, hopelessness and loneliness that lie behind all the statistics.

Joyce (1996: 56) describes the increasing homelessness of Australian youth as a tangible sign of the more prevalent spiritual homelessness suffered across all spectrums of society. Findings based on a two year national study (Campbell, McMeniman & Baikaloff, 1992) to inform an educational curriculum appropriate for Australian society into the next millennium found Australians believed that moral responsibility and human spirituality were fundamental ideals which should characterize a desirable Australian society; ideals which should inform desirable educational goals (McMeniman, 1994).

Mackay (1993, 1996) identifies a number of major challenges facing Australia in the late 1990s including: 1) the dramatic increase in the imposition of rules and regulations

in order to promote or regain stability and control, particularly in matters previously residing in the domain of moral judgment and obligation; 2) the increasingly uneven distribution of work with a resultant increase in those households in the low or high income brackets as the once predominate middle class declines and 3) the culpability of the communication technology revolution in the loss by individuals of a sense of belonging to a community.

The Catholic Church takes its place in Australian society, inevitably affected by the overwhelming forces and influences of postmodern times, finding particular expression within the context thus far described. The last two decades have seen the familiar signs of the postconciliar Church within the developed countries: dismay, confusion, upheaval, loss of clergy, declining numbers, and declining respect for the Church and its teachings (Arbuckle, 1993). Joyce (1996) argues that the initial crisis of authority caused by Vatican II has become a crisis of authenticity as the Church struggles to achieve coherence between declared values and particular stands taken. This incoherence is nowhere more evident than in the Church's pre-occupation with protecting its property, its power and the Vatican its statehood, in stark contrast to its espoused primary commitment to the poor. The same dissonance is evident in the Church's spoken commitment to the equality of the sexes as it appears that "true inclusivity as a value holds when it is convenient and nothing really has to change" (Joyce, 1996: 60). Similarly, the Church's commitment to democratic principles is relevant for governments and institutions but apparently not for the Church itself. Increasingly, the authenticity of the clergy is at risk as the difference between their public and private beliefs become more evident to themselves and others.

The situation is exacerbated by a prevailing culture of fear within the Church about speaking out, arising from the punitive experiences of those who have carried their views into the public realm. In recent years a reluctant Australian Church is being forced to account for the sexual abuse by clergy in the first instance and the accompanying veil of dishonesty, denial, hypocrisy, secrecy, and self protective actions in the second (Joyce, 1996).

Against this background, Australian Catholic schools continue to be a major expression of the Church's presence in society. Bhindi and Duignan (1996) argue that the overarching complexities and turbulence of recent times have raised fundamental issues and tensions relating to the management, leadership, structures, and cultures of religious, educational, public service and business organizations. Traditional understandings of leadership so evident in the hierarchical structures of the Church and its education system are challenged by new perspectives of leadership as "service, as stewardship and as a value-driven, transformational force" (Duignan, 1997: 2). Support for Hodgkinson's (1991) fundamental contention that administration is a 'moral art' is gathering apace (e.g., Covey, 1992; Sergiovanni, 1992; Starratt, 1994; Duignan, 1997). The recent penchant in developed countries for managerial efficiencies and organizational effectiveness (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Peters & Waterman, 1982; Senge, 1990) is challenged by "a restlessness in some quarters about the neglect of the human side of the enterprise in a rampant pursuit of profits, prestige and outcomes" (Duignan, 1997: 2). In Australia, increasing emphasis is being placed on the role of the school which:

has become more and more critical with the progressive fragmentation of society as seen in the decline in respect for authority, the rejection of moral standards, the break-up of families, selfish materialism, unemployment, and the emphasis on violence for entertainment in the media. (McGuire, 1997: 6)

In Australia and across the world, school administrators are challenged to be authentic leaders as common agreement begins to emerge that “the central questions of administration deal not so much with what is, but with what ought to be; they deal with values and morality” (Hodgkinson, 1991: 7).

CULTURE

In highlighting the lack of consensus as to the meaning of the term “culture,” Erickson (1987) refers to a book-length review by Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) which unsuccessfully attempted to resolve the debate as to the most appropriate usage of the term, despite a consideration of hundreds of its uses. According to Williams (1961) in Bates (1987) there are three general definitions of culture: 1) The ‘ideal’ in which culture is a process whereby human perfection is achieved in terms of certain universal values; 2) The ‘documentary’ in which culture is the body of intellectual and creative works encompassing the recorded experiences and thoughts of mankind recorded; and 3) The ‘social’ whereby culture is a particular way of life which expresses meanings and values in art, in learning, in institutions and in behavior.

This third concept of ‘social’ culture encompasses what is commonly referred to as organizational culture. Deal (1985: 605) defines organizational culture as “the informal, implicit - often unconscious side of business or any human organization.” Lambert (1978:

54) offers a more tangible definition of organizational culture as “the set of beliefs, assumptions, and attitudes held by a given set of people.” Pettigrew (1979) in Conway (1985) extends this view to include a family of concepts such as “symbol, language, ideology, belief, ritual and myth.” More specifically, Wilson (1971) in Corbett, Firestone and Rossman (1987: 37) defines culture as the “socially shared and transmitted knowledge of what is, and what ought to be, symbolized in act and artifact.”

Schein (1985) lists some six common meanings associated with the term ‘organizational culture’ found in the literature, including: observed behavioral regularities, group norms, the dominant group values, the philosophy of the organization, the ‘rules’ of the game and the feeling or climate of the organization. In rejecting all six interpretations as mere reflections of the organization’s culture and not the culture itself, Schein (1985) contributes greatly to the understanding of school culture through his identification of three levels of culture in an organization: *Level 1: Artifacts and Creations* which describes the visible level of culture including the physical and social environment, ceremonies, rituals, behavior patterns, language and artistic productions. Underlying these day-to-day behaviors and operating procedures is *Level 2: Values* which are comprised of the shared convictions and core beliefs of the group. Often these are molded into a particular philosophy which assists in resolving the difficult problems which face the organization. However, identification of the group’s values does not always explain contradictory behavior. In order to achieve a deeper understanding and to predict future behavior, it is necessary to analyze *Level 3: Basic Underlying Assumptions*. Underlying what an organization does are those non-confrontable, non-debatable, implicit assumptions and

beliefs of a group or organization; the essence of culture. Schein (1984: 3) explains the cyclical relationship of values, behavior and assumptions:

Such assumptions are themselves learned responses that originated as espoused values. But, as a value leads to a behavior, and as that behavior begins to solve the problem which prompted it in the first place, the value gradually is transformed into an underlying assumption about how things really are.

Schein's third level of culture is the most hidden and yet most significant aspect of culture, described by Conway (1985) as including the primitive beliefs, values and assumptions that have evolved in an organization and are unconsciously adhered to by its members. The basic underlying assumptions give rise to the particular traits, behaviors and artifacts which characterize an organization such as a school. Similarly, Caldwell and Spink's (1992: 68) distinguish between "intangible manifestations" of school culture (assumptions, values and beliefs) and "tangible manifestations" which include language, behavior, the buildings, and artifacts. A culture is considered to be 'strong' where the members of the school share values and beliefs and 'weak' where a diversity of core values and beliefs are held by the members.

Hence, organizational culture is a system of shared value orientations which describes and gives meaning to life, making sense of events, language and behavior in given situations (Corbett, Firestone & Rossman, 1987). The underlying pattern of basic assumptions and values hold the group or organization together, giving "it a distinctive identity" (Hoy, Tarter, & Kottkamp, 1991: 5).

SCHOOL CULTURE

The notion of school culture is shrouded in conceptual ambiguity, heightened by the increasing research interest of those who seek to understand schools and how they might be improved. Even a cursory glance at the related literature reveals wide-spread conceptual confusion, evidenced by the frequent interchangeable use of the terms 'school culture', 'school climate', and 'educational climate'. Writers concerned with Catholic schools seemingly compound the problem by the indifferent use of additional terms such as 'identity', 'ethos', 'atmosphere', and 'spirit'. Close study of the literature reveals that even though these terms are often substituted one for the other, the meanings of the concepts they refer to are not necessarily synonymous.

In the systems-rationalist, positivistic rush to identify, measure and manage yet another school variable, much of the education literature has been pre-occupied with understanding the structural dimensions of schools. From this perspective, concepts such as climate and culture refer to those collection of elements within the school setting which can be manipulated in order to achieve school improvement. However, many commentators now differentiate between 'climate' and 'culture' in order to accommodate the view that 'school culture' defines the social and phenomenological uniqueness of a school community (Beare, Caldwell & Millikan, 1989).

Conway (1985) argues that the rediscovery of the culture concept is a result of the comparisons between American and Japanese business productivity that surfaced in the 1980s. Deal (1985) and Conway (1985) identify a number of prominent authors in the business literature (e.g., Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Blanchard & Johnson, 1982; Peters &

Waterman, 1982) who linked the productivity of successful companies to their underlying beliefs and values. From this perspective, organizational culture was viewed as a 'man-made' phenomenon which stressed the importance of beliefs and values which became manifest through the tools, symbols, customs, language, rituals, and myths of the organization. As the interests of the business community began to impinge on educational reforms, the educational community began to focus on school effectiveness. Hence, the 'school effectiveness' literature took hold as the emerging trends of school improvement and restructuring began to dominate the education agenda.

Much of the new 'school effectiveness literature' (e.g., Brookover et al., 1979; Duignan, 1985; Purkey & Smith, 1983) equated culture with climate, a tendency readily apparent in the Australian Catholic school literature (e.g., Flynn 1985; Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education 1983, 1988). Underlying this 'effective schools movement' was an enthusiasm for the notion that school improvement was possible by the identification and manipulation of the school's culture or climate. Critics warned of the false confidence gained by the ready reduction of the complexities, subtleties and intricacies of school improvement to a set of measurable variables for subsequent manipulation (Wilson, Corbett & Webb, 1994).

In seeking to address some of the conceptual confusion within the literature, Anderson (1982) argues that climate is more general than culture in that it includes culture along with ecology (the school's physical traits), milieu (the characteristics of the people in the school) and the social system (the relationships among administrators, teachers and

students). From this perspective, culture refers to the common set of values, beliefs and practices held by various groups within the school.

Anderson's conceptualization of culture and climate enables educational developments over recent decades to be placed in perspective. The controversial findings of Coleman et al.(1966) which concluded that school did not make a difference to academic achievement involved a study of ecological and milieu variables such as the size, age and condition of the school, the availability of textbooks, teacher salaries, socio-economic status and expenditure per pupil. The 'effective schools' movement of the 1980's focused on the social system in its concern with the relationship between the conditions that exist in a school (e.g., strong leadership, safe and orderly environment, time on task, positive home-school relationships) and student outcomes.

The notion of school culture proposed by Anderson (1982) dates back as far as Waller (1932: 103) who noted that:

Schools have a culture that is definitely their own. There are in the school complex rituals of personal relationships, a set of mores, folkways, and irrational sanctions, a moral code based on them.

According to Sergiovanni and Corbally (1984), school culture includes what is shared by those in the school. The 'stuff' of school culture is the values, beliefs and meanings which determine the school's traditions and customs, as well as the habits, norms and expectations of those within it. Bates (1982: 10) refers to this as 'cultural baggage': "the school's beliefs, languages, rituals, knowledge, conventions, courtesies and artifacts from which the individual and social identities are constructed." Pejza (1985) argues that school culture is the thing that distinguishes one school from another, what

Flynn (1985: 163) in reference to Catholic schools calls their social climates, ethos or spirit.

The conception of school culture as the values, beliefs and assumptions that underpin life in the school, resists the determination of 'quick-fix' school improvement strategies based on the findings of an evaluation of school culture or climate. Values and beliefs do not readily reveal themselves for measurement or manipulation. Qualitative researchers into school culture reject the objective measurements offered by school climate checklists in favor of seeking to describe the relationships between actions and meanings within schools. An interpretive approach presumes that culture:

while manifest in behavior, is not the behavior itself but rather the mechanism for making sense of behavior - the interpretative lenses through which individuals view the world and themselves in that world (Wilson, Corbett & Webb, 1994: 5209).

Such a view recognizes that whilst enduring patterns of cultural transmission persist in schools, the determination of a school's culture is a political struggle that involves the intervention, construction, and negotiation of new and different patterns of values, behaviors, and beliefs. Moreover, this perspective affords an understanding of how schools change and why such differences exist amongst individual schools. Hence, each school has its own unique culture and within each school there are many sub-cultures. The culture and sub-cultures of a school should be interpreted in terms of the whole way of life of the organization (Bates, 1987). As Wyner (1991: xv) observes:

The grammars created in the culture of the school must be listened to and understood if we are to interpret and improve schools. Within the culture of any particular school, persons work amidst complex and interconnected relations, rooted in language, tradition, custom, history and perceived social status - a

complex equation of possibilities, disappointments, implications and meanings concealed or conveyed, depending on the values and attitudes of participants.

CATHOLIC SCHOOL CULTURE

The Church documents regarding education are primarily concerned with the achievement of an authentic Catholic identity in their schools. Confusingly, commentators both within and outside of the Church have couched their discussions within a context where the interchangeable usage of such terms as 'ethos', 'spirit', 'identity', and 'climate' variously describes the specific character of Catholic schools. Underlying these conceptions is a basic concern that the core values operating in the school and the gospel values be one and the same. The Vatican's Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education asserts that:

It is precisely in the Gospel of Christ, taking root in the minds and lives of the faithful, that the Catholic School finds its definition as it comes to terms with the cultural conditions of the times. (SCCE, 1977: 13-14)

In acknowledging the complexity of developing a genuine Catholic school culture, the United States National Conference of Catholic Bishops (1972) observed that although no one form of a Catholic school is prescribed, the Christian purpose must always be evident. Plourde (1975) noted that the Catholicity of schools will be an ever relevant concern, particularly in view of the changing social, cultural and historical contexts in which they operate. The Catholic Church itself accepts that "certain elements will be characteristic of all Catholic schools. But these can be expressed in a variety of ways" (SCCE, 1983: 47).

In its most recent document, the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education (SCCE, 1988: 84) identifies a number of conditions which enhance the authenticity of the identity (culture) of the Catholic school including:

- all members of the school co-operating to achieve shared goals;
- individuals living out the Gospel values in their daily lives;
- relationships between those in the school community based on love and freedom;
- the school is open to all families, the Church and positive forces in society.

The document includes a list of potential problems which would threaten the Catholicity of the school's culture:

- the absence or poor definition of educational goals;
- poor training of those responsible for the school;
- cold, impersonal or non-co-operative relationships;
- individuals giving a negative witness through their daily lives;
- The school becoming isolated from the local Church and society.

The notion of school culture as the shared assumptions, beliefs, values and norms of behavior found ready favor in Catholic school literature. Peters and Waterman's (1982: 280) conclusion that while resources, structures, and innovation weigh heavily in success, these aspects are "transcended by how strongly the people in the organization believe in its precepts and how faithfully they carry them out," resonated with those concerned with the identity and distinctiveness of the Catholic school. In a major study of the culture of Australian Catholic schools, Flynn (1993: 33) developed the following definition of culture

based on the effective schools literature (e.g., Peters & Waterman, 1982; Deal & Kennedy, 1982):

The culture of a Catholic school expresses the core beliefs, values, traditions and symbols which provide meaning to the school community and which help to shape the lives of students, teachers and parents. Culture in the daily life of a school provides stability, fosters certainty, encourages predictability and creates meaning.

This appealing, if somewhat simplistic perspective belies the inherent complexity involved in understanding how school cultures develop, how they might be enhanced, and how school leaders wittingly and unwittingly shape, influence, and interfere in the ongoing formation of what constitutes the culture of the school.

With little common agreement about how school cultures develop (Fullan, 1990), investigations into this aspect typically begin with an understanding of culture as shared meanings (Leithwood, Begley & Cousins, 1994). Alternatively, some critical theorists (e.g., Bates, 1986; Anderson, 1991) argue that the concept of shared beliefs and values denies the daily political struggles that pre-empt the outcomes of schools. From this perspective, school culture is dependent upon the conflicting and competing determinations of what is to count as the dominant images, beliefs, values and meanings in the school. As Quantz (1992: 487) argues culture is:

not so much the area of social life where people share understandings as that area of social life where people struggle over understandings. Culture is a contested terrain with multiple voices expressed through constitutive power relations.

A critical perspective recognizes the inherent internal and external components that resist trivialization of the conceptualization of school culture. Not only do participants in schools struggle over which and whose perspectives will exist internally, they encounter

external pressure, persuasion, resistance and encouragement in the negotiation of the final form that the school's culture takes in order to 'fit' with the wider community. Thus, the development of the culture of a Catholic school is a "highly interactive process of negotiation" (Flynn, 1993: 34) indicative of Bates' (1986: 10) contention that culture:

is not simply a pre-formed set of beliefs, values, mores and understandings which are passed on from one generation to another as if they were objects. Rather, culture is constructed and reconstructed continuously through the efforts of individuals to learn, master and take part in collective life.

In recent times, school leaders in restructured settings are considered to have a primary responsibility for building new school cultures (Deal & Peterson, 1990). A small, albeit cautiously growing body of literature (e.g., Beare, Caldwell & Millikan, 1989; Sergiovanni, 1992; Leithwood, Begley & Cousins, 1994) is concerned with how school administrators influence, reinforce and reshape school culture. Similarly, the Australian Catholic school literature argues that leaders in schools are primary responsible for the creation and development of genuine Catholic school cultures (Chapman 1984; Flynn, 1989, 1993; McDonald, 1993).

Despite Schein's (1984: 2) contention that "the only thing of real importance that leaders do is create and manage culture," Anderson (1991) warns that this understanding of school leadership is incompatible with the view of schools as sites of cultural and political struggle. As the concept of school culture is begun to be 'untangled', the positivistic approach of the school effectiveness movement makes way for a more accurate, albeit less simplistic, understanding of the complex mix of relationships, interpretations, actions, values, and expectations that characterize life in a school. Whilst

resisting 'quick-fix' manipulations of essential variables, the cultural perspective accepts that schools have unique cultures in which participants experience and make sense of their world from varying interpretative perspectives. Hence, this view suggests the possible intervention of new patterns of assumptions, beliefs, and values in the ongoing negotiation and construction of the form that this culture is to take.

For all the inconsistencies, conflict and uncertainty in the Church, the expectation that its schools embody a distinct and authentic Catholic culture remains of paramount importance. In the absence of any prescriptions as to how this might be achieved, the responsibility has fallen largely to the principal. With worldwide Catholicism under an increasing bureaucratic control, Australian Catholic school principals are in an unenviable position as to the determination as to which and whose ideology is authentic. The difficulty of the task is exacerbated by the multi-layered ambiguity that results from the fundamental differences that exist amongst bishops, clergy, Catholic Education Office personnel and the teachers, parents and children in the school community.

In essence the Church believes that a genuine Catholic culture is developed when the Gospel values underpin "a Christian way of thought and life which permeates all facets of the educational climate" (SCCE, 1988: 24). The challenge is for Catholic school principals to develop an authentic, distinctly Catholic culture despite the overarching confusion of a parent Church in disarray. Increasingly, societal pressures impinge on this determination as a plurality of values, understandings and expectations compete and conflict. Anderson's (1991) question of 'who do principals ultimately work for?' has

particular relevance to the Catholic school principals all too aware of the many, diverse opinions as to what form the Catholic culture of the school should take.

VALUES AND SCHOOL CULTURE

The critical perspective of school culture (e.g., Quantz, 1992; Anderson, 1991) focuses on school culture as a contested terrain in which conflicting and contrasting values compete for expression within the final form that the culture is to take. Leonard (1997) argues that traditional conceptions of culture as patterns of basic assumptions, beliefs and values which are learned and shared by a group and manifested in distinctive ways fail to account for the reality that culture is “actively created and contested against competing visions and values of what people in the organization should do” (Hargreaves, Earl & Ryan, 1996: 8). A focus on variations in value orientations and value conflicts underpins the contention that rather than investigate how members learn this culture “it would be more insightful to investigate how members in a group either *adopt*, *submit to*, or *resist* a dominant, or overarching, or strong culture” (Leonard, 1997: 5). Values and value conflicts are central to the ongoing negotiation of what form school culture is to take, since at the heart of the value question is the matter of choice. Implicit and explicit educational values impose burdens of choice and hence conflict in the determination of “which or whose cultural values are to be transmitted” (Leonard, 1997: 8).

The accepted notion of culture (e.g., Peters & Waterman, 1982; Schein, 1984; Caldwell & Spinks, 1992; Flynn, 1993) as the basic assumptions, values and beliefs which are shared by those in the organization is extended to an understanding of school culture

“as a phenomenon which is characterized by either one or more of the processes of consensus, negotiation, resistance, submission, and subversion” (Leonard, 1997: 23).

Understanding variations in value orientations and the inherent value conflicts is fundamental to any attempt to understanding and improving a school’s culture.

VALUES

Drawing on the contributions of Kluckhohn (1951) and Rokeach (1973) values in this study have been defined as standards held by an individual and group which guide one’s actions and thoughts, for influencing the actions and thoughts of others and for morally judging oneself and others. In the educational context, Beck (1990, 1993) and Hodgkinson (1978, 1991) have developed values theories in relation to describing inherent values in pursuit of the good life in the first instance, and motivational bases as the source of values, beliefs and actions in the second.

Hodgkinson’s (1978) analytical model of the value concept has specific application to the study of values in educational administration. The model distinguishes rational values based on consequences (Type IIa) and consensus (Type IIb) from non-rational values based on personal preference (Type III) or principle (Type I). These value types are arranged in a philosophical hierarchy across a continuum from what is “good’ or “desired” to what is “right’ or “desirable.” Good is simply a matter of personal preference, the primitive concern of subrational Type III values. Moving upwards in the hierarchy , values are progressively more justifiable in terms of the degree of ‘rightness’. Type IIb values are based on consensus, the will of the majority. Type IIa values are

concerned with the desirability of some future state adjudged through a rational analysis of perceived consequences. At the top of the hierarchy are Type I values which are transrational, taking the form of ethical codes, injunctions or commandments. The defining characteristic of Type I values is that “they are based on the will rather than upon the reasoning faculty; their adoption implies some act of faith, belief, commitment” (Hodgkinson, 1991: 99).

Hodgkinson’s value model is depicted as follows:

Analytical Model of the Value Concept			
Value Types	Grounding	Psychological Correspondences	Philosophical Correspondences
“Right”	Principle	Conative	Religionism (Transrational) Existentialism Ideologism I
	Consequences 2a	Cognitive	Humanism Pragmatism Utilitarianism II
	Consensus 2b		
“Good”	Preference	Affective	Logical Positivism Behaviorism Hedonism III

Figure 1. Hodgkinson’s Administrative Values (1978)

Hodgkinson's model not only provides a framework for the classification of motivational bases of three main value types, it supports the resolution of value conflicts.

In relation to both ends, Hodgkinson (1991) makes three claims:

- Type I values are superior, more authentic and better justified than Type II values which, in turn, are superior to Type III values.
- Values degenerate over time as authenticity or moral force is lost.
- Value conflicts tend to be resolved at the lowest possible level of the hierarchy.

Many contributors to the study of values acknowledge Hodgkinson's value theory as "the best known, most influential and specifically focused values theory applicable to educational administration" (Begley, 1996c: 10). Others, notably Evers (1985) and Lakomski (1987), hold a number of reservations and criticisms of the theory including the contradiction afforded by a functionalist separation of fact from value within a subjectivist perspective, the hierarchical structure of the values model, and the difficulty of distinguishing between transrational (Type I) and subrational (Type III) values.

Nonetheless, Hodgkinson's conception of value has contributed to a number of studies in educational administration (e.g., Begley 1988; Ashbaugh & Kasten, 1984; Lang, 1986) at a time when practitioners and theorists alike are increasingly concerned as to the influence of values in educational administration.

NATURE AND INFLUENCE OF VALUES IN EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

In accordance with Willower's (1992: 369) contention that "values are generally acknowledged to be central to the field" increasing scholarly attention has focused on the

nature and influence of values in educational administration. Yet any subsequent agreement has been short-lived with the values discourse “clouded by conceptual difficulties and epistemological wrangling” (Begley, 1996a: 554). Begley himself has contributed much clarity to the values topic through ongoing research and theorizing (e.g., Begley 1988, 1995, 1996c; Begley & Johansson, 1997). Begley (1996a) argues that the nature and function of values warrants study because:

- educational leadership involves decision making in which preferred alternatives are selected and others rejected;
- non-rational moral aspects have been traditionally neglected in favor of an over-emphasis on the technical and rational aspects of leadership;
- value conflicts are increasingly common in the postmodern environment;
- in administration, articulated values may differ from the values to which individuals and groups are actually committed;
- educational administrators need to be aware of the incompatibility that can exist between their fixed core values and those of the organization or community;
- administrative effectiveness is enhanced when administrators understand the actions of others and the sources and causes of value conflicts;
- in the mediation of value conflicts, administrators need to distinguish between personal, professional, organizational, and social values in particular situations.

Perhaps another reason why the study of values in educational administration is an increasingly important focus of study is the ready acknowledgment that practitioners give to the influence of values on their work:

a fact that seems to run counter to a prevailing stereotype of administrative practice which holds that administrators are more likely to be pragmatically and unreflectively focused on procedural matters. (Begley, 1996c: 6)

School administrators, perhaps long aware of the centrality of values to their work, are increasingly able to articulate the influence that the values of others have on the contested terrain of their school. As resultant value conflicts also increase in frequency and complexity, reflective practitioners (Schon, 1983; Sergiovanni, 1987) have become “conscious of how their own personal values may blind or illuminate the assessment of situations” (Begley, 1996c: 7). In any event the literature has begun to acknowledge what is now commonly accepted by practitioners, that value conflicts “are a part of the everyday work world of school leaders” (Leithwood, Begley & Cousins, 1994: 112).

VALUE CONFLICTS

Complex and turbulent demands of a postmodern world have brought uncertainty, ambiguity, disharmony, tension, and conflict to the educational forefront at a time when school administrators are struggling with issues of leadership authenticity, moral and ethical responsibility, and authoritative legitimacy. Increasingly, leaders are compelled to listen and respond to the ‘multiple voices’ of the individuals in their school community. Yet no one solution or course of action may exist that reflects the wide spectrum of values, beliefs and expectations expressed. Hodgkinson (1991: 93) acknowledges value choice as the central problem of administration:

To govern is to choose. One can accept or not accept the value dictates imposed by the particular organizational culture in which one works. One can aspire to or can disdain any of a number of systems of “ethics” ranging from workaholism to neo-Confucianism. One can allow, or not allow, one’s leadership to be swayed by values deriving from hedonism, ambition or careerism, or by the prejudices and affinities one has for colleagues and peers. Each day and each hour provides the

occasion for value judgments, and each choice has a determining effect on the value options for the future.

Hodgkinson's analytical value paradigm offers a mechanism for value adjudication through a consideration of whether the conflict occurs between the levels or at the same level of the values hierarchy. When interhierarchical conflict occurs "the ethical maxim is that the lower ranking value should be subordinated to the higher" (Hodgkinson, 1991: 146). In other words, matters of principle (Type I) hold ethical sway over those concerned with consequences (IIa) which themselves are superior to concerns of the majority (Type IIb). Personal preferences (Type III) are the lowest ranking values. Conflict of an intrahierarchical nature is not so readily addressed, with non-rational value conflicts involving Type I or Type III values very difficult to resolve. Although Type III intrahierarchical conflict based on personal preferences appears to hold little significance for school administration, Type I intrahierarchical conflict "poses the severest problem of all -- the rock on which men and nations have broken in the past and will continue to do so in the future" (Hodgkinson, 1991: 150). When two or more Type I (transrational) values are in conflict, Hodgkinson (1991: 150) is left to conclude that "there is no mode, no maxim, no strategy for determining the 'best' value." His only advice to the would-be ethical principal is to avoid the emergence of this form of value conflict.

Research to date (e.g., Campbell-Evans, 1988; Leithwood, Begley & Cousins, 1994) suggests that subrational and transrational value conflicts occur infrequently. Campbell (1996) notes that findings from empirical studies (e.g., Kirby, Paradise & Protti, 1992) support the contention that ethical considerations are subordinated by the rational

concerns of policy and strategy. Although some researchers (e.g., Evers & Lakomski, 1991) argue that non-rational values are inconsequential to the task of educational administration, others (e.g., Begley & Johansson, 1997) resist the ready dismissal of non-rational value motivational bases. The studies of Begley (1988), Ashbaugh and Kasten (1984) and Lang (1986) found that personal preferences were significant influences on decision making practices. The findings of Begley and Johansson (1997) concurred with those of Leithwood and Stager (1989) who found that in some instances non-rational values were important influences on administration practice, providing structure for problem solving situations in which principals lacked problem-relevant information. Where the principals knew a lot about the problem they rarely acknowledged the influence of values.

Begley and Johansson (1997: 4) suggest that part of the reason why the influence of non-rational values is contentious might be related to the less frequent articulation of non-rational values by principals "because of a prevailing social bias towards the rational value types." In addition, the possibility that non-rational values may be influential in administrative circumstances which are ambiguous, unique or urgent but not in others leads these researchers to argue that there is a need for further investigation into the influence of non-rational values on administrative practice. Despite the contention that transrational value conflicts occur relatively infrequently, on those occasions when they do occur and cannot be 'avoided' (Hodgkinson, 1991) resolution rests with the seemingly hapless practitioner. The focus of this study is on what principals actually do in response to moral and ethical value conflicts which may or may not occur infrequently.

TYPES OF MORAL AND ETHICAL DILEMMAS

School administrators experience at least five different types of moral dilemmas (Crowson, 1989; W. Greenfield, 1991) including those:

1. general ethical concerns relating to codes and standards of behavior which apply to all professions (e.g., equity, respect for others, justice).
2. concerned with standards of educational practice and appropriate pedagogy.
3. associated with the actual implementation of the preferred choice (e.g., contextual factors may compromise the implementation of the morally preferred alternative).
4. which arise because of the principal's idiosyncratic beliefs about the actual consequences of a particular option (e.g., another principal may have a completely different perspective which fails to recognize the same dilemma).
5. involving the implementation of system policies and directives which impinge on school level considerations and priorities.

For principals confronting frequent and complex value conflicts across this range of dilemmas, the reality remains that theirs is the task of resolution. In seeking to determine how school administrators actually resolved value conflicts, Leithwood, Begley, and Cousins (1994) reviewed two studies which found that principals encountered two types of value conflicts. Essentially, these involved resolving conflicts by choosing between two or more competing values and reconciling "an inability to act in a manner consistent with values held" (1994: 108).

Kirby, Paradise and Protti's (1992) study found that, according to principals themselves, the overwhelming majority of moral dilemmas they faced involved issues of teacher competence where extensive instructional supervision had failed to achieve the necessary improvement in performance. Similarly, in the studies of Ashbaugh and Kasten

(1984) and Leithwood and Stager (1989) principals identified personnel problems as the most difficult to resolve. Begley and Johansson (1997) agreed, finding that problems of an interpersonal nature were the most difficult to solve. Wignall (1994) observed that recent advances in medical diagnosis and treatment allow many teachers who live with chronic illness to continue to lead active, working lives. Increasingly, principals are profoundly affected by the moral dilemmas related to competency and the legitimate needs of teachers coping with illness.

ADMINISTRATORS' RESPONSES TO MORAL AND ETHICAL DILEMMAS

As outlined earlier, Hodgkinson (1978, 1991) describes values as being of three types: Type III values are subrational (based on preference), Type II values are rational (grounded in the determination of consequences and/or consensus), and Type I values are transrational (based on firmly held personal beliefs). In proposing that the levels are hierarchical, he argues that transrational (morals and ethics) are more authentic and better justified than rational or subrational values. Typically, principals resolve value conflicts at the lowest possible level, thereby avoiding moral issues. To the extent that leaders employ ethics, they are concerned with transrational values. Nonetheless, the majority of principals operate from a rational, objective, positivist perspective which conveniently ignores the real value dilemmas (Hodgkinson, 1991).

The studies of Begley (1988), Campbell-Evans (1988), Leithwood and Stager (1989), and Leithwood and Steinbach (1995) suggest that when dealing with value conflicts, principals usually select from a range of essentially rational responses. Begley

found that principals operated from the basis of Type II (rational) values; Campbell-Evans concluded that initially principals implemented system policy demands before working to change them; and Leithwood and Stager found that school administrators relied on their 'specific role-responsibility' as a value in problem solving, and Leithwood and Steinbach suggested that the most frequently used values were 'Professional Values' such as 'consequences for the students' and 'knowledge' which involved implementing the formal organizational policies and procedures where they existed and informal procedures such as collaboration and consensus where they did not.

In a study of value conflicts that confront school principals, Ashbaugh and Kasten (1984) identified three types of values employed by administrators. These were preference, operational (rational), and transcendent. According to the principals themselves, transcendent value conflict occurred only rarely. When the meta-values of the organization conflicted with their transcendent (transrational) values, the researchers identified three possible responses. Principals complied with the values of the organization (even if they personally believed them to be unjust), they compromised their own integrity in order to improve their career prospects or they chose to leave the role.

In a study of how teachers and principals cope with conflicting moral and ethical values, Campbell (1992) found that teachers readily identified three general responses made by them in responses to transrational value conflicts they encountered: 1) taking a moral stand; 2) suspending morality; and 3) conforming or complying. In stark contrast to the perceptions of teachers, Campbell found that principals believed that as agents of the public school system, they were largely unconcerned with moral and ethical dilemmas.

Administrators admitted to making decisions based on their own personal beliefs and values, whilst believing that generally the conflicts they addressed were not of a moral or ethical nature. Surprised and disappointed to discover the lack of a clear moral framework on the part of school administrators, Campbell argues that while teachers were concerned with such conflicts, principals viewed similar issues as being of a strategic, political, professional or practical nature. Campbell concluded that principals adopted a rationalist, technocratic, and bureaucratic approach in order to avoid or resolve transrational value conflicts in a consequential, utilitarian, and morally neutral manner.

A much unrecognized response to moral and ethical dilemmas involves adapting or modifying system policies, imperatives and programs to better 'fit' the individual school community. Creative Insubordination is usually harmless, at times devious and (rarely) destructive. Principals adopt this strategy to prevent system directives from impinging inappropriately on members of the school community. The attraction of this covert strategy for some principals is the possibility that any 'backlash' may be avoided.

LIMITATIONS OF THE CURRENT RESEARCH

Given the infancy of this field of inquiry, there are a number of obvious limitations in the values research including: the narrow range and limited use of research techniques, small sample sizes, the paucity of studies conducted, and the lack of established methodology for the identification of values. As the research to date has relied heavily on the individual's own account of their responses in actual or hypothetical situations, there is reason to be concerned about the validity of some of the findings and

the accuracy of subsequent conclusions. In reviewing studies described by Leithwood and Steinbach (1995), Corrigan (1995: 650) notes that the self-reports of principals are open to question “because what principals say they will do and what they actually do in practice may be quite different.”

If applied to individuals, Schein’s (1984) division of the domain of organizational values into espoused and unconscious (assumed) values explains much of the difficulty that may have misled researchers in their efforts to uncover principals’ values. To date the studies have identified ‘espoused’ values which principals have been aware of and willing to admit to holding, leaving non- debatable, unconscious, assumed values uncovered and undisturbed. These ‘unconscious’ values are likely to include a host of personal and professional values held by principals at a transrational level, such as providing for one’s family, projecting a positive image, protecting relationships with one’s employers and maintaining organizational stability, efficiency and effectiveness

Although the majority of the studies so far discussed began with the rejection of the rational, positivist view of the social world (e.g., Parsons, 1951; Simon, 1957; Jannis & Mann, 1977), in favor of a more subjectivist orientation (e.g., Greenfield, 1975; Hodgkinson, 1978; Schon, 1987; Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993) that recognizes the primacy of values, their subsequent findings indicate that in fact principals do make decisions from a rational perspective. Though the apparent contradiction seems lost on some of the researchers themselves, acceptance of these findings leads to the inevitable conclusion that principals generally subscribe to what is known as ‘rational choice theory’ (Crowson, 1989).

Alternatively, the findings of many of these studies can be challenged on a number of grounds, not the least of which is common sense. In these postmodern times, Campbell's (1992) somewhat naive acceptance of the supposition that teachers face moral and ethical dilemmas but that principals do not, stretch the limits of credibility beyond breaking point. In addition, the readiness with which some researchers have attributed particular values to the actions of others, casts doubt over their subsequent conclusions. For example, the designation of the value of 'respect for authority' by Campbell-Evans (1988), rather than say 'job security', 'career enhancement', or 'professionalism' to the decisions of principals to implement policy they did not personally agree with, highlights a major methodological difficulty in values research -- the determination of the actual intent underlying articulated values.

Begley and Johansson (1997) argue that it is common for administrators to deliberately or unknowingly articulate one value while being committed to another, usually lower down the values hierarchy. Schein (1984: 3) argues that the identification of values through such techniques as interviewing and observation is beset with the inherent problem of articulated values with undetermined intentions, because:

what people say is the reason for their behavior, what they ideally would like those reasons to be, and what are often their rationalizations for their behavior. Yet, the underlying reasons for their behavior remain concealed or unconscious.

A major contention of this paper is that the inference by some researchers (e.g., Campbell, 1992) and theorists (Hodgkinson, 1991) that consequentialist responses to value conflicts are intrinsically amoral is misguided and ill-formed. A principal's concern for consensus and consequences in no way implies a lack of moral or ethical principles on

his or her part. For example, a principal's concern for 'doing what's best for the children' is a predictable, yet common approach which is both rational and moral. Conversely, a principal's non-consequentialist commitment to fulfilling a professional role ethic such as 'supporting teachers no matter what' is no guarantee that any subsequent action is inherently moral. In short, rationality does not incur an automatic disposition to amoral or immoral action. Further, non-consequentialist approaches may be rational or non-rational, regardless of their morality. In other words moral and ethical values are not the sole domain of transrational or Type I values as Hodgkinson's value hierarchy suggests. Rather morals and ethics are values that occur across the range of rational and transrational values.

The focus of this study is moral and ethical dilemmas which occur at the transrational level and the subsequent principals' responses which may be motivated by values at any of the three value levels, transrational, rational and sub-rational.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Sabin (1954) in Grace (1972) distinguishes between 'inter-role' and 'intra-role' conflicts. Although the difficulty of resolving value conflicts arising from the professional and social demands and/or expectations impinging on school leaders as say principal, wife and mother (inter-role conflict) are of crucial importance to the individuals involved, this study is based on a consideration of value conflicts which occur within the professional role of school principal (intra-role conflict). While accepting that there are many occasions when school principals mediate value conflicts between others, the focus of this

study is on those moral value and ethical conflicts which occur when the principal's own system of personal and professional beliefs conflict with others. Whether they are internal or external to the school itself, such conflicts involve those collective values held by individuals and groups within the school community as well as those held by the school, the Catholic Education system or the Catholic Church.

Hodgkinson's (1978, 1991) hierarchical conception of three categories of values provides a useful philosophical framework for differentiating amongst the motivational bases of different types of values: Type III - (subrational) based on preference, Type II - (rational) grounded in the determination of consequences and/or consensus, and Type I - (transrational) based on firmly held personal principles or beliefs. For this study's purposes, Hodgkinson's typology of values is drawn upon to differentiate transrational values from those held at the rational and subrational value levels. This differentiation forms the basis of the consideration of value conflicts occurring at the transrational level (moral and ethical dilemmas) which invoke responses which may be motivated by values held by principals at any of the three levels. Importantly, although the focus of this study is on moral and ethical dilemmas which occur at the transrational level, principals are at liberty to choose responses based on personal and professional values held at any level.

This inquiry is concerned with the nature of principals' responses to moral and ethical dilemmas, rather than whether a particular action is more ethical or more justifiable than another. A review of the small body of related literature identifies a range of possible responses to transrational value conflicts including: 1) avoidance, 2) suspending morality,

3) creative insubordination, and 4) personal morality. These responses form the basis of the classification framework outlined below.

Response Classification Framework

The framework has been developed for this study through a synthesis of the literature relating to the actual responses of school administrators to value conflicts arising from within their professional role. Each of the four elements of the response classification framework is described as follows:

1. Avoidance

As noted earlier, Hodgkinson (1991) recommends somewhat paradoxically, that administrators should avoid Type 1 value conflicts, a strategy that was clearly identified in many of the studies (e.g., Ashbaugh & Kasten, 1984; Campbell-Evans, 1988). Avoidance can be of two types: cognizant and non-cognizant. Cognizant avoidance typically occurs when principals are fully aware that the conflict they are dealing with is of a transrational nature and knowingly choose to reduce the conflict to a rational or sub-rational level in order to achieve resolution. Non-cognizant avoidance occurs when principals fail to grasp that particular moral and ethical issues are in contention. Usually this occurs when principals refuse or fail to recognize the real nature and depth of the conflict, preferring to deal with the issue at 'arm's length' through a reliance on formal and/or established procedures.

Both cognizant and non-cognizant avoidance responses are reductionalist in that the conflict is reduced or reclassified to a form that allows consequentialist and non-consequentialist solutions (Strike, Haller & Soltis, 1988). The consequentialist or teleological approach is based primarily on calculating the 'good' in terms of consequences, where the ends justify the means. The deontological or non-consequentialist approach is concerned with "some clear intrinsic view of the right or ones' duty ... an approach to ethics in which a sense of duty or principle prescribes the ethical decision" (Preston, 1996: 40). In essence, consequentialist theories argue that the sole determinant of the morality of an action is its consequences. The most common form of consequentialism is utilitarianism, best illustrated by the principle of benefit maximization which maintains that the moral response is the one that produces the greatest benefit for the most people. Preston (1996) distinguishes between act utilitarianism and rule utilitarianism, the former calculating the 'good' in terms of the consequences of particular acts rather than the application of absolute rules. Rule utilitarianism involves the interpretation of absolute rules in particular circumstances.

Other forms of consequentialism include situation ethics which hold that the sole criterion of the worth of an action is its consequences; "actions are good when they benefit human beings and wrong when others are hurt" (Preston, 1996: 44). Another type of consequentialism is ethical egoism which poses self-interest as the goal of ethical human action. An individual ethical egoist believes everyone should act in his or her own self interest while a universal ethical egoist maintains that everyone should act in their own self-interest, regardless of the interests of others.

Non-consequentialism or deontology disregards the consequences of an action in favor of an intrinsic commitment to a particular duty or a primary right. Non-consequentialist principles such as the principle of equal respect place greater importance on the intrinsic worth of the individual and the dignity of each person than on the desirability or otherwise of particular consequences. 'Doing the right thing' as implored by the Ten Commandments is an example of a deontological approach where the obligation to honor a duty or right is revealed by divine authority. The Divine Command Theory is a deontological framework for moral behavior based on religious principles and values (Preston, 1996).

The German philosopher, Immanuel Kant developed another form of non-consequentialism in which human reason replaced divine authority. For Kant, if not for Hodgkinson, morality is purely rational because it is when we consistently act according to universal rules that we actually act morally. Kant's Categorical Imperative is absolute and universal, regardless of the situation, conditions or circumstances. The Categorical Imperative to act in a manner consistent with a law which could be applied universally is more commonly expressed in the form of the Golden Rule: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

Alternatively, Starratt (1994) argues that in schools the ethics of care and justice should embrace a fundamental concern for both the individual and the common good. The focus of the ethic of care on love, compassion and relationships (Preston, 1996) has both teleological and deontological aspirations in that actions are judged in terms of their impact on relationships, thereby elevating "the injunction to care or to love to the status of

a duty” (Preston, 1996: 55). Similarly, Starratt’s call for the school to be a model of the ‘just community’ is onerous on both the individual and the school community as a whole. Starratt’s (1994) ‘truly ethical school’ exemplifies various principles or ideals such as caring, sharing, honesty, fairness, co-operation, personal and communal responsibility and respect for the democratic rights of individuals and others. Thus, Starratt’s perspective suggests that as administrators of ‘just’ communities, school principals should endeavor to meet the conditions of both consequentialist (teleological) and non-consequentialist (deontological) approaches.

Hodgkinson (1991) argues that the concept of value has two components, what is ‘right’ and that which is ‘good’. Type III values are those which are good, grounded in individual preference: “they are affective, idiosyncratic, idiographic and direct” (Hodgkinson, 1991: 99). Choosing between two items or objects on the basis of color, taste and/or appearance may be a simple matter of the varying degree of preference. For Hodgkinson, the resolution of value conflicts involving interhierarchal conflict (i.e., between Type III, Type II, and/or Type I values) is achieved through applying the maxim that the lower ranking value (preference) should be subordinated to the higher.

Principals’ responses based on personal preference are difficult to uncover. Schein (1984: 3) argues that the underlying reasons for peoples’ behavior often “remain concealed or unconscious.” March (1978) in Crowson (1989: 416) observes that:

decision makers are seldom aware of their own preferences; or may hold inconsistent ones; or may lie (to themselves and others) about them; or may change them, avoid them, confound them, manipulate them, and suppress them.

Part of the difficulty in identifying personal preference as the basis of action lies in the problem described by Hodgkinson (1991: 146) as the “common good versus self-interest.” In situations where a principal’s self-interest is at stake, the researcher’s task of unearthing personal preference as a major factor underlying a principal’s response to a moral dilemma is fraught with difficulties.

For the purposes of a research study such as this, it seems reasonable to expect personal preferences to be largely hidden, consciously or otherwise. For example, such preferences as maintaining organizational stability, sustaining school-wide efficiency and effectiveness, projecting a positive image to one’s community, employer and peers, career enhancement, separating work stresses from personal and/or family life, and self interest (‘looking after number one’) may at various times, to varying degrees and in a variety of circumstances influence a principal’s response. The relative importance of this complex dimension as a possible component of the principals’ responses in this study will be discussed in greater depth later in the study.

2. Suspending Morality

Drawing on work of Milgram (1974) and Hodgkinson (1978), Campbell (1992) describes at considerable length the actions of those who compromise or suspend their own moral judgments in order to accommodate organizational ethics and imperatives. Through a process of rationalization described here as ‘Rationalized Compliance’, school leaders as ‘agents’ of the organization are able to abdicate their own responsibility by suspending their own morality and deferring to system directives or to the articulated

interests and wishes of the school community. Many principals argue that it is their 'professional' obligation and responsibility to adhere to the official directives of Board personnel (e.g., superintendent, director), the formal policies, rules and regulations that exist (perhaps especially for these occasions!), and/or the needs or wishes of the school community (e.g., teachers, parents, students).

'Rationalized Compliance' has three motivational bases: 1. Moral Accommodation 2. False Necessity and 3. Self-Delusion. Moral Accommodation, also referred to as 'situational adjustment' (Lacey 1977, Campbell 1992), embraces three forms. *Conforming* (acquiescence or strategic compliance) occurs when principals simply defer to the organization by complying with the particular demands of officials and/ or policies, despite holding their own personal reservations. *Conversion* or 'internalized adjustment' describes those occasions when principals actually 'buy' into the 'opposing' values, now convinced that these previously conflicting values are ultimately more appropriate and morally more justifiable. Principals who chose to use *measured resistance* seek to achieve a change in the formal value stance adopted by the organization. This is similar to what Lacey refers to as 'strategic redefinition' where over a period of time individuals who do not possess the formal power are able to achieve a change in the organization's interpretation of the situation. This response avoids outright confrontation in favor of a calculated resistance that is designed to gradually achieve the organization's re-definition of the situation. To achieve this end, the principal chooses to temporarily 'suspend' personal morality, perhaps willing 'to lose the occasional battle in order to win the war'.

False Necessity, the second form of rationalized compliance is described by Campbell (1992) as evident in those unethical or immoral responses that principals justify on the grounds that they have no choice. Thus, particular actions are 'crucial', 'essential' or 'vital', causing the principal's 'hands to be tied'. Often these individual actions are justified in terms of the mandated implementation of broad system policy.

When principals refuse to admit their full knowledge of the details of a particular values conflict to themselves in order to excuse an otherwise indefensible action, they engage in Self-Delusion. In the face of possible criticism, principals are able to justify their decision choice on the grounds that they would have acted differently were they fully aware of all the facts. By denying certain realities, principals suspend their own morality and delude themselves into believing that they are acting 'in good faith'.

3. Creative Insubordination

Much of the literature relating to values conflicts (e.g., Ashbaugh & Kasten, 1984; Campbell-Evans, 1988; Leithwood & Steinbach, 1995) disregards principals' frequent recourse to Creative Insubordination which usually involves adapting system policies, procedures and programs in a way "that fits the principal's values, philosophy, goals and situation" (Haynes & Licata, 1995: 21). Creatively insubordinate responses are usually harmless, perhaps mischievous and at worst (although rarely) destructive (Crowson, 1989). Creative insubordination has two main purposes: to ensure that system directives do not impinge unfairly or inappropriately on teachers and students; and to avoid the possible 'backlash' that outright defiance may incur. Whilst on the surface

principals seemingly conform to a system imperative, in fact they seek to adapt, undermine or even sabotage the implementation process.

Indiscriminate use of this strategy may give rise to a potential dissonance between the administrator's articulated values and the perceived level of actual commitment to these moral principles. In a consideration of an integrated approach to values theory and information processing theory, Begley (1996a) identifies the possible conscious or unconscious selection by an individual of separate functions of knowledge and procedural schema. Such a selection occurring raises the possibility that a particular knowledge schema reflects a commitment to one set of values while a procedural schema reflects another set of values. Begley (1996a: 583) concludes that :

when this is done unconsciously it reflects an absence of values coherence, administrative inconsistency, a source of values conflict and perhaps even a basic lack of administrative expertise. When it occurs consciously it is amoral or Machiavellian behavior and likely the source of stressful value conflicts for the administrator within the role.

Often the principal can avoid criticism for adopting such an approach by embracing what Haynes and Licata (1995) refer to as 'the legitimacy of the justifiable'. Essentially when experienced principals choose to take the 'high moral ground' to preserve or protect the rights and needs of students and teachers, they are unlikely to be criticized for adapting a policy or procedure. Further, principals often escape punishment for the use of creative insubordination strategies, because they are justifiable on ethical grounds. After all, as Haynes and Licata (1995: 33) argue:

no superintendent.....would be in a hurry to reprimand or dismiss a principal who had the courage, integrity and good judgment to adapt the policy in a way that maintains or improves teaching and learning.

Crowson (1989) and Haynes and Licata (1995) perceive that when principals use creative insubordination, the counter- bureaucratic behaviors they adopt often contain a moral element designed to balance anti- educational consequences. Others such as Campbell (1992) refer to this type of response as 'covert subversion', suggestive of a secretive, perhaps devious undermining of legitimate system expectations and directives. Similarly, Blumberg and Greenfield (1986) observe that principals often pretend to implement a district policy in order to preserve their threatened personal integrity, only to feel uncomfortable about the subversion. Choosing to tell a 'white lie' is the morally expedient alternative to compromising one's own integrity by implementing the policy or incurring formal and informal sanctions by taking a moral stand.

4. Personal Morality

Nelson's (1984: 111) description of stands and stances as patterns of relationships in and to the world parallels those responses based on personal morality:

Stands and stances include patterns of action in the world: ways of expressing and effecting theories, moralities, principles, visions, emotions, and the like. Thus, they are more than simple techniques for action; they extend to the choice and ordering of ends as well as means.

Nelson's distinction between the political stand and the political stance has particular relevance to this response. The political stand "offers a way of taking responsibility for the world as well as oneself, without eroding principles"; the political stance "fits the give and take of ordinary politics, when principle is created by and for compromise" (Nelson, 1984: 106). Stand making and stand taking are typical of troubled

times but a rarity in everyday politics. Taking a moral stand involves an undaunted, unmoving, enduring commitment to a personal moral principle in the face of any and all consequences. Its appeal lies in its ability to accommodate the exercise of personal responsibility and the maintenance of personal integrity in times of moral trouble or crisis.

Moral stances or postures are more common in the 'cut and parry' of everyday life. As a strategy perhaps best described as holding out for a better deal, taking a moral stance has the initial appearance of the moral stand. 'Taking the high moral ground' is often foreshadowed by a rational assessment of probable outcomes which gives reason to be confident about the likely success of the response. At other times, moral stances are carefully calculated to extract the maximum personal benefit at the least personal cost.

Moral stances or postures adopted by principals are short-lived: "Stances and postures are temporary; they are either preliminary or intermediary" (Nelson, 1984: 109). As resistance to the administrator's position mounts, moral principle gives way to compromise; the 'measured' stance reaches the full extent of its limits. As the reality of 'backlash', 'disfavor' or unwanted consequences looms near, the initial illusion of taking a moral stand quickly fades; the stance has run its course.

Choosing to take a moral stand is a response best understood as being diametrically opposite to cognizant avoidance. The essence of this response is captured in Grace's (1972: 9) description of "the Sir Thomas More response," which values the preservation of personal integrity above all else. School administrators who choose this option have two alternatives; either to confront the source of the conflict or retreat from the situation. On those rare occasions when principals actually decide to take a

moral stand (Campbell, 1992), they can either 'dig in' and suffer the consequences or withdraw through transfer or resignation. The apparent reality that this option is seldom chosen attests to the considerable price that an individual often pays for adopting such a position, especially when taken against the system (employing authority). Moreover, pragmatic principals may intuitively realize that preserving their own integrity does not guarantee that their position is necessarily morally superior or even the 'best' thing, as "clearly neither the individual nor the collective is always right or always wrong" (Campbell, 1994: 2).

Figure 2 provides a framework for describing the range of possible alternative responses to moral and ethical dilemmas outlined above. These responses are presented in the form of a classification framework which depicts the type, nature, form and basic assumptions pertaining to each of four categories of responses.

The Response Classification Framework delineates possible responses to moral and ethical dilemmas. Although some of the responses are quite distinct and obviously incompatible with each other (e.g., cognizant avoidance and taking a moral stand), the categories and their components are not necessarily mutually exclusive. For example, in one sense creative insubordination involves suspending morality by telling a 'white lie', and in another it could be a form of cognizant avoidance through the suspension or reduction of moral issues in favor of practical or rational considerations. Similarly, in avoiding transrational value conflicts, principals may prefer to employ the principle of benefit maximization and the principle of equal respect (the Golden Rule) in combination.

PRINCIPALS' RESPONSES TO MORAL AND ETHICAL DILEMMAS

Response	Nature of Response	Form	Basic Assumptions
			Consequential e.g. benefit maximization
Avoidance 1. Cognizant 2. Non-cognizant	Reductionism	Rational Choice	Non-Consequential e.g. equal respect Preference i.e. strongest desire
Suspending Morality	Rationalized Compliance	Deference to: a) formal authority b) policy, regulation c) community	1. Moral Accommodation a) conforming b) conversion c) measured resistance 2. False Necessity 3. Self-Delusion
Creative Insubordination	Justifiable Moral Expediency	Surface Conformity	'White Lie'
Personal Morality			
1. Moral Stand	Confrontation Retreat	Open Conflict Withdrawal	Maintenance of Integrity Personal Preference
2. Moral Stance	Calculated	Compromise	Temporary Posture

Figure 2: Response Classification Framework

In all, the categories describe definite responses which are used wholly, in part or in combination by principals in response to transrational value conflicts.

The response framework does not offer a mechanism for the adjudication of transrational values, nor does it support the selection of any particular response over another. However, the classification framework does allow a means by which the responses of principals to moral and ethical dilemmas can be identified, described and understood. In this way, the Response Classification Framework provides a lens for investigations into the actions and behavior of five Australian Catholic school principals in resolving moral and ethical dilemmas that arise within their professional role.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this chapter has been to review the literature relevant to the study's focus on principals' responses to moral and ethical dilemmas. Although empirical and theoretical considerations directly pertaining to the research problem are relatively few in number, this chapter has reviewed a vast amount of related literature.

Principals in Catholic school settings are employed by the Church to administer Catholic schools, themselves official educational agencies of the Catholic Church. Thus, the literature review began with a consideration of the historical context of the Church with a particular emphasis on the radical paradigm shift sparked by the Second Vatican Council. A sweeping review of the recent history of a world-wide Church preceded a brief sociological consideration of the Australian context in which the study was situated.

In the last two decades, organizational culture in general and school culture in particular have achieved prominence in literature relating to schools. More recently the complexity of school culture has been realized as new understandings of what culture may mean and how it might develop began to emerge. Similarly, the Church in many of its documents (SCCE, 1977, 1983, 1988) has articulated a concern for ensuring the distinctiveness of its schools through the development and maintenance of a Catholic school culture. In attempting to achieve 'a synthesis of faith and culture' (SCCE, 1977, 1988), notions of school culture have become of primary significance to the official educational authorities of the Church and to individual Catholic school principals.

Increasingly, the determination of school culture is becoming understood as a political struggle involving the intervention, construction, resistance and negotiation of new and different patterns of values, behaviors and beliefs. This perspective is further extended by current research that investigates the pivotal part played by variations in value orientations and value conflicts (e.g., Begley & Johansson, 1997; Leonard, 1977) in the ongoing determination of what form the culture of the school is to take.

Hodgkinson's (1978) analytical model of the value concept was described at length for its relevance to the research problem. The model's classification of values based on three motivational bases allowed transrational (Type I) values to be distinguished from rational (Type II) and subrational (Type III) values. Moral and ethical dilemmas were identified as the most difficult value conflicts that Catholic school principals encounter. A detailed explanation of Hodgkinson's value paradigm pre-empted the crucial distinction made in this study between moral and ethical dilemmas which occur at the transrational

level, and principals' subsequent responses which may be motivated by personal and/or professional values held by the principals at any of the three levels. Ultimately, various types of moral and ethical dilemmas were identified and the question of how administrators might respond was addressed.

Given the infancy of the field and the complexity of the central concepts, the literature review included a section specifically outlining some of the limitations of the research to date. This section did not intend to be overly critical of the research forays into the complex domain of values, value conflicts and the school cultures in which they occur. Rather, it acknowledged that significant conceptual ambiguity, a paucity of studies and a lack of an established methodology are significant limitations that confront the qualitative investigations of studies of this nature.

Finally, the review led to an explanation of the study's conceptual framework, including a detailed account of the Response Classification Framework developed from the literature for the specific purposes of this study. In all, four general responses by principals to moral and ethical dilemmas were identified: 1) avoidance, 2) suspending morality, 3) creative insubordination, and 4) personal morality.

Cognizant and non-cognizant avoidance occurs when principals knowingly or unknowingly reduce a transrational moral dilemma to a rational or subrational level in order to achieve a resolution through consequentialist and/or non-consequentialist means. Principals suspend their own morality when they adhere to official directives that they disagree with, usually by simply complying with organizational imperatives. On other occasions, principals use measured resistance in an attempt to influence the formal

authority within an organization to redefine the policy or directive. At times principals feel that they are compelled to comply by virtue of their position within the organization. Principals who choose to adopt creatively insubordinate responses to system imperatives in order to ensure that implementation does not impinge unfairly on their situation seek to adapt, undermine or even sabotage the implementation process. Often these principals justify their actions on ethical grounds in that they are acting in the best interests of teachers and children. Responses based on personal morality commonly take the form of temporary stances adopted by principals who take the 'high moral ground' as a calculated strategy to achieve desired ends. On rare occasions principals take a moral stand in order to preserve personal integrity regardless of the personal consequences.

In sum, this chapter has presented a literature review which situates the research problem in the theoretical and empirical context in which it exists. The implications of the review have informed the study's whole approach to the investigation at hand. Finally, the literature review has 'set the scene' for the development of the study's methodology which is outlined in Chapter Three.

¹Pope John XXIII died before the implementation of Vatican II could begin. He was succeeded by Pope Paul VI.

²The Roman Curia is the Vatican's bureaucratic mechanism that manages the official Church and its affairs.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Chapters One and Two have delineated the research problem within the existing theoretical context of school administrators' responses to value conflicts of a moral and ethical nature. As it is the intention of this study to investigate the nature and variety of principals' responses to moral and ethical dilemmas in Catholic school settings, the purpose of this chapter is to explain and justify the research methodology employed to achieve this end.

This chapter begins with a short overview of the research design. The rest of Chapter Three consists of the rationale which outlines the various components of the research design relating to the collection and analysis of data. A feature of the rationale is the detailed discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the various research techniques employed and how the latter were addressed in the study to ensure that believable and trustworthy results were attained. Since they are critical elements of the study and pivotal to the actual research design, the four vignettes are presented in the body of this chapter. In addition, the means by which the data were analyzed are explained in terms of an adopted procedure for the analysis of dilemmas that was used in conjunction with the Response Classification Framework developed specifically for this study. Taken together, the components of the research design combine to form an interactive process consistent with the underlying philosophy of the study itself.

OVERVIEW

To better understand how Catholic school principals respond to moral and ethical dilemmas, a qualitative research design was selected. In essence, this case study involves conducting three interviews with each of five principals. The interviews were conducted in the period from August to November, 1996. A retrospective and two semi-structured interviews generated specific data in answer to each of the specific research questions.

The study focused on the principals' responses to four hypothetical case scenarios (vignettes) and their deliberated responses to recent moral and ethical dilemmas. As the emphasis was on the description of principals' actual and perceived responses, no value stance was assumed or taken. In other words, the research design sought to find out the nature and variety of principals' responses, not to pass judgment on the quality or preferability of the responses themselves.

RATIONALE

The following section provides an explication and justification for the qualitative methodology developed for the study, specifically dealing with the researcher's perspective, the sample, procedures for collecting data, the method, the pilot study, the interviews, and the recording, management and analysis of data. Although discussed separately, these components do not represent a step-by-step or linear process, but rather an interactive process through which data were collected and analyzed within the context and purposes of the overall study.

The Researcher's Perspective

According to Merriam (1988: 53), the importance of the researcher in qualitative research cannot be overemphasized as “how the investigator views the world affects the entire research process - from conceptualizing a problem, to collecting and analyzing data, to interpreting the findings.” Goetz and LeCompte (1984) argue that since the qualitative investigator is the main instrument for data collection, the researcher should explain his/her position in relation to the overall study. Further, since data analysis is more than description, the researcher interprets data that have been filtered through his/her own perspectives and language (Powney & Watts, 1987).

Given the researcher's pervasive influence, it seems appropriate to begin this discussion of methodology with a consideration of my own position and perspective. Above all else I believe that administrative practice is essentially a human endeavour, bound to be imperfect but nonetheless involving school leaders focussed on achieving the utmost for each child under their care. The administrative task is complex, the final reality for those children, teachers and parents in the school community constructed and reconstructed as competing and often conflicting forces impinge on administrative practice. As an Australian principal of a systemic Catholic school myself, I have a natural empathy for others in the same role. With them I share a common language and mutual understanding of their role and the context in which it is performed. Perhaps the greatest advantage of my position as researcher is the common bond which typically exists between principals, characterized by a mutual trust and willingness to discuss aspects of highly sensitive issues without fear of breaching confidentiality. At the same time, my position

has potential disadvantages mainly through the ease by which I could make the false assumption that my understandings automatically matched those of the respondents. It was necessary to avoid giving advice, interfering in problems and making inferences about issues, ideas and meanings not explicitly stated by the participants.

In order to maximize the advantages and minimize any disadvantages arising from my perspective and position, a number of strategies and techniques were 'built-in' to the methodology. As these considerations will be outlined in conjunction with other relevant factors in the appropriate sections of the chapter, it is sufficient at this point to briefly outline the form taken by these accommodations. Initially, the non-judgmental nature of the study was strongly emphasized to the respondents with respect to the study's fundamental commitment to representing the participants' perspectives in their own terms. Anonymity and confidentiality were identified as significant priorities. The importance of particular interviewing skills in relation to listening, remaining neutral and non-judgmental, being sensitive to conveying verbal and non-verbal messages, and the use of interested but non-committed feedback were acknowledged prior to the interview process. Other techniques designed to reduce the influence of the researcher, such as taping and transcribing the interviews in full, the use of member checks, and making the findings available to the participants were incorporated into the research design.

Sample:

The sample consists of five Catholic elementary school principals, each with a minimum of one year's experience in their current position. The schools are all systemic,

Parish schools in the same diocese within one of the states of Australia. Each school operates under the auspices of the Diocesan Bishop, through the Catholic Education Office and a Parish Priest. The selected principals came from schools within the same region in which they are grouped by the Catholic Education Office for administrative and organizational purposes. The selection was based on willingness to participate in the study.

In order to undertake the study, it was first necessary to gain the permission of the Director of the Catholic Education Office for principals of systemic schools to participate in the research study (Appendix A). Once permission was granted, the principals were contacted by telephone; the first five principals (two females and three males) immediately agreeing to take part in the study. In a short meeting with each respondent, the purpose and nature of the study were explained more fully and relevant aspects of the interview procedures were discussed. Every effort was made to ensure that the participants fully understood that confidentiality was assured through a variety of means, including: the use of pseudonyms in place of the respondents' names; the purposeful omission of the names of individual schools, the diocese and even the state in which the diocese was situated; the voluntary nature of their participation and their freedom to withdraw at any time; transcripts and direct quotations to be made available to the respondents prior to the completion of the study, not only conforming with research code of ethics (Dixon, Bouma & Atkinson, 1987) but also strengthening the validity of the data (Merriam, 1988); and that all tapes would be destroyed on completion of the study. To each and every respondent, it was strongly emphasized that the study was not an evaluation, assessment

or judgment; there were no right or wrong answers. Rather, the study's concern was the principals' individual perceptions in relation to the moral and ethical dilemmas they faced.

Each principal signed a letter of consent to confirm their participation in the study within the terms and conditions outlined (Appendix B). In order to obtain relevant factual and biographical information each respondent was asked to complete a pre-interview synopsis (Appendix C). Finally, appointment times for the three interviews were established with each principal.

Procedures for Collecting Data

Phase 1: Pilot Study. The research methodology was field tested involving a principal from a Catholic school not in the sample.

Phase 2: Principals' First Interviews. These semi-structured interviews with individual principals were based on four hypothetical situations (vignettes). These interviews averaged about two to two and one-half hours in duration.

Phase 3: Retrospective Interviews. These interviews of approximately two hours were based on the principals' perceptions of their actual responses to two or three recent moral and ethical dilemmas that they had faced. The interviews were unstructured, with the principals asked to explain how they dealt with each dilemma. The focus of each interview was on why the individual acted in a particular manner in the resolution of moral and ethical dilemmas.

Phase 4: Principals' Third Interviews. The final one and one-half hour interviews with each principal comprised open-ended questioning in relation to the nature and frequency

of moral and ethical dilemmas, principals' deliberate or non-deliberate application of guiding principles to resolve dilemmas, and the identification of a legitimate ultimate authority.

Member Checks (Phases 3 and 4)

In order to ensure internal validity, each principal was asked to react to a written interpretation of their responses to the interviews in Phase 2 and Phase 3. These descriptive summaries of their responses to Phases 2 and 3 were presented separately to the principals at the beginning of their interviews in Phase 3 and Phase 4 respectively. By 'playing back' summarized interpretations to those from whom they were derived, the respondents themselves were able to clarify, modify and validate the interpretations ascribed to their particular responses to the hypothetical and actual dilemmas discussed.

Method

Questions of research method are dependent upon the particular world view "which guides the investigator ... in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). This study's qualitative use of interviewing with a schedule rests firmly on the ontological assumptions underlying the interpretivist view that social reality is constructed through social interaction rooted in the concepts and use of language (Hughes, 1990). Qualitative interviewing assumes that the other person's perspective is "meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit" (Patton, 1980: 278). In this study, the use of qualitative interviewing is based on the understanding that

interviews are purposeful conversations conducted by one in order to obtain information from another (Bogdan & Bilken, 1992). The purpose of interviewing is to bring the interviewer into the world of the interviewee in order to “find out what is in and on someone else’s mind ... to enter into the other person’s perspective” (Patton, 1980: 278).

The use of semi-structured interviews (First and Third Interviews) affords the opportunity to explain the purpose of the overall research and clarify individual questions, to follow up on incomplete or unclear responses, and to delve further into particular aspects of interest. In this way, the respondents were given the opportunity to provide the context, reasons and motivation for particular actions. Semi-structured interviews involve the use of an interview schedule or guide to focus the dialogue on specific topics.

Patton (1980) argues that the use of an interview schedule has many advantages. The guide provides topics within which the investigator is able to explore, probe and ask questions that will illuminate that particular subject, whilst ensuring the best use of the limited time available in an interview. At the same time, the flexibility that an interview schedule provides allows individual perspectives and experiences to surface within a particular context, while allowing comparisons across respondents to be drawn (Bogdan & Bilken, 1992). As a research method, semi-structured interviews have some limitations which seem relevant to this study. Bogdan and Bilken (1992) point out that this approach loses the opportunity to understand how the subjects themselves structure the topic at hand, a concern voiced by Hughes (1990). Further, variations in depth, breadth and amount of information received from different respondents compound the considerable

difficulties of managing information gained through open-ended questioning (Miles & Huberman, 1984; Powney & Watts, 1987).

Since unstructured interviews allow the respondent to structure the response themselves, the Retrospective (second) Interview is an appropriate and complementary means by which to investigate the respondents' real-life experiences of specific moral and ethical dilemmas. As this type of interview has particular application to the investigation of topics which are highly sensitive, perhaps even distressing to the subject, an unstructured interview format was particularly applicable to the retrospective interviews in which the respondents recounted actual personal experiences of moral and ethical dilemmas. Although the interviewer does not employ a detailed interview schedule, a general plan is adopted to ensure that the respondent is led towards providing the data required to meet the interviewer's objectives (Borg & Gall, 1983: 443). In this way, the focus of each interview was on why the respondent acted as he/she did in the resolution of moral dilemmas. To ensure that each respondent provided the required information, the Retrospective interview guide (Appendix E) noted the issues of dilemma resolution raised by Kirby, Paradise & Protti's (1992) study.

Qualitative researchers face a fundamental problem of validity in claiming that the meaning of particular concepts articulated by the interviewee are compatible with those actually understood and reported by the researcher. Although the justification often given is that interviews produce findings that are representative of an other's view within a given context, the researcher nonetheless seeks to interpret the experience of others and the meaning they make of that experience (Seidman, 1991). A related weakness in

interviewing that is particularly pertinent to a study of this nature is the ready assumption that respondents will respond openly, honestly and willingly (Powney & Watts, 1987). A critical problem here is the difference between what people say they do and what they actually do. As March (1978) in Crowson (1989: 416) points out:

decision makers are seldom aware of their own preferences ; or may hold inconsistent ones; or may lie (to themselves and others) about them; or may change them, avoid them, confound them, manipulate them, and suppress them.

The incongruence between what respondents say they prefer, believe, do or have done and 'actuality' appears to exist in two distinct forms. Cockburn (1980) in Powney and Watts (1987: 190) distinguishes between interviewees who willfully distort reality and those that are "genuinely unaware that what they say they do, is not in fact what they do." Obviously this distinction should be extended to include the likely possibility that both purposeful and unconscious distortions are variously made by the same respondent.

This study formally recognizes as fundamental to the human condition the difference that can exist between consciously articulated values apparent in the re-telling and projections of a respondent's actions and 'brute' reality. As explained in Chapter Two, the classification of principals' responses to value conflicts (the Response Classification Framework) recognizes this incongruence by the creation of a distinct category. The category, 'Non-cognizant Avoidance', includes those responses when the subjects failed to acknowledge or appeared to be unaware that particular moral and ethical tenets were in contention, often in spite of a previously stated, personal commitment to upholding those very same principles or beliefs. The comparison of the responses of the

respondents to the same vignettes (and to outside references as appropriate) enabled particular instances of non-cognizant avoidance to be identified.

At times the problem of discrepancy between what people say and what they do may be compounded by a number of factors which can influence the interview situation, including: embarrassment and self-consciousness on the part of the respondent; the subject's need to provide the 'right' or 'expected' answer, a respondent's need to perform or the desire to impress the interviewer; a general lack of rapport between the interviewer and the respondent; and feelings of mistrust that can characterize an interview.

To reduce the significance of these concerns, this study initially focused on the perceived responses of individual principals to hypothetical scenarios and then on actual situations provided by the respondents themselves. According to Campbell (1992) in qualitative investigations of this nature, hypothetical dilemmas are an effective research method. Similarly, Gilligan (1982: 100) argues that hypothetical case scenarios "divest moral actors from the history and psychology of their individual lives and separate the moral problem from the social contingencies of its possible occurrence." The use of vignettes in the first interview phase removed the immediacy of actual experience and allowed individual principals to initially consider the issues from a personally removed perspective and on a more general level. The vignettes also served as a stimulus whereby the principals remembered similar elements or incidents for subsequent discussion in the second and third interviews. Moreover, the past experience of the principals enhanced the quality and accuracy of their responses to the hypothetical situations. By allowing the principals to choose and structure their responses in the retrospective interview, individual

respondents had the freedom to select actual situations which they felt comfortable enough to discuss. Such freedom may have lessened the potential for the participants' purposeful distortion of reported dilemma situations.

Another aspect concerning the validity of qualitative interviewing is the use of language since "social realities cannot be identified in abstraction from the language in which they are embedded" (Hughes, 1990: 117). Hence, in any verbal exchange between the interviewer and the interviewee there is the potential for some disparity between the subjective meaning structures that each assigns to particular components and uses of language. Since the qualitative interviewer is "interested in perspectives rather than truth per se" (Borg & Gall, 1983: 168), it is onerous on the researcher to represent the respondent's multiple constructions as honestly as possible in the reconstructions that constitute the findings and the ascribed interpretations.

This study attempted to minimize the problem of internal validity in a number of ways. Firstly, the study reports the findings (Chapter Four) and much of the evidence in the analysis (Chapter Five) in the form of direct quotations in order that each respondent's own voice be heard, rather than use what Hughes (1990: 125) refers to as "second order constructs." Burns (1994: 274) recommends the use of explicit illustration by way of direct quotation from the data records, not only as a means to represent the argument, but as a way to avoid the "traditional 'third person' literary format that neutralizes any sense of the personality of the investigator." Through the use of member checks (as recommended by Guba and Lincoln, 1981) respondents were given the opportunity to clarify and validate a prepared summary of their individual responses to dilemmas raised in

the first and second interviews. In this way, the reconstructions were put to the respondents themselves to ensure that they were “credible to the constructors of the original multiple realities” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985: 296). Finally, with respect to Patton’s (1980: 310) concern that interviewers employ the language that “participants use among themselves,” Phase 1 of the methodology constituted a pilot study involving a respondent from the same population as the main sample (as recommended by Borg and Gall [1983: 454]). The fact that as researcher, I am also a Catholic school principal ensures that common and shared language constructs were employed in the preparation of the vignettes and the interview schedules as well as in the actual interview exchanges.

One of the most critical concerns associated with the family of data collection procedures referred to by Leithwood and Steinbach (1995: 15) as “think-aloud protocols,” relates to the ongoing debate about the validity of verbal reports (e.g., Nisbett & Wilson, 1977; Ericsson & Simon, 1984). The sources of invalidity include the limited access to cognitive processes, distorted and incomplete verbal descriptions, failure of the respondents to rely on memory and the limitations of long-term memory when relied upon. Short-term memory stores recently acquired or needed information which is directly available for verbal reports. Information stored in long-term memory must be retrieved before it can be reported, thereby reducing validity as “the retrieval process can threaten the validity of verbal reports because it can be incomplete and subject to many different types of distortion by the retriever” (Leithwood & Steinbach, 1995: 15). Recall depends greatly on the availability of retrieval cues since “the ability to recall specific events-

especially with detailed information -- deteriorates rapidly with time” (Ericsson & Simon, 1984: 45).

The structure and components of this study’s research method seek to address the considerable difficulties relating to the validity of verbal reports. The responses provided in the first interviews called upon the respondents’ short term memory and hence should be high in validity, notwithstanding that these interviews involved hypothetical situations. The high correlation between the vignettes and actual similar experiences reported by the principals served to reduce the artificiality of the hypothetical scenarios. By comparison, the retrospective interview focused on actual events but relied on the respondents’ long-term memory. Biderman (1967) in Ericsson and Simon (1984: 45) argues that “if the experimenter specifies the relevant time period and the particular type of events to be recalled, recall increases considerably.” Thus, respondents were asked to report on specific occurrences of moral and ethical dilemmas that had occurred in the past twelve months. Further, as noted in her study of personal morals and organizational ethics, vignettes presented to teachers and principals “served as memory triggers which, in many cases, reminded respondents of similar situations encountered in the past” (Campbell, 1992: 202). Hence, the particular type of events to be recalled were illustrated by example in the First Interview, before the respondents were required to recall actual experiences in the Retrospective (second) interview.

The ordering of the interviews from specific situations in the First and Retrospective Interviews to the general questioning of the Third Interview acknowledges that “more valid information is attained by cueing subjects with specific items ... than by

asking general questions” (Ericsson & Simon, 1984: xlix). This aspect was further enhanced through the means by which the member checks were employed. The first member check of Phase 2 (the vignettes) occurred at the beginning of the Phase 3 (actual dilemma experiences); the second member check of Phase 3 conducted at the beginning of Phase 4 (general dilemma situations). Hence, each member check also served to cue the respondents with specific items immediately before more general questions were asked during the course of the interview.

Since “the accuracy of verbal reports depends on the procedures used to elicit them and the relation between the requested information and the actual sequence of heeded information” (Ericsson & Simon, 1984: 27), the combination of the study’s particular methods, the overall structure, and the ordered sequencing of the three interviews served to limit the concerns of validity usually attributed to verbal reports.

Pilot Study

The main purpose of the pilot study was to ensure that the structure and organization of the interviews met the requirements of the research project. In particular, the pilot study provided the opportunity to trial the logistics of the method and pretest the vignettes with a subject who belonged to the same population as the main study sample.

The pilot study revealed that the order of the interviews and the structure of the research method were very appropriate, producing fruitful responses and a worthwhile opportunity to practice the social interactive skills required to conduct the interviews. The vignettes were readily confirmed as realistic and common dilemmas, well familiar to the

respondent. In a post-interview discussion, it was confirmed by the subject that responding to the hypothetical scenarios before being required to recount actual experiences greatly enhanced the understanding of what was required. Responding to the vignettes greatly informed the scope and depth of the responses required in the second and third interviews and enhanced the respondent's ability to articulate relevant aspects of specific and general responses to moral and ethical dilemmas. Further, the respondent commented that the full page descriptions of each hypothetical situation were a necessity; the comprehensive explanation of each vignette providing an appropriate context for the dilemma, thereby reducing the ambiguity and confusion that questions of 'what if?' might incur were significant facts and important details omitted. In this regard, it was necessary to include more information in some of the vignettes such as the age of the teachers (Vignettes #1, #4), the time in the school year that the event took place (Vignette #2, #4), and the need to remind respondents that the vignettes were situated within the context of the particular situation of their own school and system.

The pilot study resulted in some other minor, but important modifications, including: a change in the ordering of some of the questions in the third interview; using a more sophisticated recording mechanism; and ensuring the length of time between the interviews with each respondent was kept to a minimum (no more than two weeks).

First Interview (the Vignettes)

The four hypothetical scenarios (vignettes) were developed from my own experiences as a principal, the various accounts of dilemma situations described to me by

other principals over the last ten years, and published case scenarios (see Strike, Haller & Soltis, 1988; Campbell, 1992).

The four vignettes were developed and trialed over a twelve month period with individuals and groups drawn from postgraduate students enrolled at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto. Minor adjustments were made before and after the pilot study to ensure the case scenarios reflected the context in which Australian Catholic school principals operate. These modifications included subtle syntax considerations and the use of Australian (British) spelling and terminology.

Each respondent was required to respond to the same four vignettes. In order to minimize any undue influences and reduce interview bias, the respondents were asked to read each vignette silently as many times as they felt necessary to fully understand the circumstances of each dilemma situation. Once the respondents confirmed their readiness to respond to questioning, they were asked to read the vignette aloud. Although the same general interview guide (Appendix D) was used as the basis for each vignette, specific questions were asked in terms of the names of actual people and parties peculiar to the described situation.

As the vignettes were pivotal to the entire study, both as a means of data collection and as preparatory device for the second and third interviews, each of the four vignettes is presented in this section as follows:

Vignette #1 (Miss Usher)

Miss Usher, aged 50, had a reputation for being extremely difficult. Twice she had been involved in 'critical incidents' at previous schools when she and the respective principals had clashed irreconcilably. In fact, the last 'episode' had resulted in the early retirement of the principal and Miss Usher's transfer to St. Michael's Primary. After five years on staff, Miss Usher was surreptitiously referred to as 'The Principal' by most teachers and even some parents. She invariably 'got her way' with teachers and administrators as a result of her extremely non-compliant behaviour and the consideration given to her complicated health problems. As a teacher, Miss Usher was somewhat of an enigma. Some considered her to be an 'expert' teacher with an affinity for 'special needs' children. Others thought she was 'tyrannical' because of the inordinate pressure she placed on the children to perform. Everyone knew that countless 'failed' operations had left Miss Usher in ill health and constant pain.

Prior to the commencement of the school year, the new but experienced principal, Ben Jones, had received a number of requests from parents in relation to the possible placement of their child in Miss Usher's class. Even though teachers had not yet been allocated to year levels, the general assumption was that Miss Usher would be teaching year 3 as usual. In contrast to most of the requests, two parents of children with learning difficulties sought placement for their child in her class. Due to the high number of year 5 'special needs' children, Ben had already decided to allocate that class to Miss Usher. The possibility of beginning his principalship embroiled in a dispute with year 3 parents re-confirmed the decision in his own mind. However, when asked to teach the year 5 class, Miss Usher flatly refused on the grounds of her year 3 'expertise' and the negative effect of the extra preparation required for a new year level on her poor health. In reply, Ben Jones argued that there was no such thing as a 'specialist' general teacher and if she was too ill to teach year 5, then obviously she was too ill to teach year 3. Subsequently, he insisted that she was to teach the year 5 class.

The dispute escalated. The principal consulted the policy manual which confirmed the right of the principal to allocate teachers to classes. Miss Usher complained bitterly to teachers and parents that she was being victimised. The principal warned Miss Usher of the possible consequences of unprofessional behaviour and of refusing to follow a legitimate direction. In reply, she complained to the Union who contacted Ben Jones to discuss allegations of 'teacher harassment and victimisation'. The staffing officer telephoned the principal to advise him to 'back-off' as the last thing that the Office wanted was a court case over an issue where a single, female teacher with chronic health problems was pitted against an 'unsympathetic bureaucracy'.

Feeling that his professional integrity and authority were being challenged before he had a chance to establish his credibility within the school community, the principal decided to maintain his stand. Two days before school was due to commence, Miss Usher telephoned Ben Jones to say that she would be absent for the first week due to stress related health problems. On the day before classes were to commence, the year 3 teacher approached the principal and offered to swap classes in order to allow Miss Usher to take Year 3. Once again Ben Jones considered his options.

Vignette #2 (Jane)

Jane's enrolment into year 5 was accepted in mid-year. As her father was in prison, Jane lived at home with her mother. From age two, Jane had been a ward of the state after her parents were convicted of child abuse. As her legal guardian, the Department of Children's Services had placed Jane in some eight different foster and children's homes. A history of unsuccessful placements had resulted in Jane recently returning to live with her mother.

Shortly after her enrolment at Holy Family, individual staff members became concerned about matters relating to Jane's personal health and hygiene. She appeared to be underfed, was often unwashed and poorly clothed. As her mother was an alcoholic and rarely awoke before midday, Jane was often left to fend for herself. The school began to provide Jane with textbooks, extra clothes, and meals (usually breakfast and lunch). Her class teacher regarded Jane as a quiet, introverted child of average academic ability.

At various times, Children's Services visited the school as part of the ongoing review of Jane's situation. Her class teacher periodically discussed her concerns about her health and home situation with the principal, Brenda Williams. Brenda kept in personal contact with Jane's mother and frequently visited her house to discuss her concerns about Jane's welfare. On two occasions the Department of Children's Services made contact with the school in relation to complaints made to them by neighbours who were concerned about Jane suffering from neglect. According to the Department, Jane would continue to live in what was less than a desirable situation because of her history of unsuccessful placements and a lack of suitable alternatives.

Early in the next year, some children in Jane's class reported to the teacher that Jane had boasted about having sexual intercourse with a man from next door. According to Jane, the lady who lived next door was visiting Jane's mother while Jane was baby sitting her two young children. On returning home the woman discovered Jane and a male visitor in the bedroom. She reported this to Jane's mother. After an angry confrontation with her mother, Jane left home and stayed overnight with a friend.

Jane began to relate this and other similar events to members of her class. She became 'popular' with a group of boys who began to congregate at the front of the school, pending her daily arrival. The class teacher voiced her concerns about the negative effect that Jane was having on the entire class and on the school. Mrs. Williams spoke with Children's Services and with Jane's mother in relation to what she considered to be a serious and developing problem. Both the teacher and the principal spoke with Jane and members of her class and established strict 'ground rules' about their behaviour.

In mid-year, a boy reported to the class teacher that Jane had brought condoms to school and was offering sex in return for money. Brenda questioned Jane who admitted the truth of the report. The class teacher voiced her strong opinion that it was time to 'get rid' of Jane before the situation deteriorated any further. Other teachers spoke with Brenda about the wild rumours circulating the school and likelihood that parent backlash was imminent.

Obviously, urgent and decisive action was needed. Brenda began to consider just what form that action would take.

Vignette #3 (Formal Administrative Authority)

Acting on a directive from the new bishop, the Waterford Catholic Education Office announced a significant change to the Diocesan Enrolment Policy for systemic primary schools. Subject to the other existing conditions, future enrolment in Diocesan primary schools would henceforth be restricted to baptised Catholics. The Director of Catholic Education instructed the principals to communicate the policy change to their own school communities.

Susan Wheatly, the principal of Our Lady of Souls, greeted the announcement with disbelief. For a number of years the school had a declining enrolment which had now settled to 105 children. In order to ensure the ongoing survival of the school it was necessary to keep the enrolment above 100. This had been achieved in part by increasing the percentage of non-Catholics from twelve to twenty percent, the maximum allowed under the previous enrolment policy.

Susan believed that the policy change would cause a major upheaval in the school community. Many of the non-Catholic families had younger children who they also intended to educate at Our Lady of Souls. The non-Catholic population included a number of parents who were strong supporters of the school. These included some practising Anglicans who chose to enrol their children because of the school's reputation in curriculum, especially its religious education programme. Even the Secretary of the Parents and Friends Association was a non-Catholic.

After telephoning the Director for clarification, Susan learned that the policy change was not open for discussion. The Bishop had not included the Director or the Diocesan Education Board in the decision, nor was he open to discussion on what he considered to be a matter of faith.

Susan re-read the school's enrolment policy which had been recently updated in an attempt to increase the school's population. After a long and extensive period of consultation with the Parish Priest, the Parish Council and the school community, one of the measures adopted was to increase the percentage of non-Catholics. It was obvious that the new policy would cause enormous difficulties for Our Lady of Souls. Not only would it hurt and upset many of the current school families and threaten the future survival of the school, it would compromise the integrity of the school-level processes of consultation and shared decision-making she had worked so hard to establish.

Susan thought it over. How could she announce a policy change which contravened the very things she stood for? On the other hand, it was not as if she was being given a choice!

Vignette #4 (The Johnsons)

Michael Thompson, the principal of St. Agnes Primary hated the 'silly season', those last four to six weeks of the academic year when teachers, parents and children seemed to have nothing but problems, complaints and short tempers. Each year after the class lists for next year had been sent home there were the usual rumblings from the parents about the unsuitability of an assigned teacher for their child. This morning Michael had just received his fourth telephone call in the last two weeks from parents requesting that their child not be placed in Mr. Kent's class for next year. Michael was willing to bet that his one o'clock appointment with the Johnsons was to do with the same issue.

The interview went just how he predicted. Mr. and Mrs. Johnson began very politely, asking that their daughter Melissa be changed into Miss Lyons' class. As Michael's unwillingness to give an assurance that their request would be granted became evident, their alternative 'strategy' was revealed. Not only would they take their complaint to the Bishop (whom they claimed to be on personal terms with), but if necessary they would withdraw all three of their children from the school.

The annoying aspect was that the Johnsons were right. Melissa would do better with Miss Lyons. Forty year old Mr. Kent had come to St. Agnes 'under a cloud' from his previous school. For all intents and purposes, Mrs. Johnson's claim that as a teacher he was a 'square peg in a round hole' was an accurate summation of the situation. His lack of classroom management strategies, poor teaching skills, and little enthusiasm hardly inspired parent confidence. To date, Michael's efforts to encourage and assist Mr. Kent with his teaching had met with little success and some resentment. Miss Lyons, the other year 6 teacher was far superior and the Johnsons and the rest of the parent body knew it.

Michael thought it over again. If he 'gave in' to all of the requests there would be an impossible imbalance in the two classes. He could hardly transfer children out of Mr. Kent's class without transferring others in from Miss Lyons. If he granted the 'demand' made by the Johnsons, there would be a 'run' of similar demands from those parents who were prepared to lobby on behalf of their children. On the other hand there was every reason to believe that Mr. and Mrs. Johnson would go to the Bishop - certainly the Parish Priest would not like to lose such a prominent family from the parish. Mr. Johnson's last remark about Michael giving 'lip-service' to the rights of parents to have a say in their children's education had stung - it was just the kind of comment that might find some empathy with the clergy who did not have to deal with such practicalities as class placements. Certainly Michael knew that he didn't need another complaint made to Bishop Herzig about him or St. Agnes.

Michael believed in listening to parents and taking action when necessary. He also believed in doing the best for each child. Nonetheless, there was no escaping the reality that 30 children had to be placed in Mr. Kent's class and he had done just that.

Retrospective Interview

These unstructured interviews were based on the principals' responses to actual dilemmas they had recently encountered. None of the respondents experienced any difficulty in selecting or describing at least two such dilemmas. In fact, during the course of the reporting of one dilemma many of the respondents frequently referred to a number of other similar or related dilemmas. Although the interview was unstructured, the issues raised by Kirby, Paradise and Protti (1992) were used as a guide (Appendix E) to ensure that all relevant aspects were covered. The principals' responses were lengthy and considered, covering many of the same aspects dealt with in the first interviews. In general, the respondents required very little guidance, but on occasion it was necessary to lead the respondents to further specify specific areas of the real-life dilemma situations that they reported.

Final Interview

The final semi-structured interviews sought individual responses to moral and ethical dilemmas in the broad sense (Appendix F). Given the respondents' experience through the study in reporting their individual responses to a number of hypothetical and actual dilemmas, this interview sought to probe some of the overall assumptions, general perceptions and typical practice of the principals in dealing with moral and ethical dilemmas. Interestingly, in many cases this interview proved to be self-enlightening with some respondents realizing and subsequently articulating previously 'unconscious' assumptions and perceptions for the first time.

The Recording, Management and Analysis of Data

In line with Powney and Watt's (1987: 124) argument that "there is no substitute for a full tape recording of an interview," the three interviews were taped and fully transcribed. Extensive note taking during and after each interview provided additional data of a verbal and non-verbal nature. A color coding system was developed to keep the interview responses for each principal separate and to protect the anonymity of the respondents. A referencing system which identified the dilemmas as actual or hypothetical was combined with other coding systems which distinguished between the principals' three interviews, the specific dilemmas and the nature of a particular response.

Strategies for attending to administrative details included: keeping a research journal; using bibliography cards for keeping track of references; using note cards for recording ideas, information and direct quotations; keeping notes during and after interviews; and maintaining separate records for each person.

Ideally, the analysis of data should be consistent and compatible with the underlying philosophy of the research. In qualitative research, this "notion of congruence" (Powney & Watts, 1987) assumes that "data collection and analysis is a simultaneous activity" (Merriam, 1988: 119). As the research design of this study was based on hypothetical and actual case scenarios, the analysis of data really began with the presentation of the four vignettes. Nonetheless, a major part of the analysis was imposing a structure or classification scheme on the information collected. In line with the philosophy underlying research concerned with the values and perceptions of the respondents, data analysis in this study was based on distinct categories which described

major elements of what was said (Powney & Watts, 1987). The categories themselves included a priori response categories developed within the conceptual framework for the explicit purposes of this study, and other categories constructed inductively during the interpretive process. As an initial scan of the data base readily determined that the response categories evident in the study matched those categories contained within the Response Classification Framework, the pre-determined response categories were used for both descriptive and generative purposes (as recommended by Goetz and LeCompte [1984: 184]).

Initially, the data were assigned to a particular category on the basis of the parties involved. There were four categories: teacher(s), child(ren), formal administrative authority, and parents. Where overlap occurred, the data were assigned to the category which best described the dominant source of conflict. Subsequently, the data was further categorized to distinguish between actual and hypothetical dilemmas. Within these categories, the principal's responses to the vignettes and actual dilemmas were analyzed using Elliott's three step procedure for the analysis of dilemmas (in Burgess, 1985), in conjunction with the Response Classification Framework:

Step 1: For each vignette or actual situation, the dilemma was described in terms of the main issues as identified by the individual principal, citing evidence to support the description (Chapter Four).

Step 2: Each response was described, explained and then categorized according to the classification framework. Specific evidence from the principals' interviews was used to support the classification (Chapter Five).

Step 3: Implications of the findings will be considered in terms of the research questions (Chapter Five) and for the practice of research (Chapter Six).

The data analysis contains other categories to report and interpret the principals' comments, observations, and opinions about the nature, frequency, and resolution of moral and ethical dilemmas.

SUMMARY

In this chapter, the study's methodology has been fully outlined and justified within the context and purposes of the overall research project. Although the individual aspects of the research design were presented in some detail, the strength of the method lies in the relationship amongst and within the various components. Thus, the qualitative methodology developed for this study is consistent and compatible with the underlying philosophy of the research study itself. Particular research techniques were developed in combination so that their inherent strengths and weaknesses would complement each other. Further, the structure and order of these techniques, from hypothetical to actual and from specific to general situations, contribute to a methodology whose overall strength is far greater than the sum of its parts. In addition, Chapter Three provided a synopsis of the data analysis process which began with the presentation of the vignettes indicative of the four categories of dilemma situations. In Part One of Chapter Four, these same categories are used to report the findings from the First and Retrospective Interviews. Finally, this chapter explained the three step process by which the principals' responses were analyzed and categorized. Ultimately, Chapter Three has laid the foundation for the subsequent presentation and analysis of the study's findings which are the subject of Chapters Four and Five.

CHAPTER IV: MORAL AND ETHICAL DILEMMAS

This chapter reports the research findings obtained from the principals over three interviews using the research methodology outlined in Chapter Three. Pseudonyms are used to identify the five individual principals, their bibliographic details summarized in Appendix G. As explained in Chapter Three, this study focuses on the respondents' perceptions of moral and ethical dilemmas. To this end, the findings are presented in terms of the individual's own voice. Consistent with Elliott's (1985) procedure for the analysis of dilemmas, the direct quotations recounting each principals' responses in the 'first person' provide evidence of the principals' identification of the main issues in each dilemma. The findings are presented in two parts, the former dealing with specific dilemma situations and the latter with the resolution of dilemmas in the general sense.

Part One is divided into four main sections according to the particular dilemma situations described as teacher(s), child(ren), formal administrative authority and parents. Each category pertains to the dominant source of intra-role conflict, although some overlap between the categories does exist.

Each of the four sections of Part One is further divided into two categories depending on the nature of the dilemma situation. The first category refers to the responses of the principals in the study to a hypothetical moral or ethical dilemma; the second includes recent actual or real life instances as encountered and described by the

respondents themselves. Part One concludes with a short section detailing the principals' overall comments in relation to the resolution of specific dilemma situations.

The principals' resolution of dilemmas in the general sense are reported in Part Two. Four simple categories are used to organize the findings in this section. "Nature and Frequency" deals with the determination by the principals themselves of how often they encounter moral and ethical dilemmas within their professional role. The second category, "Resolution Strategy," details the overall approach that each principal proclaims to adopt in the resolution of moral and ethical dilemmas. The category "Sources of Value Conflicts," considers the principals' perspective of moral and ethical dilemmas in terms of two distinct sources: the school community and formal administrative authorities in the form of the Catholic Education Office and /or the hierarchy of the local Catholic Church. In the first instance, the principal by virtue of position has formal authority over school matters relating to teachers, parents and children. In the latter circumstances, the principal is formally responsible to the Director of Catholic Education, the Parish Priest and the Diocesan Bishop who, by virtue of their position, hold formal authority over the principal in matters of employment and performance of professional duties. In the fourth category entitled "Final Authority," the respondents identify who or what they consider to be the final authority in the resolution of moral dilemmas.

Part Two concludes with a selection of comments and observations made by the individual principals in relation to the resolution of moral and ethical dilemmas that occur in the conduct of their professional role.

PART ONE: RESPONSES TO MORAL AND ETHICAL DILEMMAS

In order to present the research findings in context, it is pertinent to consider the principals' opinion as to the frequency with which they encounter moral and ethical dilemmas. For the purposes of attaining an informed, reflective response, this question was asked in the final interview.

When asked directly, all respondents, except for Elizabeth Wright, believed that they faced dilemmas on a very frequent basis: "I guess right from the first you come into the school in the morning" (James Hegarty); "Daily. I had one this morning before I came down for this interview" (Brian Davis); "Well, without sounding too over the top, I think if you can have a day without a dilemma, you've done pretty well ... quite easily you would go through a dilemma a day" (Malcom Burnes); "In my experience they come too often!" (Maria Antonez). Although Elizabeth initially stated, "Well, I don't have many to begin with," she clarified her response: "Requests from parents whose children are enrolled in a State school to come to our school - nine times out of ten it's for the wrong reason ... sometimes it averages one a week ... I suppose another dilemma that comes up quite a bit is the whole issue of the payment of fees. How far do you push? Who do you make excuses for? ... Yeah, they would probably be ... two on my mind at the moment."

A) DILEMMA SITUATION: TEACHER(S)

A.1 Vignette #1: Miss Usher

This hypothetical scenario involved the refusal by Miss Usher, a difficult teacher with poor health, to accept a year level change from Year 3 to Year 5. Feeling that his

personal integrity and authority were being challenged, Ben Jones, the newly appointed principal, refused to alter the decision on the basis that Miss Usher's expertise was in special education and the large number of special needs children were in Year 5.

Representatives of the Teacher's Union and the Catholic Education Office became involved as the dispute escalated. Two days before the school year was to commence, Miss Usher took sick leave due to stress related health problems. Once again, the principal considered his options.

i) Responses

None of the five respondents would alter their original decision. Malcom's observation that "swapping classes is not an option" typified their response. Each principal felt that leaving Miss Usher with the Year 5 class was the best arrangement for the children: "The school is there primarily for the children" (Maria); "The focus of any decision you make is what is best for the children ... so you are asking her to move, not for the sake of moving, but for the sake of the children" (Malcom); "There are a number of children going into Year 5 that needed special help" (Brian); "Well, if she does have a particular talent for children with special needs and that Year 5 class has a high number, then that's where she should go. I mean if she had a particular talent for music then I would put her in the music class or whatever" (Elizabeth).

The stress felt by principals in such situations was immediately apparent in many of their responses. When asked what options would you have if you were the principal, Maria replied, "Shoot myself!"; Elizabeth remarked, "A bottle of Valium would be the

best one.” Brian would attempt to appear calm on the surface “whilst paddling like a duck under the water.” James remarked, “Poor old Ben is going to be stressed out and grey-haired before he is much older and will want to give the job away.” Four of the respondents referred to either a current or recent situation which was very similar to the hypothetical. Hence, actual experience formed the basis of many of the responses. For example, in a post interview discussion, James admitted to becoming “confused with someone else”; Malcom commented, “I have certainly had this scenario”; Brian stated, “I have had a very similar case to this and that’s what I had to do.”

Even though the five respondents all refused to allow Miss Usher to change classes, they varied considerably in the manner in which they responded. James, Maria and Brian would try “to get her on side for a start” (James); “offer her as much support as I could” (Brian). Support ranged from professional development, cooperative teaching and reducing the size of the class to making “some kind of concessions, for example, if Year 5 involved going out to sport ... I would perhaps say that ‘I will make some other arrangement for you on Friday afternoon’ ... even perhaps giving her a classroom which say was closest to the staff room or had a sunny aspect or had more facilities” (Maria).

Rather than seeking to support Miss Usher, both Elizabeth and Malcom would simply “get in a replacement teacher for the week” (Elizabeth) or “the term” (Malcom). For these two respondents it seemed likely that the teacher may not return: “I would suspect that she would maybe try to take quite a few months off on stress leave” (Elizabeth); a prospect that neither principal was concerned about: “Ultimately, if she comes back, you want her back because she wants to be back” (Malcom).

In their final deliberations as to whether they should re-allocate Miss Usher to Year 3, Brian and Maria remained firm in their commitment to acting in the best interests of the children. Both would seek a 'win-win' outcome by attempting to convince Miss Usher that it is in everyone's best interest for her to take Year 5. Through offers of support and making concessions, Maria hopes to change Miss Usher's perception of the principal from "someone who has got to be controlled. I would like her to see the principal as someone she works with -- that perhaps things can be gained by working with someone, rather than controlling them."

At this stage of the dilemma, James would not change the original decision. However, he believes that he would not have gone about it in the same way: "Obviously she had some fears and those fears had to be allayed first, before you dump something on somebody." James would have avoided the situation: "I guess as a new principal coming in, you don't change too many things, do you? You observe." However, under the given circumstances he would seek to improve her confidence and self-esteem: "I guess that's what I would be trying to do, um, give her confidence ... trying to give her maybe a bit of responsibility." James would attempt to find out why she is so adamant that she doesn't want to change to Year 5: "Who knows? There might be some reason why ... then it would be up to the principal to give her some inservice or expertise ... or even help."

In re-affirming the original decision, Elizabeth asserted that it was in the best interests of the school to have Miss Usher teaching Year 5. There was no doubt in her mind that the principal had made the right decision: "I don't think he would be losing any

sleep over the decision ... after quite a lot of carrying on she (Miss Usher) would probably be told that she really has to take the class that she has been allocated.”

For Malcom, who believed that the focus of the original decision was the benefits the children would derive, “It has turned into a situation of the strength the principal is going to show in terms of standing up to the Miss Usher.” The issue is now one of “ownership of a particular grade level -- power ... the principal doesn’t wish it to be a scenario like that, Miss Usher has made it that scenario.”

When asked if he thinks Miss Usher will return to school after her week’s stress leave, Malcom outlined his response to the situation that had now developed:

Who cares? Whilst you’ve got someone in front of the class, I would certainly be approaching it from the angle of longevity ... I would see the fight or the fact that you were in for the long haul - I think for every day or week that she is away, she is isolating herself more and the bottom line is you’re in control. I mean the school is going on without her - that’s going to hurt her ... word will start filtering back ... that this new principal seems to be good ... people start becoming confident in you and that’s taking, all the time, away from her stand ... if she wants to take that stand she is entitled ... but, ultimately schools are not pre-retirement clubs, we can not just afford to sit back and offer pre-retirement incentives to people because it is the children who are being affected. By the same token you have got to maintain your integrity and maintain a belief in yourself and show strength as to why you want that person to change. But not get caught in a confrontationalist mode with her which is what she would want, because if she gets that, that just gives her more ammunition to bring you down.

Malcom was not the only principal to acknowledge that the issue had now developed into a situation where the principal’s credibility and authority were in question.

Maria observed:

Once again, just looking at a couple of situations that perhaps have happened - you always get the feeling, you know, why am I following this procedure or why am I following this plan? Is it because I am worried about how I will look or is it because I really am sticking to school guidelines, school policy and what I feel is

best for the school as a whole? I think sometimes that comes in to a certain degree, however, I am new here at this school as principal and I think I really have to show them that I've got what it takes. If I let them see that I have given in, then of course every parent and every teacher is going to come and expect the same thing ... my gut feeling tells me that I really do have to stand my ground, because this is what I feel is the best option for the whole school. I certainly refuse to let one staff member manipulate the rest of the staff and the school. I understand there will be some backlash from parents ...

Most of the principals had little empathy for Miss Usher, her perspective or her health problems. For the most part, Miss Usher, "was a difficult teacher used to getting her own way" (Brian); she was merely "putting on a tantrum ... a spoilt, childish attitude" (James); sooner or later she "was going to be a problem, something would have cropped up with her ... I suspect that she is probably not at all well liked" (Elizabeth). The respondents found it difficult to understand Miss Usher's perspective. In particular, Maria was at somewhat of a loss to explain why she found it so difficult to put herself in Miss Usher's position: "I suppose because I am so used to being in an administrative role ... it's the principal's role to delegate classes ... Miss Usher is not a person who would give and take ... I would say my sympathies would be with the principal."

Similarly, the respondents expressed little or no concern for Miss Usher's health. Certainly it was not a factor in the allocation of classes: "the school is there primarily for the education of the children ... and anything that negatively affects that, for example, the health of the teacher, then I feel the effective education of the children must come first" (Maria). When asked directly if her health would be a factor in future decisions about classes, Elizabeth replied:

Well, I think it would affect her health - it certainly would be there, but I don't think that. I think my decisions as far as that would be more practical. For

example, if someone has difficulty in getting up and down stairs, then I wouldn't give them a class upstairs ... in this case she has a professional duty to take the class that she has been allocated.

Malcom discounted any consideration of Miss Usher's health, facetiously suggesting that, "I'd be a bit 'worried' about Miss Usher. She has had seven weeks Christmas holidays and she is stressed. Imagine what she would be like after seven weeks of school!"

It seems probable that as a new principal in that situation, James may have given some consideration to Miss Usher's health. Certainly, he expressed the need for principals to be aware of each person: "You need to really know the person ... even her health and you need a profile on all the teachers." Although Maria would not consider Miss Usher's health in the allocation of classes, she would seek to accommodate some of her health concerns as part of her offer of concessions, such as relieving her of involvement in sport, if that would "affect her health."

ii) Outcomes

Each of the respondents predicted mostly positive outcomes of his or her resolution not to change Miss Usher to Year 3. The special needs children in Year 5 would benefit from her expertise as intended; the majority of parents of Year 3 would be happy not to have Miss Usher given that the complaints so far received were only "the tip of the iceberg" (Brian); parents and teachers who "saw the principal was effective in bringing her around would see that as a good thing, but really their respect for the principal would increase" (Maria).

Where respondents had sought to provide support, inservice and/or concessions for Miss Usher, they felt that Miss Usher could make a success of teaching Year 5. During first term she would probably resent having “lost the battle ... but then as she got accustomed to the class and realized that there is support for her ... she might say ‘hey , you know, these people do appreciate me and I’ll give it my best shot’” (Brian); “I think they (teachers) are like that because they have had insufficient inservice ... or because of the fear of change ... I think they need to be supported ... and encouraged” (James); “The easing of tension ... would certainly be good for the staff and the kids as a whole” (Maria); the “side-walk Mafia” (parents who gossip in the carpark and at the front gate) would “spread the word that Ben had a victory which the parents would see as positive” (Brian); similarly, the teachers would appreciate that the principal had been firm in his decision-making -- “No wishy-washiness ... that’s what teachers want” (James).

The principals who were unconcerned about making efforts to support Miss Usher, were comfortable with the distinct likelihood that she would not return to take the Year 5 class: “You know, you sort of get someone in for the whole week - I can’t see that’s a big problem ... if she (Miss Usher) has to take the class, you know, it talks about her being tyrannical and placing inordinate pressure on the children -- that could get worse” (Elizabeth); “Again, you’re probably better off having a supply teacher in there than a teacher who doesn’t want to be there” (Malcom). However, Elizabeth believed that not all the outcomes would be positive. She cautioned that the principal:

Was not getting off on a very good foot, well, if he took the options that I would take. Even the people that support what he has done would still think that it is a bit high-handed and perhaps a bit thoughtless ... it could well put people off

discussing things with him and other people could perhaps make a determined push to see how far he'll go ... I think he would be losing sleep over other people's perceptions of him as a leader and the sort of leadership he is giving to enact ... there would be a fair bit of disappointment - I wanted to start in a really 'you beaut', fantastic way.

In predicting positive outcomes for the principal, Malcom referred to a similar real life situation where he showed that he "wasn't going to be swayed by one person's opinion ... it's important for everybody to see you make decisions based on equity and justice, not on personalities, not on cliques, but on what is best for the kids." A difficult incident, like the Miss Usher saga, presents an opportunity for the principal to establish himself or herself in the eyes of the school community. Malcom explained:

Well, the way you deal with it is going to tell the staff a lot about your philosophies on leadership and management's and the way you want to take the school ... so I guess it's a good thing ... it's making you stand up. You don't have to say anything ... they're actually seeing your philosophy in action ... if this was a test case for your leadership, in future whatever else may arise that they know you've got some strength there.

Malcom could not see positive outcomes for Miss Usher as he could for the principal:

The consequences are the fact that she could be out of a job. She is obviously used to the fact that in her past this tactic has worked ... you know I certainly had the scenario and I just kept going with what I believed in ... it took two years but the teacher concerned who had certain ownership and control ... found herself isolated and in tears in my office."

None of the respondents suggested that pressure from the Teacher's Union was a factor in their final decision. They believed that "it's the principal's role to delegate classes" and hence, "the Teacher's Union is not an issue" (Malcom). Similarly, the lack of support from the Catholic Education Office for the principal's position was inconsequential to the final determination of each respondent. Nonetheless, the principals were disappointed

with the attitude expressed by the Staffing Officer: “the principal is not getting enough support from the Office” (Elizabeth). Whilst not a factor in the decision, the lack of support from the Office shaped some of the responses: “Well, I’d be sitting down with the Director, rather than the Staffing Officer. The Staffing Officers have battled with this woman before and lost” (Brian); “The Catholic Education Office is passing the buck ... taking the easy way out rather than facing up to its responsibilities” (Maria). Although not changing her decision, Maria’s response sought to take the Catholic Education’s position into account:

Well, to tell you the truth, if I’ve got the Office telling me to back off, I don’t like my chances - particularly if the Union approached me ... okay, I haven’t got much hope have I? ... but surely, I mean there has to be some hope that I would come to some kind of - I don’t think it would be win-win, but perhaps a compromise. If I told the Union I was trying to make concessions?

A.2 Actual Examples

When asked to describe actual dilemma situations that they had recently faced, all the principals, except James, related a dilemma primarily concerning teachers.

i) Situation: Teacher Lifestyle/Competency (Elizabeth/Brian)

Both Elizabeth and Brian described situations which involved aspects relating to competency and lifestyle. Elizabeth outlined her dilemma:

There was a position vacant and this teacher was recommended to me by the Director ... He said she’d been on study leave and that she was wonderful and terrific and that everything would be fantastic. Um, what ended up happening was that she had a lot of problems. She was very, very unpopular with the parents and also with one or two other teachers and on a small staff that can be really

dangerous. The problems ranged from very, very basic problems such as she couldn't spell, so I had situations of parents bringing me work that she had corrected where she had actually corrected children's correct spelling and put the wrong spelling, so it was that bad and the parents had a real and legitimate concern. At the other end were problems with lifestyle. She had been, from what I understand, coerced by the Director into getting married before she got a position in a Catholic school because she had been living with her partner. Her and her partner had been together for many years before, and they had quite an interesting sex life and she used to talk about this quite openly.

So it just got worse and worse. A big part of the problem was my inexperience. I had no idea what to do and I probably didn't handle it very well. I spent a lot of time praying that she would go to another school ... there was the problems of the lifestyle and the non-commitment to the Catholic faith, which was evident. She talked about it very willingly. Again in front of not just the staff, but parents and so on. So, I had on average a parent up at least once a week complaining about different aspects and problems in the staff room as well. I didn't have any problems with her as a person, I mean she was lots of fun and, um, she tried really hard and the big thing was she didn't know her problem. The other thing that amazed me was that she had, a Bachelor of Education and she was working on her Masters - so how she still had all these problems? It was really hard.

The main dilemma was that she was trying hard and she did work hard. The kids enjoyed her and she really believed that she was committed to teaching. So the dilemma was that it was hard for me personally to tell this person, "You know, you're not that great, you've got a lot of room to improve." Some of the things were things that were intangible, they were hard to really measure. There was no way to set goals for someone to measure them, work towards them. That was a dilemma. I felt very much for the parents who were very upset because they were right and I couldn't come out and say "Yes, you were right" ... The other dilemma that I saw was that by arranging for her to be moved, I wasn't solving the problem ... it was just going to become someone else's problem.

On accepting a new principalship, Brian immediately encountered this situation:

This teacher had been on staff here for something like twelve years and had a chequered career, a bit of tyrant and parents either loved him or hated him. The year I came in, the first interview I had was two parents came up, husband and wife, and they decided to pull their kids out of the school because of the treatment this teacher had meted out to their daughter ... they'd had an older child in his class and now their younger child was going into that class and they said "Right! we're not going to go through hell on earth again with this teacher." So they pulled them out, but they wanted me to know why. I spoke to a couple of teachers

whom I felt I could communicate with without being unprofessional and they confirmed that a lot of this behavior had gone on. I spoke to the previous principal who said that this teacher was the bane of his life. The principal had suffered a nervous breakdown the year before I arrived and he sort of intimated that a lot of it was to do with this teacher who was extremely difficult, but covered himself extremely well. Anyway, I then went into the first year with this teacher and found that he was very obstructionist in staff meetings, never had a positive word to say, - a very strong, forceful person with a very quick tongue.

Both Elizabeth and Brian sought to solve their dilemma through removing the offending teacher from their school:

I didn't know about things like processes to follow or anything like that and I ended up going and speaking to the Staffing Officer and saying that I thought it would be a really good idea if this person moved, because that's how I saw the solution and, um, and so, um, that's what happened. She was moved and she was happy to move. Now I mean I know now, looking back in hindsight, that was not a good way to handle it but it was the best way that I knew at the time.
(Elizabeth)

Brian recalled the circumstances of his response:

The teaching situation got no better and I went into the second year with him and I thought really this teacher just shouldn't be in teaching. He'd been there for twelve years; I felt he really needed a break, but no one would take him. Anyway, at that stage I saw in the newspaper that they were looking for exchange teachers to Ireland and he had an Irish name, so I brought it to his attention that maybe he'd like to apply for this position in Ireland and he dismissed it out of hand. But a few days later he came back to me and he said, "You know, I thought on what you said and I think I'd like to try" and I said, "Okay, you put your application in and I'll endorse it," which I did. Lo and behold he was selected to go to Ireland for twelve months and he did.

Although this "took the pressure off" Brian for twelve months, the problem was compounded during the teacher's absence when the principal became aware that the teacher had begun living in a homosexual relationship in Ireland:

So here he is leaving us, going across there and then I was faced with the dilemma, if he comes back (pause). He had contacted his power of attorney to say that he and Sean were coming out to Australia and they were hoping to teach here

and he'd be coming back on to class and I'm thinking "Hell's bells, you know, what am I going to be faced with next?"

As the current situation was that the teacher was still overseas, Brian was unsure about what to do next. He was hopeful that he would remain in Ireland "so that he'll resign, which will save me a moral dilemma." Brian had already discussed the situation with the Catholic Education Office. As the teacher had signed a contract for the twelve months which, on his return, "guaranteed him a place, but not necessarily at this school," they had agreed to offer him a position at another school at a far removed location. So, if he was offered one of those positions he would, I say, resign."

As principals of Catholic schools, both Elizabeth and Brian struggled to come to terms with the question of teacher lifestyles. In the example she described, Elizabeth concluded that the lifestyle issue "was pretty big. It was perhaps more amongst the staff because, you know, they were exposed to it more ... what seemed to be very little commitment to the Catholic faith becomes a problem ... what seemed a big one to me." Yet the Catholic Education Office did not want to get involved: "Their main thing was that she had married her partner - that on paper her lifestyle was acceptable."

For Brian, the lifestyle issue was a source of many dilemmas:

Yeah, it's always a bind. You know, you get teachers living in de facto relationships or whatever. I think I've got one in that situation now, but half my parents would be in the same situation, so they can't really call the kettle black. But at the same time the more orthodox parents don't like to hear anything about it and they feel that there is a lot hypocrisy if they're teaching the sanctity of marriage and living in a de facto relationship, how can they teach it? I agree with them.

Q: So what would you do about it?

I would not, perhaps, not take any action unless I had several parents complaining about the situation and then I would have to take it up with that teacher concerned and say, "Look - I've got these complaints, you either perhaps go into a marriage situation if you think that's going to happen or maybe you'd better think about moving to another school because of the disquiet that it's causing." I would be on very tricky ground. I would be on grounds of discrimination and I'd explain that all to the teacher too. I'd also talk to the Union and say that the issue has to be resolved ... um, I actually have spoken to the Union about a hypothetical.

Q: What about the argument that it's hypocrisy for the Church to turn a blind eye until there are complaints and only then will we take a stand?

Yeah, I don't think it's hypocrisy, I think it's a matter of living in the real world ... but if it's a blatant thing, where it is causing scandal and maybe there are several boyfriends coming and living at different times and the lifestyle of that teacher is not good or not a good example - then I think the Church should take a stand on the issue. It's a hard one and I don't think there's any right or wrong things, and I just sort of encourage my teachers not to get into that situation to begin with.

In a situation involving a teacher who divorced and re-married outside of the Catholic Church, Brian faced another example of a lifestyle dilemma:

I would feel in a bind, but I would justify it that in a secondary school where quite a lot of teachers are not Catholic, many of them are other religions who may also go through divorces and so on. I would be justifying my conscience that we can employ a divorcee from another religion, but we can't employ a divorcee from a Catholic religion. I think that's wrong ... you can't sack him or anything like that - I don't think that's justified - but perhaps even saying because of the difficulty of the situation maybe we will take you off religion classes and you teach something else and someone who's not in that predicament takes your religion lessons.

Brian felt torn over the Church's attitude to the teacher and his own convictions:

I don't think the Church should penalize him for that and I'm sure God or Christ wouldn't. He has the opportunity of making another lady very happy and they are very much in love and very happy - it's good for her kids too. ... he's going through hell. When I talk to him my heart bleeds, and I'm sure God doesn't want to see a soul tortured like that. And yet if a divorce was permitted, he would be a very happy man and probably his new wife would come into the Church and her children.

The school seems to be a moral custodian of society's values but society is living usually five or six years ahead of the school and then want the school to uphold all these cherished beliefs and traditions but ... society has a much laxer view of themselves and I think that will be a bind for the Church.

ii) Situation: Teacher Competency (Malcom)

At the time of the retrospective interview, Malcom was struggling with a situation involving two teachers nearing retirement:

I have two who are finding the going very tough, need a lot of support, suddenly feeling insecure and unable to handle situations that for many years they have been able to handle. I guess they start feeling that they are not as in control as they have been, begin taking a lot of time off on stress leave ... um, they come, these teachers come from a generation where you are encouraged to worry about your four walls of your classroom and nothing else. They come from a very selfish type of culture where you handle everything yourself, you handle your discipline yourself, you handle your planning yourself, you're accountable to yourself and therefore they tend not to see or worry about the larger picture. What they find now that they are insecure and looking for support, because they have isolated themselves, they don't have the support. I think that's a great insecurity they have that for so long they have been supposedly in control, in reality they haven't been because they haven't been in control of themselves. Just what do you do in terms of what we are on about as a Catholic school and ministering to our staff? Obviously, recognizing the fact that they're in need whether it be spiritually or emotionally - but clinically, at some stage, a judgment has got to be made on the impact on what their absence - even when they're at school - what their frame of mind is, on the children. I'm still wrestling with it, I don't have the answer, um.

For me, the moral dilemma is how far do you continue being pastoral and supportive and concerned before you actually pull up the runaway train and say, "Let's look at the load you're putting on yourself, the school, the children. Do you think it would be best if perhaps you looked at retirement? I haven't found the answer of that question yet. My nature is to be very supportive and care and concern but, my ego tells me that something has got to be sorted out ...

Malcom was still uncertain about how he was going to resolve the situation:

But it does worry me because I've got to find the balance between being pastoral, supportive and caring to the teachers and ... making them realize, that they're doing harm to the school overall, harm to their class' education and probably harm to their reputations ... something has got to be sorted out for the continuity and the flow of education to the kids ... if you've got the answer, please tell me.

Malcom considered his possible courses of action:

I haven't moved it along. I know you can move it along by, I guess, being less interested or less pastoral or less approachable, so that they might turn around and say, "You are not sensitive or you don't care for me or whatever." But what you're trying to do is leave some distance in your relationship so that they can see for themselves what is actually happening. But again that's hard, um. The other thing of course, is just to speak to them at an interview situation and just explain to them, I guess the worry you have over their frame of mind and discuss their future with him. But the dilemma is that what they want to do, which is to hang on and keep going, would be different to what you would like them to do ... um, so you know you have got to have respect for where they are coming from, but I don't think they can see how bad the scenario is.

Q: What would you do if they dug their heels in? Let's say ... the situation continues to deteriorate.

I don't think there is much you can do, all you have to do is wait for a situation where they get more sick leave so you attack them in their time of weakness ... I haven't done that yet, but that's certainly something that I am contemplating now

- when they're trying to prove to you how fit and healthy they are, that's not the time to do it - it's when they are at their vulnerable stage, when they know they haven't got the comeback. I mean it's not something that I would back away from, I think your body language (pause). Ultimately you're trying to do them a favor. You're not trying to hurt them. You're trying to make them wake up to the fact of something that they can't see, that not only I can see but other people can see as well. Um, it comes down to a psychological battle, you've got to make them realize in a number of ways, either through your body language - you know, not that you're not caring, but let them see the load that they are actually putting back on the school.

Q: When you have those types of dilemmas, what's your intention?

I think it's my intention to understand the problem well, understand the issue and have a grasp of the issue and to be able to make an informed judgment, not a

judgment based on what I want to do, but a judgment based on what is best for the school which may not necessarily be what I want to do.

Q: But would what is best for the school be put over what an individual may think is best for themselves?

Yeah, individuals are going to see it selfishly. I mean, certainly like in this case these teachers would be devastated to hear that parents are actually saying the children aren't having a good year or the children are having an interrupted year or so and she's 'lost it' ... but I think it's your duty to make sure the teachers are aware of that. Try and get across to them that not to damage or further damage any work they may have done because of their stubbornness or the fact that they think they can't be done without ... trying to get them to face up to I guess. I mean, ultimately you've got to try and turn it around to make them feel as though it's their decision because they won't do it - they'll certainly buck at the fact that you want them to go. They won't do that because to them they will see that as being asked to leave, or being in the category of special needs.

iii) Situation: Teacher Conflict (Maria)

One of Maria's dilemmas arose because of friction that developed between teachers in a cooperative teaching arrangement. The friction developed to the point where both teachers were coming up to her with their own complaints: "One didn't agree with what the other was doing. The other one was saying, 'Well, this one's not pulling her weight, everything falls to me'."

The main problem for Maria was that the conflict of personalities was in a very close working environment. Hence, the friction was being felt right throughout the classroom environment. Part of the dilemma was that Maria felt that she had personally contributed to the problem by her own failure to give enough attention to the situation before the problem arose. To a degree, both teachers felt neglected and isolated from the rest of the school, due in part to the geographical location of their classroom from the

administration office and the school buildings. Maria felt she compounded the problem by failing to visit the classroom more frequently: "So if I do have to look at it in an analytical way, I really think part of the blame there is on my side. Because of their physical distance from the top school, it's very easy for them to feel like that are a separate part."

In retrospect, Maria felt that the situation was further complicated by the fact that the teachers felt uncomfortable about complaining to the principal about each other:

That particular issue wasn't verbalized as such but it was quite obvious. Also I think too the fact that I can remember once when one of them came up, she was feeling very guilty about being up there because she felt it would be quite obvious to the other person where she was.

Maria decided to meet with the two teachers together on a regular basis, once a month or twice a term:

So, at the first meeting - that's right, I had asked them to come prepared with a list of issues that they wanted to talk about. I let each sort of speak in their time, making sure that I did expect the other to listen and give that person the chance to speak. While it sort of started out fairly tense at first, I felt that while each person was speaking the tension was a little bit eased. Um, I made sure then before we left that we had actually made a date for the next meeting so that they felt that, it just wasn't a one off thing, that I was serious about carrying it on.

In between those meetings I tried to go down there just on an informal basis, asking informally how things were getting on and it seemed like things were being sort of shared and understood. So we carried on with those meetings and those meetings have really helped quite a lot.

Maria professed to having numerous other dilemmas at work that involved staff, often when individual teachers seemed to be preoccupied or struggling with their own dilemmas. In such cases, Maria believed that "the best thing is to solve the whole lot." However, she would leave it to the teacher to choose to tell her, "because that really is not

my concern - it's my concern when it is affecting the school." Maria believed she has a pastoral role to play:

I have no hesitation about that - in my role as principal that I have to try and help that person out. Once again, I have to say that if it's private it is at their invitation of course. I see that really, not as just a choice on the principal's part, but as a responsibility. Particularly the Catholic school ... um, I can remember one of them crossed the oval one down going from the lower school to the top school and I really felt like I was weighted down. I had just come from speaking to a teacher who I knew was going through a bit of a hassle. I just felt totally weighted down as principal because I felt not only do you run a school but you have to basically take on the burdens of the teachers that they may be going through. As I said to you before, it's very hard - people say you leave your own personal worries at home when you enter the door but I honestly can't see how that is possible and I think, you know, if something is affecting your professional life then you have to see to it.

B) DILEMMA SITUATION: CHILD(REN)

B.1 Vignette #2: Jane

Now a ward of the State, twelve year old Jane had suffered a long history of physical and sexual abuse, ill health, poor personal hygiene and long standing neglect. Since Jane's enrollment at the school, the teachers had become concerned that Jane's presence was having an increasingly detrimental effect on the other children and on the school. The popularization of her recent sexual exploits and her current efforts to prostitute herself with the boys in her class have led her class teacher to conclude that it is now time to 'get rid' of Jane. Wild rumors were circulating the school and a teacher and parent backlash seemed imminent. The principal, Brenda Williams, needed to take urgent and decisive action - but what action?

i) Responses

Elizabeth immediately felt the horns of the dilemma “because my life is going to be a lot easier if I can get rid of Jane - that versus we are talking about a human being here who really needs help and perhaps we are the people to do it ... yeah, that’s ‘real stay awake at night’ stuff that.” Maria pointed out that “the principal is sort of the ham in the sandwich here. As principal I would feel the need to really help the teacher. I think I would try to understand it from the parent’s point of view that if my child was in that class.” Nonetheless, Maria’s foremost concern was for Jane: “We’ve got to get to the bottom of the problem ... so that instead of seeing her as a perpetrator as such, seeing her as a victim.” Initially, James sought to reconcile the issues:

On the pastoral side of it you have to consider the child herself, where she is at, her homelife, anything else that had happened to her and maybe look at it from that point of view ... the main concern is the safety of the rest of the children ... You would have to weigh up taking one person as compared to taking the other three hundred or whatever children ... I guess the majority of people, you have to think of those rather than an individual. I know it would be good to do both, but I think you just need to refer the one person to the authorities who can handle it ... I don’t think for the sake of one child, you can neglect what is best for the others.

From the outset Malcom and Brian were very definite in their view of the situation.

I think Jane has put herself in a predicament where she is beyond any help in terms of what the school can offer and in terms of the impact she would or is having on the other children. I think that you would have to - not think - I know that the school would be better off without her. Now that seems rather cold and doesn’t take into consideration the friendly, pastoral care we offer as a Catholic school, but this situation is beyond pastoral care...

But ultimately, as the principal of the school you are responsible to all the parents and to all the children in the school and, whilst you may feel like a bit of a bastard so to speak, you’ve got to ensure quality education, quality schooling - but

you know you've got to ... You've got to make the decision for the school, then the second scenario is you've got to look at what's going to happen to her.
(Malcom)

In stark contrast, Brian's primary concern was for Jane: "Obviously she is crying out for help ... she wants to be noticed, she wants to be loved ... I don't think any child's a lost cause. All kids have good in them, it's just a matter of finding it."

For Malcom, there was no alternative but to look "for removal, not only from your school but from the school system ... I don't think that suspension would solve the problem - the problem is only going to come back ... I'd use expulsion if I had to!"

For Brian, Maria and Elizabeth, 'getting rid' of Jane was not an option. As Elizabeth explained:

If you're going to get into that state of mind that you just get rid of them as soon as they are a problem, then there's some fairly questionable ethics involved ... like you get rid of Jane, but there is always another Jane around - you can't get rid of them every time.

Expulsion, suspension or even encouraging the parents to withdraw Jane were not options: "Because to me that is just repeating all the negative experiences that she has had ... it's an easy way out for the school" (Maria); "Well, I think it's a case of Christ left the flock of sheep and went looking for the lost one ... when He carried it back there was great rejoice" (Brian).

Each of these respondents (Elizabeth, Maria and Brian) related recent similar experiences which had formed the basis of their response. They believed that by solving Jane's problems first, the other concerns would fall into place. In essence, they envisaged developing an overall school strategy which involved the class teacher, parents, staff,

children, the Catholic Education Office and the Department of Children's Services. This strategy would be developed under the guidance of a specialist, a psychologist or student counselor: "I would consult a child psychologist or counselor ... one of the things is equip the other children with a strategy to cope with it ... Jane also needs some positive strategies too and the class teacher as well" (Elizabeth).

I'd try and work through the strategy ... make sure that the teacher knew what the strategy was and why we were doing that ... getting the psychologist to come and talk to those teachers ... so they knew that it wasn't just the principal's strategy, it was a professional thing and every teacher had to support it ... you might even have to go further than this, to some of the mothers in the class ... and say, 'look we need your help'.

(Brian).

The primary concern of the strategy proposed by Elizabeth, Maria and Brian "would be somehow to show Jane that her welfare is of utmost importance to us in the school"

(Maria).

James preferred to avoid the problem with Jane, wishing that the latest problem occurred in the last week of the school year so that "I didn't have the problem anymore." Failing that possibility, through the intervention of a school counselor he would hope to "work out some sort of procedure, steps of a procedure." If the situation deteriorated, James was optimistic that "the parents might decide to withdraw the child." For James, expulsion was "the very last option."

ii) Outcomes

Typically, the respondents had lingering doubts about the likely outcome of their response. Maria cited a particular case involving a girl from a foster home:

By the time that child left us her whole attitude had changed ... I wouldn't expect results overnight ... I would see it as my responsibility to make sure that she goes to a secondary school which would be sensitive to her needs ... I guess I'm very idealistic."

Elizabeth's concern would be if the situation deteriorated: "If what we do doesn't seem to make the situation better ... perhaps our situation isn't the best for her ... but Mum's not going to take a great deal of notice of that. I really don't know where you stand."

Brian found it difficult to determine what response he would make if the situation did not improve: "I don't know ... I would like to think the situation improved ... if everything else failed then ... maybe she needs to go to a special school ... We love her dearly, but we just can't manage with the resources we have." Similarly, James hoped to achieve a 'win-win' situation, "but unfortunately, I don't think for the sake of one child, you can neglect the rest... you try to support that person until it comes to a stage where the kids are suffering, the teacher's suffering, the school's suffering." James believed that it was "going to another stressful, time consuming process - so once again, it's just virtually making retirement a happy occasion in 'x' number of years."

Although Malcom saw no future for Jane at his school or any other Catholic school in the system, he was concerned that "we take an interest in what's going to happen ... not just waving good-bye at the school gate." He believed that by taking an interest in her future placement, it was possible "to make it a 'real life Christian situation' where the children would see that where we have people in life like this ... that we need to support them." Nonetheless, part of the message to the community would be that "you

are not going to have disruptive elements or disruptive times, so the consequences are that confidence in the school is boosted, confidence in you (the principal) is boosted.”

One of the lingering tensions for some of the respondents was the question of the commitment that parents were obliged to make to the ethos of the Catholic school. Some of the respondents felt torn over the level of support that the school should provide for a child whose family does not support the school and its mission: “I would be really torn over that because, I mean, my life is going to be lot easier if I can get rid of Jane and obviously I have got a loophole through which to do it” (Elizabeth); “Before you get rid of her, you would hope that enough pressure is put onto Jane’s parents so that they realize that our type of education isn’t the sort of education that they particularly want ... they’re obviously not agreeing to the policies to the school” (James).

Malcom admitted to having an ongoing struggle with this question, describing a number of current examples of unresolved dilemmas involving a lack of parental support for the school’s ethos. Malcom explained:

How far do you go before you say to these people - ‘Look, I’ve got a whole body of committed people at this school, they are committed financially, they are committed faith wise, they are committed to the place - you are obviously not committed - Why are your children here?’ But that’s a very current and topical dilemma with me ...

We have ... a single mother who lives off the Welfare system and she looks after herself and not her kids ... the child smells of urine, the child is not in uniform, looks terrible, not washed ... yet you’re a Catholic school, if there is any school in the place that they should be at, it’s a Catholic school ... Schools are child-centered institutions and as principal you have to make decisions based on the philosophy ‘what is best for the child, what is best for the child’ ... there must ‘out’ for the school because of the impact that it is having on the other children ... It’s a huge dilemma to me, probably one of the biggest dilemmas I face.

B.2 Actual Examples

Brian and James described dilemma situations they had encountered which involved children.

i) Situation: Aggressive After-school Behavior (Brian)

During the retrospective interview, Brian described a number of situations that he was currently involved in concerning persistent misbehavior of students. One such situation was particularly difficult. Earlier in the year, Brian had enrolled a boy, David, who had been experiencing a number of difficulties at his previous school. As time progressed, David began to become involved in a number of incidents after school: “If anyone tried to tell him anything, he would come out with verbal abuse and fighting” (Brian). As these incidents usually occurred on the way home from school, Brian was unsure as to his rights to take any action other than to speak to the boys:

I didn't take any other action at this stage, I thought the thing had resolved itself and I wasn't quite sure of my jurisdiction after school. You've got four hundred kids leaving the playground, how much control do you have on them? ... I know we had jurisdiction on school buses and if they're in school uniform but I wasn't quite sure on this thing.”

After a number of similar incidents, Brian spoke to David's father who “sided with David and was quite bombastic about it.” Brian decided not to pursue it any further “because I haven't got enough evidence and I thought I was on shaky ground.” Then, on the previous Friday, a teacher warned Brian that there was going to be a fight between David and some other boys on the weekend. Even though Brian warned the boys not to get involved, when he came to school on Monday “The buzz in the school was that there

had been a fight and that weapons had been taken and that about twenty kids were involved in it.” Brian was in a quandary:

We’d sought counseling with David and counseling had been going on all this time. We seemed to be getting nowhere. I knew that my jurisdiction didn’t cover the boys on Saturday. It had nothing to do with me, but I thought the issue of weapons, chains, billiard balls, whatever, was going a bit too far.

Brian telephoned the Juvenile Police for some informal advice about where he stood.

I said, “They’re our kids. It happened on a Saturday and weapons were taken. What do you think? She said she would talk to a superior and get back to me. Then I rang the parents of the main ringleaders and I spoke to Anthony’s mum and she was absolutely horrified that he had taken a chain and a billiard ball and, she didn’t know anything about it ... and James’ mum was the same ... Then I rang David’s mum and I told her what I’d told the other parents and she admitted that she did know the fight was on and that her husband had actually driven David up to it. His father phoned me back that afternoon to abuse me for sticking my nose in where it wasn’t concerned and what right did I have to go to the police and so and why did I do that?”

At this stage I am getting teachers sort of pressing to get rid of David - that he is causing a bad influence in the school and giving the school a bad name - and I’m trying to do the best for David and his mum and probably his father, even though I am getting a lot of opposition. Anyway, the police then got back to me to say that they did think it was a serious matter because if they were taking weapons at the age of eleven, what they might be like at thirteen or sixteen. They asked if they could come up and interview the boys ... The following morning, I had an irate phone call from David’s dad who had rung the Catholic Education Office’s School Liaison Officer ... Today I’m waiting for the next irate phone call and it’s creating a bind because teachers are still advocating that David should go ... That’s a bind I’m in at the moment - trying to keep this kid on the straight and narrow, because I think if we wipe our hands of him he will go on to another school and be just as aggressive. He will be a problem in society unless he’s helped, so we are persevering with school counseling for him.

Q: What are you going to do next?

I’m a bit worried about a couple of teachers that feel that he should be out of the school and I’ve got one very strong teacher who’s advocating that and she’s influencing a few of the weaker teachers and they’re sort of getting on a bandwagon. So, it’s sort of a ‘move David on’ project and then I’ve got probably

a third of the staff who think what I'm doing is the right thing, so it's causing a bit of a division, um ... parents are talking at the shops, you know, repeating the saga of David's aggression and that school seemingly is powerless to do anything about it and so I'm getting a bit of parental pressure ... we just got to persevere with him and if we do take the easy option of expelling him we just pass the problem onto someone else and I think his anger and frustration would be just continued and magnified. Surely in a Christian context here, if we can help I think we'll do society and David a much better job.

In hindsight, Brian would again telephone the Juvenile Police. Now that "the word has gone around ... that the police were called, the parents have been spoken to and the boys were in trouble ...has given everyone a bit of a scare. In retrospect it wasn't a bad move although I didn't think the police would act that way."

ii) Situation: Persistent Misbehavior (James)

James described a situation involving the persistent disobedience of a child,

Jonathan:

There wouldn't be a week gone by that we hadn't had to speak to him about his behavior ... On speaking to the mother on a numbers of occasions, she would agree that he continually lies, he's aggressive, he physically and verbally abuses other children, he defies teachers and school captains. He firstly denies it of course, but he is caught red-handed and then he offers all the excuses - saying he doesn't know, he can't remember... we have gone through the various steps of the discipline policy, he's been put into the discipline books on numbers of occasions. We've been very flexible and we have marked many, many times at the one spot.

It came to a head I guess this year in, oh God, about twenty or thirty entries from May through to possibly June/July where he had been doing things, I suppose, like pulling trousers down, down the oval exposing himself, talking very rudely to children - now everyone 'tugs themselves' and he's going to do this to the girls and that to the girls. The situation got really intolerable and to the stage he was also spreading rumors that he came to school one weekend and here he saw Mr. Neil and another teacher doing certain things in the classroom - and he really had an imagination.

For James, part of the problem with Jonathan was that:

he had been diagnosed by a GP (general practitioner) for ADD (attention deficit disorder) and he's gone to psychiatrists, he's gone to counseling - whether he's got ADD, who knows? ... ninety per cent of children diagnosed with ADD are only diagnosed because it satisfies the parents.

Eventually, Jonathan went through suspension where he was asked to stay away for three days. The parents were told that if he came back he would be coming back "under contract." When Jonathan went back to school the misbehavior continued thus breaking the contract. James rang "the parents and suggested that maybe it would be better for Jonathan to find an alternative education and thus save the stigma of expulsion." In reply, Jonathan's mother wrote a letter to the Catholic Education Office saying that James was very inflexible.

The dilemma for James was "in the reaction of the parents to the suggestion that they find an alternative education for the child and I guess their dilemma was accepting the possibility of us finally going through the discipline policy and expelling him."

Compounding James' dilemma was his knowledge that expulsion from a Catholic school was at the determination of the Director, not the principal: "Whether we would have been allowed to do that or not by the Office was another thing and that would have been a dilemma for sure."

The parents' reaction of writing to the Catholic Education Office exposed the threat of expulsion by the school. As a result, the Catholic Education Office informed James that it was not within his authority to decide expulsion. "But, I mean, if you can threaten it, maybe it works," mused James. Hence, at the heart of the issue was

determining what action the school could take under the circumstances. James believed that Jonathan wasn't going to improve: "We couldn't get him around to our way without reverting back to the old method of punishment. So that was the dilemma really, what do you do with him once he has broken every part of the discipline policy?"

James' intention was very clear: "As a staff, we discussed it and said, 'Well, we don't want him around because he's a bad influence'. So our intention was to ask him to leave the school. So there was no dilemma then. As far as we were concerned." Over the course of time, James had kept the Catholic Education Office fully informed of what was happening. In discussions with the mother, James had advocated that they consider a change of school, "that had a program for ADD children or a supposed program for ADD children." Meanwhile, James would employ the school discipline policy. As the situation worsened, James applied pressure to Jonathan's mother to change schools: "I explained to the mother that ... you don't like to expel a child, any child really, and you try to help them as much as you can."

Eventually James and Jonathan's mother again discussed the option of alternative placement. She did make inquiries at another school and was impressed with the program. The Catholic Education Office endorsed the benefits of his attending a school with a program for ADD children. "Yeah, full support from the Office, they sort of marched along all the way." Finally, the parents accepted this option and Jonathan was withdrawn from the school.

C) DILEMMA SITUATION: FORMAL AUTHORITY

C.1 Vignette #3: Bishop/Catholic Education Office

This hypothetical situation involved a directive from the Bishop to change the enrollment policy for Systemic primary schools; future enrollment would henceforth be restricted to baptized Catholics. The Catholic Education Office instructed principals to communicate the policy to their school communities. Susan Wheatley, the principal of a small school of 105 children (20% non-Catholic) greeted the announcement with disbelief. She believed that the directive would hurt and upset many of the current school families and threaten the survival of the school. Further, it would compromise the integrity of the school level processes of consultation and shared decision making that she had worked so hard to establish. How could Susan announce a policy which contravened the very things she stood for?

i) Responses

The respondents immediately identified the purpose of the Catholic school as the main issue: “Whether the Catholic school ... is there to promote and to witness the faith to all people and to try and evangelize, or it is there only for the benefit of Catholics who have already got the faith?” (Maria); “the main issue is the philosophy of education - who are we educating for?” (Malcom); “do we guard the faith or share it?” (Brian); “Christ was here to share the good news, not just give it to a select few” (James); “I think Catholic schools are doing a lot of evangelization ... policies like that can not only damage

the school, but they can damage the Catholic Church as a whole because I think people have only just started to come out of a lot of prejudices" (Elizabeth).

The principals were also concerned with the decision making processes involved : "I think the way the decision was made is the most worrying part of it ... where one person, without consultation, can make a decision" (James); "the one that worries me the most is the lack of consultation" (Elizabeth); "I mean if I was Susan I would be seething at the way the decision was made" (Malcom).

James and Malcom could not identify many options for the principal because "if the Bishop speaks one must do what he says" (Malcom); "there are basically three options - resign, get sacked or follow the direction ... you can buck the System but how long would you last? ... It's all very well to go with your own conscience, but when you get a direction like that from the person in charge, there's not much you can do" (James).

Maria saw it quite differently:

As principal, while Susan is an instrument of the Church and its beliefs, she also has to witness to her own faith conviction and she has to be true to that ... if I am going to be effective in my role as a Catholic school principal, while I am faithful to the hierarchy, yes - I don't sacrifice my own beliefs in favor of the hierarchy, but I try to do my best to marry the two if possible. When that's not possible I approach the next person in the hierarchy and tell them about my conflict.

Four of the five respondents would delay making the announcement "until I'd had a heartfelt talk with the Bishop" (Brian). Elizabeth would "approach the Bishop. After that, get parents to approach the Bishop, try to get other principals ... to make a loud enough noise ... try to bombard." She would only announce the policy after everything had been done that could possibly be done. Elizabeth believed that "there would be a lot

of hurt if the policy had to be enacted ... bitterness about the Catholics being back in the Middle Ages and the school as part of the town community would suffer enormously.”

Maria and Malcom would also delay making the announcement in favor of working through the school community to voice their disapproval of the decision. Alternatively, James believes that the principal has to communicate the policy as directed and “then work to overthrow the decision.” He would work with his school community, through the Catholic Education Office to the Diocesan Education Board, writing letters and communicating his own policy. James did not hold out much hope for success: “But the Board doesn’t work that way, I mean the Bishop has the final say in everything.”

As employees of the Catholic Church, the principals were acutely aware of the predicament that the principal was placed in by this scenario: “Your hands are ultimately tied ... as far as what the Bishop would do, I don’t know - he’s the overall employer ... I could, in fact, be terminated” (Elizabeth); “Do you think he might ex-communicate me? ... If I didn’t have the Parish Priest’s blessing ... Oh, I don’t like this! ... It doesn’t go with my beliefs and therefore I would have to resign as principal ... I have to live with my conscience” (Maria); “Would there be any cutbacks in your principalship in the next five years, when your term was up? I’m sure there would be, you could be blacklisted” (James); “It’s a huge dilemma ... ultimately, the Bishop holds the authority ... you can’t change that you have to work within it ... She could spend a lot of time publicly debating the issue to the detriment of her career - it comes back to the type of stand you want to make” (Malcom).

Both Malcom and Brian accept that if their initial efforts to change the policy go unheeded, you would “have no option but to make the announcement” (Brian); “Well, you know, I’m a System’s man ... ultimately we are a System and I guess you have to play the System’s game ... the Church’s structure is not answerable to us” (Malcom). Even though they would announce the policy, Brian and Malcom had definite ideas about the manner in which they would make the announcement. Brian explained:

I’d put it in the school’s newsletter, then I would put a rider out that if you see any difficulties with this would you please write directly to the Bishop ... I mean if the Bishop makes a statement like that, he’s got to wear the consequences of it too! Mind you, I mean it might cause me some stress!

Similarly, Malcom points out that in making the announcement, the principal is free to do it “the way you like ... messages are like putty - you can create them any way you like. You’d certainly express the fact that it was with extreme displeasure.”

ii) Outcomes

The respondents could predict only negative outcomes of the policy change: “the school as part of the town community could suffer enormously ... enrollment would drop, the school would close” (Elizabeth); “enrollment would fall ... the school would close” (Brian); “Well, you’d certainly get a reduction ... later on, down the track, it could have big ramifications” (James); “the policy would impact on every school ... but then, it wouldn’t be Susan that would close down the school, it would be the Catholic Education Office” (Malcom).

The principals were familiar with this type of situation: “It has happened in a couple of dioceses I’ve worked in” (Brian); “this very scenario has happened in a diocese in Australia, yeah, it can happen” (Elizabeth); “I mean, there has been a real life issue here - the fact that only Catholic teachers can teach religious education ... it was a dilemma that hurt a lot of people” (Malcom); “it wouldn’t happen so often now, but there is still a possibility it could happen” (Maria). Only James held any doubts about this type of situation occurring: “I don’t think this would happen under the present administration ... but, I guess it could have happened in the past ... I can’t remember any, unless there were some I can’t remember ... certainly other schools have.”

Some of the respondents held grave concerns about the possibility of a similar situation occurring because of the hierarchical structure of the Church. Elizabeth explains:

Ultimately, the Bishop is the overall employer in charge of education, faith education and so on - you can have diocesan education boards, you can have councils, you can have all sorts of things which make people feel that they are having an input into the decisions ... but when the final thing comes down, it is the Bishop who makes the decision.

Malcom also worried about the possibilities:

There’s a lot of moral issues involved in the Church with birth control and a lot of other things in modern society. This would be just another one of them ... Ultimately you would be losing a lot of faith in Catholic Education, in your employer. But the Church structure is such that it is not answerable to us - which probably makes the dilemma even bigger, because it is something that, you know, could eat at your slowly, like a termite - then you’d get out of it somehow ... We are put in a lot of dilemmas.

For Maria, it was case of being somewhat overwhelmed by the reality of this type of scenario:

Well, as one Priest said to me one day about what we could do about it. He gave us this wonderful, wonderful talk on the future of the Church which looked extremely promising. And we said we would have to go back to our own parishes now and so what could we do? He sort of just said that you pray for the timely death of the Bishop, so I guess I would pray for the timely death of the Bishop!"

C.2 Actual Examples

Malcom, Elizabeth and James all described actual dilemma situations in which formal administrative structures, policy or personnel impinged on school level considerations.

i) Situation: Sick Leave Policy (Malcom)

Well what is very current here is sick leave. The policy of the Office is not to provide supply teachers for the first or second day but to cover the absence of teachers for three days or more. The moral dilemma is the fact that if the teacher is away, a teacher whilst entitled to sick leave, the teacher shouldn't have the pressure put on them that they come to school because they know they can't be replaced. Also the children need a person in front of them rather than being put together with one teacher looking after two classes or their class being split up amongst other classes. The parents pay school fees and have a right to expect that if their teacher is sick, that a replacement teacher can be found. Teachers aren't robots, they're humans, they get sick and in winter particularly, the biggest breeding grounds of sickness can be closed classrooms. So for me the dilemma is to have the ability to provide a teacher for one day or two days, but where to find the money for that and how to actually do it, to be fair to everybody. Another scenario of course is that the Catholic Education Office can point the finger at a principal on full time release and say, "Yes - the principal on full time release should go into the classroom." Whilst I enjoy going into the classrooms and being with the children, I find that my workload is such that, I am the principal of the school and not a supply teacher. The other angle is the fact that when you do provide release by finding money by whatever means, you then get the teachers who can abuse that system - it's a judgment I suppose that I shouldn't make - that they just feel that some days it's a bit too easy to take a day off and therefore drain the budget that you have allocated. So it's a real dilemma what to do. The bottom line is, as far as I'm concerned, teachers are entitled to be sick, there

should be money from the Office to cover that. Children are entitled to have a teacher in front of them, every day of the year and it shouldn't be a dilemma.

In order to minimize what he considers to be the unfair consequences of the sick leave policy, Malcom employs a variety of strategies:

Well if a teacher is away the first day that's fine, you certainly don't (pause) you encourage them, support them, wish them well and tell them that the best place for them is to be home. If they ring up the second day and say that they are away but they could be right to come back on the third day, I would then ask them if they realize the policy of Catholic Education is that if you are away for three days, the absence is paid by the Catholic Education Office. Therefore I could get a teacher in for the second day and the third day, even though the first day would probably have doubled up. So, I suppose that's coming from the angle whilst the teacher is still not well, but maybe comes back to school - we've got to look at the children and realize that the children need someone in front of them. But it's not something I would force a teacher to do. If the teacher says, "Look, I will be back tomorrow," well I'd say, "Look, that's fine, we'll cover for you again."

Q: But would you be encouraging them to take the three days?

Well I would explain to them that if they stay away the third day I could get a teacher in the second day and the third day, um. I would have no hesitation in encouraging them to do that, but ultimately it's their sick leave and they have to do what they want to do.

If a teacher was away for one day and was replaced internally at no financial cost to the school, only to then take a further two days sick leave, Malcom claims for the full three days. Subsequently, he tells the replacement teacher, "Yeah, you owe me a day."

Malcom explained:

Well, I hope the Office won't be hearing this - I had a teacher who was on curriculum release on Thursday. She was away the Friday and the Monday and I claimed three days sick leave whereas the curriculum release should have been coming out of school budget. However, you have to be careful there because the first day mustn't come off the teacher's entitlement so I guess I put some hope in the Office not picking it up by virtue of their inefficiency. It was put on the leave form that the teacher had curriculum release on the Thursday, she was away the Friday and the Monday and another teacher away on the Tuesday, but it was the

same teacher who did the four days. I actually claimed four days' pay under Catholic Education's sick leave policy, but on the staff member's sick leave application it did state that she was away one day curriculum release, two days sick leave and the other teacher was away one day sick. And it hasn't been questioned or taken up.

Malcom felt justified, but uneasy about this type of arrangement:

Well, I'm not happy about it. I'm prepared to carry the weight of the System, if it's broke ... and they can't afford it. But what doesn't help is the fact that I think teachers are entitled to feel that they can be away a sick day and also the fact that the Office now seem to be financial or have money ... My impression is that their financial situation is that they can now cover first and second days' absences, and so therefore I do disagree with the policy. It adds more pressure to my job, but it certainly adds pressures to teachers who do come to work sick and it just adds pressure to the whole system.

Q: Do you think the Catholic Education Office is aware that principals may make these sort of accommodations to their policy?

I don't know. I probably don't think so. I don't think they would know, they certainly wouldn't know, purely because with the new administrative structure of you having to fill our leave forms for teachers and then also having to fill in a special particular supply teacher form, - well if the dates match there is no problem.

Q: Do you think that if they did know there would be a problem or not?

I don't really think it matters. It wouldn't worry me. I mean, I'm in charge of the school ... Well, it is just hard - I mean, as principal of the school my first priority is the children in the class, the parents who pay the school fees and the teachers' right that they are entitled to sick leave ... I'd like to think that if they did find out, that I really don't think they would point the gun or take up the issue, because I think they know that the policy they have doesn't have much ground to stand on anyway ... I think they'd prefer to keep the peace and accept it rather than pick a fight and therefore it becomes a major dominant issue with the Principal's Association.

Q: Would the Parish Priest need to know of any of those sorts of arrangements?

No, I don't think the Parish Priest would want to know and I think he's happy to let me be in control of the school and has trust and faith in me ... Parish Priests tend to have a very fiery relationship with Catholic Education Office, so anything

they could see you were doing for the benefit of their school, I'm sure they would appreciate ... they tend to be focused purely on their own community and not from a diocesan point of view. Catholic Education Office is a diocesan agency, the Parish Priest sees his parish and no one else's.

For Malcom, the sick leave policy was indicative of the tension that exists between "what's good for the System and what's good for the individual school." This tension was a source of many dilemmas for Catholic school principals who were employed by the Catholic Education Office but in reality worked for the Parish Priest: "I mean Canon Law states that a Parish Priest is in charge of his parish, you have twenty-six primary schools under the system of Catholic Education Office having to run as a system, but you have twenty-six parishes running as their own island."

ii) Situation: Parish Priest Appointment (Elizabeth)

Elizabeth outlined a situation in which a decision of the Church's hierarchy held significant ramifications for her school and herself:

We had been without a Priest for five months and in that five months the school, as a part of the parish, had been involved in the process of helping to choose a new Priest. We were basically told towards the end of that five months that there was no one and we would start to consider other options. Then, all of a sudden, one day we were told that there would be someone. The Priest we were told about didn't really fit into any of the things that as a parish and a school we had come up with.

There were staff and parents who had had experience with this Priest or had heard stories and the stories were awful. I had heard too from the Priest's own brother, as well as various other people, of dreadful things that he had done - really, really dreadful things and the moment I heard his name I just thought, "That's it. I don't think I will be able to stay here because I won't be able to work with him." Various staff came up to me and said, "We don't think we will be able to stay here because we won't be able to work with him." Parents came up saying, "We really think that when he comes we will have to take the children away because we've

heard these awful stories about him.” I just thought, “Well, the school is going to close.” The President of the Parents and Friends’ Association (P & F) rang parents at other places that this Priest had been and the stories were basically all true and staff rang other staff who had been where he had been and on it went. I just thought, “Well, what do I do?” I mean I am fairly helpless in this. He had been appointed by the Bishop. I just didn’t know what to do and of course the stories were getting bigger and better. There were phone calls and meetings. A group of parents went to see the Bishop to register their dismay and well, of course nothing came of that. So it was about a couple of weeks ago that other Priests were ringing me to give me advice on how to handle him. You can just imagine -- it was just quite incredible, the whole thing. So I suppose my dilemma was, what do we do? If he comes we are going to lose families ... my own personal problems of thinking that I would not be able to work with him. The other part of that was that I felt we’re not giving him a chance, we are being really unfair and maybe in a different situation he will be quite different. I mean that was trying to look on the bright side.

Elizabeth detailed her response:

Anyhow, what I did was I went and spoke to an old friend of mine who is a Priest who also happens to be the Chairman of the Priest’s Council and told him about all of my fears and concerns. He was able to assure me that the appointment had been made on certain conditions and that I could take that message back to the people, and that’s what I did. I went back and talked to the staff and the group of parents who had been the most vocal, and talked about it at a P&F meeting. By the time he came a lot of it had died down and there were actually a couple of good stories going around. I mean people were very reticent at first, but they did take him at face value and things started off well. At the moment things are okay but we have our days where it’s a bit of a shock for everyone. But we know now to expect the unexpected and I think once you work out where the other person is coming from, even if it’s an erratic thing, you can cope with it.

In retrospect, Elizabeth would take the same action:

Because I know that as a result of the parents going to the Bishop and me going to the Chairman of the Priest’s Council that this Priest was counseled before he was put into the position and he was told, I now know, that he was told that he had certain obligations to fulfill.

Part of the problem for Elizabeth was the lack of support from the Catholic Education

Office: “When you have a real need ... there is no mechanisms, processes or skills to

address it ... I think that's hard because there are times when you really want some substantial guidance."

iii) Situation: School Finances (James)

In the final interview, James referred to a dilemma that he frequently encounters with his Parish Priests in relation to school finances. In essence, the dilemma occurs because the Parish Priest collects the school fees and decides how they are spent; not necessarily on the school. James is excluded from membership of the Parish Finance Committee and consequently, from being part of the decision making. James explained the situation:

You don't get too much input ... we don't handle the school fees account. So I prepare a budget, give it to the Parish Priest, discuss it and say this is what's needed and he usually states that when finances become available these things will be done, um. With Workplace Health and Safety, which is a big issue, there are lots of things to be done, going through audits and finding out exactly what you have to do, if there is something needed or something recommended, it has to be done to satisfy Workplace Health and Safety regulations ... Just take the fire extinguishers. We've got a couple of water hoses in the classrooms down there, but no fire extinguishers whatsoever, so I got a quote. I got a person to come in and quote for it and sent the quote up to the Parish and asked them to deal with it. I had written a letter to the Parish Priest saying that from the point of view of Workplace Health and Safety these issues have to be addressed because of the regulations. There's the quote, it's up to you.

I spoke to him about it and that's only last week. He says he agrees. He says, "Yes, definitely" and that's it. And I've got the quote and I've given him the quote and all that ... and the person who supplied the quote for that rang up two or three times to say, "How about it?" and that's it ... you can't get anywhere.

James remains very frustrated about the situation:

So, anything to do with that the money I have well covered myself by passing it over to the relevant authorities. I mean I can't pay for it. It's a big issue, the

whole thing and that would be - I mean if you look at it - the biggest dilemma, if you're talking in a dilemma sense, that you can't do anything about it, but you can only go through what you think is the correct procedure to cover yourself in case something happens ... If he doesn't want to put fire extinguishers in or he doesn't want to bird proof the library or doesn't want to fix up the steps to make it safe, well, I can't do anything about it!

D) DILEMMA SITUATION: PARENTS

D.1 Vignette #4: The Johnsons

This vignette involved a conflict between the principal, Michael Thompson, and the parents of Melissa Johnson. Mr. and Mrs. Johnson were upset with the placement of Melissa into Mr. Kent's class in preference to the far superior teacher, Miss Lyons. The annoying aspect for Michael was that they were right - Melissa would do better in Miss Lyons' class. Mr. Kent's poor teaching skills, lack of classroom management strategies and low enthusiasm did little to inspire parent confidence. However, Michael had already received a number of similar requests. He could hardly transfer children out of Mr. Kent's class without transferring others in from Miss Lyons. Yet, Michael had every reason to believe that the Johnsons would carry out their threat to complain to the Bishop. There was little doubt that if Melissa was not changed, the Johnsons would withdraw from the parish and the school.

i) Responses

Every respondent indicated that this scenario was a common issue, arising "practically every year" even when the other teacher "has not been incapable" (Maria).

After all “parents in a Catholic school pay for their child’s education ... and feel, quite rightly, that they can have more of an input into what happens ... a common problem ... we’ve a real life situation at this school with it” (Malcom).

Elizabeth and James agreed with Malcom’s view that “if you grant an exemption to one parent that’s going to create a bigger issue ... there will be no change of class, under any circumstances.” These three principals agreed that “you’ve got to be consistent with policy” (Malcom); “You can’t really let parents dictate where they are going to go, whether they’re friends with the Bishop or the Bishop’s relation” (James); “I think that, whatever, you have to support Mr. Kent and I’d be ringing up the Bishop before the parents even got in the car!” (Elizabeth).

On the other hand, Brian and Maria would be looking for alternative options for Mr. Kent. Brian was very adamant in his view: “I don’t think the principal does support the teacher no matter what, I think teachers have to realize that too.” Maria would ask the Johnsons for some time “to think things over ... only because I know that Mr. Kent is ill-suited to the position. My worry would be that the school should be seen as sticking to that policy, but at the same time that they are also seen to take in parent concern. This is a dilemma, isn’t it?” Similarly, Brian would delay making a decision until he had fully explored what options existed for Mr. Kent: “I would be saying to them, ‘Okay, I hear your concerns, I realize that there is a difficulty ... I’m prepared to take it up. Give me a couple of weeks to see what resolution can be arrived at’.”

Both Maria and Brian would approach the Catholic Education Office to gain the Director’s support: “I would say that I do not see Mr. Kent being suited to the position of

classroom teacher ... both the Catholic Education Office and the school should work together to try and find an appropriate place for him” (Maria). They would alert Mr. Kent to the situation that there have been a number of complaints against him and that he has serious problems. In this way, both Maria and Brian would put the problem back to Mr. Kent: “I would make it clear to him that ... my priority, is to make sure that the child, gets the education for which this school is responsible. So there I suppose I am giving him the opportunity to offer to do something on his part about it” (Maria); “he would know that parents were dissatisfied, but sometimes it just takes someone to tell you what you already know to convince you that maybe it’s more politic for me to go quietly or find myself another position” (Brian).

Even though Elizabeth would also inform Mr. Kent that complaints had been made against him “as a result of not changing,” she would pledge her full support to him. She would definitely not give the Johnsons any inkling that she was aware of the problem, in case they “use it as ammunition to fight you on or argue that you are weak in that you know the problem exists and you haven’t got rid of the teacher.” Even if the Parish Priest or Bishop pressured her, Elizabeth would “fight it out to the very end and I would actually even advise Mr. Kent to contact the Union ... and tell them what is happening and what is going to happen ...” For Elizabeth, the crux of the problem was the manner in which the Johnsons had complained, not teacher competence:

Though the teacher has his problems ... when it comes down to it, it’s not so much the teacher, it’s the way the thing has happened and it’s the use of threats and almost bullying tactics ... so I would push for Mr. Kent’s sake, but I would also push it for my own sake ... to let people know that if they are going to do things, there is a right way to do it.

Elizabeth would consider a team teaching situation sometime in the future: “Probably, what I’d do is fight this issue out, let it die down and then look at other things.”

Like Elizabeth, Malcom would not change Melissa to the other class, even if the Bishop or Parish Priest requested it: “It’s threat and intimidation and you don’t give into that.” Rather, Malcom would try to improve Mr. Kent’s teaching by “working with him, not against him - but not to your own detriment and not to the school’s detriment and most importantly, not to the children’s detriment.” Nonetheless, Malcom believed that “it is a difficult scenario. It is one that will probably eat at you all the time.”

James’ initial response is one of regret that the problem has arisen: “I think it could have been avoided ... by listening to what the parents say ... you can detour around certain situations ... with some parents you would know that you would see a potential problem.” In other words, James believes that the issue is best avoided by simply not placing the children of certain parents, such as Mr. and Mrs. Johnson, in particular classes in the first place. However, once a decision was made, the principal “has to live with it, for better or for worse.”

Once Melissa’s placement had been determined, James would “stick by the decision I made ... It’s pretty hard to back down on a decision, otherwise you’re whole credibility goes - after all, the principal is responsible for ... the good of all the school and the teachers, not just one or two kids.” James would look at alternatives for Mr. Kent, such as cooperative teaching or sharing expertise with other teachers. Like Elizabeth, James would give his full support to Mr. Kent in the issue with the Johnsons: “he hasn’t

proven to be incompetent, although he's got deficiencies ... you're looking out for your teacher ... I think that's what we are here for."

If the alternative strategies were unsuccessful, James still would not go back on his initial decision. However, it would then be time to put the person 'on process'.

ii) Outcomes

Maria would prefer to see the issue resolved by Mr. Kent himself: "Perhaps for Mr. Kent to come to and say 'Look, okay, I realize that things aren't working out' ... and he offers his resignation or whatever." If Mr. Kent failed to come up with a solution, Maria would consider using 'due process'. Meanwhile she would maintain regular contact with the Johnsons whom she believes will give her time to find a resolution.

Brian would favor working with the teacher, the Teacher's Union and the Catholic Education Office to negotiate an early retirement or redundancy package:

I had a very similar situation and I did all that. The teacher was incompetent ... I approached the Union ... I rang the Director with the proposition ... then I sat down with the teacher and said, "Look, I really think your teaching days are over - you're having hassles - we know, the parents know. If you take a redundancy package (pause) ... otherwise we go to Court and prove you're incompetent and you get nothing, plus you get sacked." She came back to me and said, "I'll take the option - she resented it at the time but I bumped into her 12 months after and she said it was the best thing she had ever done."

James believed that the Johnsons would settle for a cooperative teaching arrangement, even though Melissa would officially remain in Mr. Kent's class: "Well, initially I think they might. Whether in reality it will work out that way?" If it didn't work out, James would resort to using the 'process'.

Elizabeth had no doubt that her stance would leave little choice but for the Johnsons to take their children away: “If the situation went the way I hoped it would go, then they would feel that they’ve lost face and they’d go.” She was very aware that her staunch support for Mr. Kent may result in her not receiving the necessary future support she may need should the situation with Mr. Kent deteriorate. The Parish Priest and/or the Catholic Education Office may withhold their support because she had refused their earlier offers of assistance. Elizabeth was also aware that there couldn’t be many positive consequences for her in the eyes of the parents “because they would probably say that I wasn’t putting the good of the children first.”

Nonetheless, Elizabeth would maintain her support for the teacher because:

If I genuinely felt that the children were at a great disadvantage, then I’d take steps to overcome that ... it is a real conflict, the good of the children and the rights of the teacher ... if you do know that a teacher is not performing to the best. I think you have to maintain your support for the teacher, but, yes the children, ultimately in your own mind have to come first.

Malcom agreed that, “Ultimately, the System has to look at how teachers like him (Mr. Kent) get into the System, maybe teacher appraisal as part of enterprise bargaining.”

Meanwhile, “the Johnsons can do what they like ... you will probably draw more people to the school anyway because parents like to see, in principals, strength, firmness and the ability to counter power plays and people who want to run the school.”

Malcom believed that the principal, Michael Thompson, should “heed what’s happened here to try and counter that for next year.” In particular, Malcom would focus on the selection of classes:

I mean, if a parent came to see you before the selection of classes was made, that is something that I would have no problem with in making sure that child doesn't go into that class. But when it's a public issue ... then it's a whole different scenario ...

Classes are selected on the basis of academic, social, emotional maturity ... but you would probably try to work it around that their (the Johnson's) child wasn't in that class ... You get other parents who couldn't care less what class their child is in. You'd also be privy to that two or three or four parents who have come to see and you could make sure that these children were in the other class. No one need know about it, including Mr. Kent ... So it would come down to the fact that you would find children to go into the class ...

Whilst this approach to the selection of classes was endorsed by James, Maria adopted a different approach whereby a parent's negative opinion of a teacher would be a factor in the child's placement, "but it wouldn't be the main factor." Maria provided an example:

If I felt Suzy would be very good with Mrs. Smith because Suzy needed her confidence built up and I knew Mrs. Smith was a very sensitive and caring teacher in comparison to Mrs. Jones ... There may be some reason as to why the parents may not prefer Mrs. Smith. What I would do is to make sure I have a chat to the parents first and explain to them why I have put her in that particular class.

Once again, the respondents found the situation stressful: "Any problems like that, they're all stressful aren't they?" (James); "Again, it's another stressful situation because you are dealing with people's sensibilities" (Brian). Malcom, James and Maria believed that some of the pressure could be taken out of this particular scenario by delaying the announcement of classes to the beginning of the new academic year: "Well, firstly, don't publicize the listings until the first day of the year ... I mean you might still get your requests, however I think they would be very minimal in comparison" (Maria).

D.2 Actual Examples

Maria and James described actual dilemma situations involving parents.

i) Situation: Math Ability Grouping (Maria)

I had a couple of parents approach me. Their son is in Year 7. In Year 7 we have a policy there of having three ability math groups. Their son was in the middle math group and they wanted Warren to be transferred to the advanced math group. So that's basically their request.

So I left at the end of that first communication, um, just telling them that I would look into it. I approached the teachers concerned and we discussed Warren's current progress in the math. I was told really that if Warren was to be moved up into the advanced group then at least twelve other children should be moved up because their results were certainly far superior to his; that certain criteria had been established right at the very beginning of the year as to how these children were placed in the groups and to me, one of the most important factors was that this criteria had also been explained to parents at the parent/teacher meeting ...

Maria arranged to discuss the matter with the parents:

I then rang the parent back and I discussed with him what I had found out. I went through the criteria again with him and just said really that in this particular case I could not meet with his request. From this point on things started to develop - well, the parents began to get quite aggressive ... she threatened to take the matter to the Bishop, to the Catholic Education Office and she said that I could also expect a letter from her solicitor.

I suppose the dilemma was that I had a school policy. I had three teachers who were involved in this and three teachers whose judgments I respected. They were telling me one thing and the parents were saying another and to me the dilemma was that I couldn't seem to get any kind of a resolution.

I tried to explain to her that this was the policy of the school and I did not see that there was anything in their request that could justify me changing that policy. I suggested that perhaps rather than talking on the phone that we come face to face and talk about it openly. After she mentioned that she was going to bring the Catholic Education Office into it, I asked would she like me to ask a member of the Catholic Education Office to come in on the interview. She said "Yes."

After I'd had that first talk with the Mr. Atwell, I had a chat with Warren who wasn't aware of the fact that his father had been chatting to me. I explained to him

the position and I said to him that for us to be able to work things out agreeably that he really needed to be honest with what he was saying to me. After a while he broke down and said that he didn't want to be in the advance group. And this was after his parents had told me over and over again that that was what he wanted and he said, "No, my parents want me in the advanced group, I don't want to be in the advanced group." I told Mr. Atwell that the next day and he said that it was only because I forced Warren around to saying that - which was what really I was expecting anyhow.

When it came time for the interview Mrs. Atwell did not come, only Mr. Atwell. Mr. Atwell explained his side of the story ... um, I felt that actually without Mrs. Atwell there that the interview went much better because at least with Mr. Atwell, I think he was ready to listen. I explained the situation and the policy of the school again to him and also the fact that if I moved Warren up there were twelve other children in all fairness that should be moved before Warren because their achievement of criteria was superior to Warren's. He then brought out another concern of the parents that I had written a reference letter for Warren and that they were very disappointed with what I had written ... He said, "You could have at least mentioned that he had been House Captain" and yes, I agreed with him, "Yes, that was an omission on my part and I would be quite willing if he was agreeable for me to write up the reference again and insert that piece of information." He said yes. He was happy with that. We were also able to come then to an agreement that, um, if I, um, stuck to the decision of not moving Warren into the advanced group that I would at least organize advanced work to be sent home. I said, "Yes, that I would organize for some work to be sent home as long as it was Warren's responsibility to come and collect it."

Q: What were you trying to achieve?

I think I was trying to achieve the fact that the school had a position to which it had to adhere to. One of the comments that Mr. Atwell made was that I've heard that if you complain long enough here at the school you get what you want. So therefore to me one of the main issues here was that the school needed to be seen I suppose an organization that stuck to its Catholic principles really; that it could be seen as a leader within the community; that it wasn't going to be dictated to by parents; while it invited parent involvement at the same time it had to be seen in the community as a leader within the community.

Well, I guess in retrospect if I look back on it I can't think of any other way I could have handled it. It still makes me very angry that parents will use the school like this and will think that a school will bend to its wishes, even though they are incredibly unjust. But I suppose what I'm saying is that because of the area in which we live where a lot of our families come from backgrounds where parents

are professionals, that perhaps they feel that their position either as doctor, solicitor, executive manager or whatever, gives them some weight in society that they feel that perhaps the school is an area in which the influence of their position is felt. I would say that yes it is felt, but more in support of the school's policy rather than going against the school's policies.

Q: Are you suggesting that the school might have a role in society in this regard?

It comes back I suppose to that leadership thing. I suppose for people to see things in their true perspective that, "Okay, while I may be doctor or manager of a certain firm, that this role doesn't flow over into every other area of my life in which I may come into, for example, my child's education. That while I would expect my employees to respect our business ethics here, that I would also respect perhaps the policies of the school to which my child goes." I think it's a very idealistic thought and I'm really not too sure how to go about achieving it. I suppose perhaps really showing parents like these Atwells that we are very committed to our role as teachers and that we really do believe in what we are doing as a school and therefore this is why I've got this policy and this is why I've got that policy. Um, perhaps that might be one way of doing it, I don't know. I don't know. I didn't like that question.

ii) Situation: Hair-Style Policy (James)

James detailed a situation that developed with a parent over non-compliance to the school's hair style code:

We had a family come to the school possibly when the eldest boy, Luke, was in about Year Two or Three and ... their language was absolutely atrocious and so was their behavior. It wasn't long before I noticed a lump on the side of his throat under his chin, that appeared to be getting larger. I mentioned to him on a number of occasions to tell his parents and ask if they were concerned and he said, "No." So I eventually rang the parents and said, "We are concerned about that lump on his throat" and they eventually took him to get it checked out and it was cancerous, so they had to remove it and treat it. We didn't get too many thanks for that, I mean they didn't come up and say too much about it. We sort of had some sort of dialogue and Luke went to get his chemotherapy and there was a certain amount of hair loss and we knew that that was going to happen.

The children of the school knew the situation, they were told about it. There wasn't a great deal of hair loss, but there was some on the one side. When this

person came back to school he wanted to have his hair cut in a certain method and it was a zigzag type thing at the back, which to me broke all sorts of rules of hair. Even though we were sympathetic towards the case, there was an alternative way of cutting the hair that the parent would not have a bar of it because of the stress that they had been through, the stress that the child had been through. They refused to do anything about it. The child would wear a hat all the time because obviously, he was embarrassed by it, but he was the one that wanted the hair cut in that particular way. Once again, you have a policy on hair cuts, the types of hair cuts ... we are very conservative. It made Luke so much different and it drew complete attention to him which to me wasn't doing the right thing.

Yes, he had the shaver and got it cut in a big sort of saw tooth type thing at the back when it could have been cut across; it could have been done in two or three other ways and when that was mentioned to the parents. I rang the parents and suggested maybe there would be a better way to do it. They weren't real happy about that, they didn't say too much on the phone but they did write a letter and the letter said that this child had been at the school for four weeks before he had become the subject of standards of dress code which, in this case was an unfair one, and they had concerns that they were assured that his hair wouldn't be a problem with the school and the classmates. These parents were enraged that the issue had been directed to their son.

To me, the letter was irrelevant, it was aggressive, it was threatening and it was certainly unfounded - they would not reverse their decision (to leave his hair the way it was) and nor did they wish to see any decline in the education standards of their child due to the hostilities of the teacher. They were really 'having a go' at the teacher more so than me because the teacher was very adamant that you know the hair cut should change. So the parents got onto a social worker and they told their side of the story to a social worker at the Royal Children's Hospital. Never before had the hospital seen a case where teachers picked on a little issue like hairstyle after all the trauma that the child had been through - that social worker certainly wasn't aware of the full situation.

I suppose it was a parenting problem, I don't know, but certainly we had the dilemma with the parent - what we were going to do?

James arranged an interview with the parents:

Both parents came in. I was very careful; there was an interview with the two parents and the teacher involved and myself. As the father was getting comfortable a tape recorder fell out of his pocket and he bent down and picked it up and put it in his pocket. The teacher that I was with would have been very, very irate and stormed out if she would have known. So I just ignored it. But I

was very, very careful with what we said and made sure that what I said could not have been used in any way. But I was quite clear in my mind that what we were doing was right and we had informed them; we've gone through everything and told them everything. Actually, I had written down a lot of things that I wanted to deal with so I went through the whole thing that we did. I said, "Well, you know, we mentioned the concerns about the lump and it was due to us that maybe that something was done." We knew that maybe it wasn't terminal and the school community, they prayed about it every day and supported them in that way, and we realized that lots of things had happened over the holidays and there was stress and everything else. We were trying to give the kids a good education and all that sort of stuff, but we needed the support of the parents - their full support. And I just didn't think we were getting it. We weren't going to win because of the parents' antagonistic, aggressive type of manner.

The parents - Yes, the parents' manner! They didn't say anything ... just virtually sat there and were going to deliver an ultimatum that they weren't going to change the hair cut and we should be more sympathetic towards it and stop causing them so much stress. So virtually that finished at that and we said good-bye and nothing happened and it went away for a little while. At this stage we didn't have a discipline policy written down and that was I guess one of the lead ups to our discipline policy. We needed to have something in writing, we didn't have a procedure that was written. If you haven't got something that is written down and they know about it, it's very difficult to do something about it ... I mean, we had nowhere to go.

Q: Did you persist in asking the child or reminding the child to get his hair cut?

Well, the teacher did, yes. The teacher persisted quite a deal with it and I guess that's one of the things that got the backs of the parents up, because the parents' problem then was with the teacher. But, as always, I mean you support your teacher if you feel that they are in the right and that was our policy on hair cuts at that particular stage. Once again it wasn't written down ... which was a mistake.

Yes, we had a policy on hair cuts and we stuck to it. Stuck to it. This was a little bit different in the fact that there was a lot of stress and that involved but you can't sort of make too many exceptions. If it could not have been helped. I mean if the hair was right up to here somewhere, and it looked better that way, um, but it certainly, cosmetically, it looked strange ... he was just one of those because of the history of that particular child - I don't know what the discipline was at home, I don't know, but certainly he was hyperactive and he would like to do as he liked. His behavior certainly wasn't the best.

Q: Did he continue to wear his hat at school?

Yes, he wore his hat at school - he wore his hat around the place, but not in class. He tried to wear it in school and his teacher said, "No, you take it off."

Q: Why?

You just don't wear hats in school. There is no sun in here. Everyone knew what he was like and everyone and the kids were informed that he's had his 'chemo' and that there was a certain amount of loss of hair and people understand that. I guess it's situations where you would like to avoid because of the concern for that child in that situation with the cancer and that.

Q: What happened next?

Um, without the discipline policy we couldn't do anything. We couldn't do anything really. Fortunately, once again it was towards the end of the year and the youngest child was in Year Four and they took the children out of the school - not before they had spread lots of stories on what we were supposed to have said or what the teacher was supposed to have said and they were all wrong ... So really it went out of our hands. They took the children out of the school.

SUMMARY: FINAL COMMENTS

In order to conclude Part One of Chapter Four, a number of overall comments made by the principals about their responses to moral and ethical dilemmas are included:

Rules are rules and you can be flexible if you have to be, but when we feel that there is no need to be flexible I think you've got to stick by your policies and your rules...It's pretty hard to back down on a decision, otherwise your whole credibility goes. I think once you start doing that, it's going to come to everything else. After all, the principal is responsible for the running of the school, for the good of all the teachers, not just one or two kids.

(James)

Principals see things from the whole school point of view. Teachers by nature don't. Teachers see it from their own point of view. You've got your supportive parents who look at the whole school issue, but by nature parents look at the school in terms of what it can offer their child and I mean their child only. So on one hand you've got this overall vision and accountability that we have to the whole school, but yet you've got people coming from a background of the fact

that they are only looking at it from their own perspective and that's difficult. I guess because of the tension that creeps in, there's got to be a meeting point somewhere in the discussion because there's got to be give and take from both sides. But that's why I'm mentioning it, because it is a dilemma and it's hard.
(Malcom)

Maria reflected on the difficult role that principals have in dealing with the different individuals in the school community:

Even though I was principal three years before, these past twelve months have really entrenched in me more the responsibilities that a principal has, because when you say that a principal runs a school as such, the implications are incredible. People tend to think of things like curriculum and administration and meetings, but then, the school is made up of individuals and each of those individuals comes to the school with their own personal experiences which will then affect the school as a community. I think it all seems to land on the principal. I suppose it's up to the principal too, how he or she sees his role - whether they choose to ignore it and perhaps think that these personal worries or concerns that particularly a member of staff might have, may not affect them and they might just choose to ignore them - but I can't see how they can do that really.

Brian felt that the lifestyle question was an increasing dilemma for the Catholic Church :

I think that dilemmas are going to increase. Usually a school is a few years behind society. The school seems to be the moral custodian of society's values, but society is living usually five or six years ahead of the school. They want the school to uphold all these cherished beliefs and traditions, but when you look at society fairly closely, society has a much laxer view of themselves. I think that will be a bind for the Church.
(Brian)

Ultimately the Bishop is the overall employer in charge of education ... when the final thing comes down, it is the Bishop who makes the decision. I mean that's all tied up in Canon Law and that's not going to change ... it's scary because when you look at it - what sort of things could be put on principals to put in place? Where does it stop?...It's a real concern because you are helpless in the end. There's no higher authority. There is nowhere you can go. They (bishops) are protected by the Church.
(Elizabeth)

PART TWO: THE RESOLUTION OF MORAL AND ETHICAL DILEMMAS - AN OVERVIEW

Part Two of Chapter Four reports the findings from the Principals' third interview dealing with the general resolution of moral and ethical dilemmas.

NATURE AND FREQUENCY

When asked what type of dilemma occurred most frequently, the respondents replied, "I think staff is the one that I find happens the most ... I mean in other schools it possibly could be parents, in another it could be the children, but at my place staff seems to be the issue" (Malcom); "ones involving parents" (Maria); "parents" (Elizabeth); "parents and teachers, parents versus teachers ... how to handle the discipline problems: (James). Brian summed up the situation:

You're dealing with parents who may be going through a marriage crisis, you're dealing with kids that are in a difficult home life, you're dealing with teachers who are maybe going through similar situations - we are in a peoples' industry ... you're dealing with people's emotions, their love, their affection and you're dealing with a whole gamut of relationships - so nothing can be perfect and nothing is easy.

Malcom believed that the Catholic school setting adds an extra dimension to the dilemmas encountered by principals:

Well, I think the extra thing for our position as principals in a Catholic school is the fact that because of what we're on about and our basis of gospel values and all of that, that adds an extra dimension to our dilemmas that our State colleagues wouldn't have. If we want people to operate in a Christian, ethical way then we must operate in a Christian, ethical way - so that adds an extra dimension I think to the dilemmas that we face. In that, probably a dilemma that our Government school colleagues don't have is that they can act very simply from policy, they can act very simply from guidelines set by the Department; whereas it's never that easy for us because whilst considering the facts and considering what is best for the

children we must also approach it from an angle of gospel values and that should always be our basis. So in itself that's probably the dilemma that I face. Built into that then comes all your other dilemmas, like your special needs teacher, your pre-retirement teacher, your parent who wants to take the kids away, sick leave issue, etc.

All respondents, except Elizabeth, believed that they faced dilemmas on a very frequent basis: "Daily. I had one this morning before I came down" (Brian); "I guess right from the first time you come in to school in the morning" (James); "Well, without sounding too 'over the top', I think if you can have a day without a dilemma you've done pretty well ... so quite easily you would go through a dilemma a day" (Malcom); "In my experience I would say they come too often" (Maria).

Although Elizabeth believed that, "Well, I don't have too many to begin with ...," she went on to describe two dilemmas that were on her mind at the time of the interview:

Requests from parents whose children are enrolled in a State school ... nine times out of ten it is for the wrong reason ... sometimes it averages one a week. I suppose another dilemma that comes up quite a bit is the whole issue of payment of school fees. How far do you push? Who do you make excuses for? Yeah, they would be two on my mind at the moment.

GENERAL RESOLUTION STRATEGY

Each of the respondents could readily articulate an overall strategy, approach or philosophy to resolving the many dilemmas they encountered. James took a case by case approach:

Well, everyone is different and I guess you've got to take different people's personalities into account and knowing the people you have to approach different dilemmas in different ways. I guess that's what I try to do, maybe taking the person's history in to it and it might take a long time to solve the problem, but

sometimes like water dripping away somewhere, you just keep going until you can get to it.

I guess you're looking at your mission statement and trying to do the best for all, the best for both people involved in it and you would hope there is a win-win somewhere along the line without knocking the self-esteem I suppose of the people involved. So, it's sensitivity to the particular parties involved. But of course sometimes there are cases when you just, well, once you've got your information you just have to be brutal, it you like, and knowing when to do that is half the battle I guess. When you do that. I don't know how many court cases I've held so that you get both sides of the story and check it up and sort of be informed. It's important that you're informed. It's important that you're informed and then you can deal with the facts that you've got, rationally, I would hope. If a person becomes irrational then there's no point in continuing at that particular stage.

For Elizabeth it's a matter of her conscience:

Well, as an overriding thing, if I can sleep with myself at night. Um, then you know I'm fairly certain that I've made the right decision and I guess that comes down to knowing that you've looked into the background of it, that you've done the research, that you've talked to people and you've considered everything. I think if you've done everything, you feel within yourself that you've made a fair and equitable decision.

Brian based his approach on gospel values: "I sort of try to step back and say what would Christ do if He was here in this situation and the results often amaze me."

Malcom's approach was more utilitarian:

Well, that's a good question. If it's a school dilemma, the crux question that I always ask myself is what is best for the children. What is best for the children at the school? I think if you start there, that's the common point that the teachers would have and parents would have as well. So you're all starting from the one point and it's the point you can take people to for them to be able to see your point of view in any dilemma ... But, yeah, at school what's best for the kids.

Q: What about when you have to choose between the good of one child versus the good of the other children?

What is best for the other children in the class. Yeah, that brings in the minority and the majority. Whilst I'm probably not as clinical to think that the majority

should always win over the minority, because you've got to bring into a situation like that whether this child or family going to be any better off. But the key ... would be the effect it is having on the other kids in the class and to that extent, the teacher as well.

Maria takes a more philosophical approach:

Well, I think that if a person comes to you with a problem, regardless of how you may view the problem yourself, there's a reason for the upset that it's causing this person. I suppose I try to go past my own personal feelings towards this parent or towards this teacher and try to deal with the problems. In other words, I try to put my own personal feelings aside but I must admit it's that not always easy, um, I find that extremely hard at times. So I suppose I try to deal with the problem only, and this sort of sounds a little bit crazy - I try to deal with the problem only because I know it is having this effect on this person. Therefore, in dealing with the problem, I mean eventually you can perhaps get to the person - you know what I mean. I suppose I try to look for every member of the community to cooperate and build the community up, rather than work against it. Once again it's an ideal, but I suppose we always have to work at ideals.

In practice, this approach usually precludes Maria from acting on the spot: "So the first thing I do ... I will just listen ... I try to give the impression I will deal with it ... but I never give answers ... when I'm confronted with it for the first time."

VALUE CONFLICTS

When asked how he responds when his values conflict with others in his school community, Brian replied:

Um. I don't think my values conflict, but it's a hard one. I think I'm just a bit more flexible with the rules. I hold the ideal, but I know this side of the grave we're not perfect, and if we were perfect there'd be no problems. (pause) But as Jesus said, you know, Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath - when he was criticized for gathering food on the Sabbath and it was shameful that man could be above a church law.

Yeah and I'll often talk to the Priest too; I'll tell him how I feel and how I see it because my perspective is not always right either, and I need someone that I can

trust and relate to - I've just been fortunate in most schools I've been in, I've been able to trust the Parish Priest and get along quite well with him and we've had a good relationship. I can pour my heart out and tell him how I feel and sometimes he shifts ground, sometimes I shift ground.

Maria was very aware of times when her values conflicted with others:

Oh yeah! Particularly my own beliefs as regards my faith, perhaps when certain directives come from the hierarchy in regards to the Church ... I am currently working in a parish where the Parish Priest is very forward thinking and it has made my job much, much easier. However, I can remember working in a parish where the Priest was extremely 'old school' - very legalistic in his thinking. Therefore the conflict there would have occurred more or less on a daily basis. It occurred all too often and caused an incredible tension right through the school.

Here, it's not bad, however, I think sometimes your conflict would come probably more from your hierarchy such as the Bishop for example. Well, an example would be where he made a fairly, what I thought was a rigid directive about non-Catholic teaching staff not teaching religion. I suppose in black and white I can see the logic of that but in practice I think that there's some directives that while directives have to be made, I think there has to be lots of flexibility and lots of consideration of the local situation. I know that caused quite a bit of conflict within the school because we had a non-Catholic teaching member who was, as far as I was concerned anyhow, more Christian than some of our Catholic teaching members.

Q: What do you usually do in those sort of situations?"

I think the first thing I seem to naturally do is to go to someone who I feel quite comfortable with and I suppose just confirm within myself the way I'm thinking is on track. So I suppose the first thing I need to do is just have that own self-affirmation and having that, then I feel perhaps I can go further and pursue it ... but I'm lucky in this situation in that I do have a Parish Priest who's understanding so I think he would be one that I would probably go and talk with and see what suggestions he could offer. I'd say if it was a directive that was coming from the Bishop that I didn't agree with, I would feel more comfortable in going to him before I ever went to anyone in the Catholic Education Office.

In contrast to Maria, Elizabeth could not describe situations in which her values clashed with others: "No, not directly. Um, indirectly? When the directive came out that

all the teachers had to be Catholic - I felt it was unjust and it would have gone against my decision if I had a non-Catholic teacher on staff who was a good, practicing Christian.”

Similarly, Malcom struggled to come to terms with the same question:

Yeah, um, it's hard to think of an example off hand but I think that would have happened a few times. Are you acting from your own value base or are you acting as a System-orientated person? Yes, it's a hard question that ...

Well, I think probably I would have to work for my System. I guess that's happened a few times, things that I've disagreed with, um ... but because, you know, I'm a System person, I guess I just wait for their time line even though I can still work around it somehow. But basically I'm System-orientated, but again that brings in a dilemma of course that I'm not noted for being a puppet or whatever. I will speak my mind, but if it's the bottom line and I'm told to pull my head, I pull my head in.

When dilemmas involved parents, teachers and children, rather than higher administrative authority, Malcom was quite definite:

I've got no hesitation. I'd go from my value base which gives me confidence. My value base drives who I am, doesn't it? My value base tells people more about me, your value base is the hidden part of you that people judge you on. And you know, I would act from my value base on anything. I think I'd always be coming from my value base trying to understand their value base, ... while I mean, it may take a year, it may take two years, but the values you espouse, once parents have confidence in that, I think they would expect you to go from those values.

But if you show weakness, they'll be on your doorstep trying to move you around like a balloon and I think that's all value driven. I think that your value base is where you work from, it's what people see in you and admire in you or not admire in you, and I think that tells a lot to people. Ultimately, I guess, for myself, I've got confidence in that. I know that it's going to take time but I know ultimately I'm going to win people over with my values and beliefs.

For James, the main source of any value conflict was the Parish Priest. The majority of these conflicts concerned school finances:

Finances are always the big problem with Parish Priests because they tend to want to manage school affairs. I'm not saying all of them, but in some cases the Parish

Priest wants to have that hierarchical structure where they have to be in charge, they have to decide. It's very difficult for me in particular, because I'm not on the Parish Finance Committee which was one of the issues when I first came here. I suggested I should be, but he suggested that I didn't need to be because they could handle the affairs without that - you don't get too much input so we don't handle the school fees account.

Yes, well, that's where the conflict is - I'd certainly spend the money solely on the school for the purpose it was intended - whereas it can be drained off to benefit other parts of the parish complex.

The conflict situation with the Parish Priest is James' "biggest dilemma ... you know you can't do anything about it ... I cover myself by passing it over to the relevant authorities."

James is acutely aware that in certain respects his school does not meet the requirements of the Workplace Health and Safety regulations:

It does worry me and it worries us at the school level that these things are happening and the teachers are concerned about it. But they are quite well aware that I can't do anything about it which causes a little bit of a dilemma - a rift between the parish and the school. How you really address it is difficult because, well, you can't get anywhere. Unless you sort of somehow can take it out of his hands to say, "I'm doing it." But if you did that - if you got the job done, he'll say, "I didn't authorize it, you pay it." That happened when I first came ... If he doesn't want to put fire extinguishers in or he doesn't want to bird proof the library or doesn't want to fix up the steps to make it safe, well I can't do anything about that.

I've put it in writing. There's a copy there, a copy to the Office. The Office are well aware of the whole situation. The Bishop's aware of it, but I mean you can't do anything more. All you can do is go through the channels that you believe; that are the right way to do it and you've got to cover yourself. So all those things are the biggest dilemmas, I suppose, that crop up.

FINAL AUTHORITY

The respondents were asked whether in trying to resolve moral and ethical dilemmas, they recognized an ultimate or final authority. James answered:

Well, if it's to do with parish the final authority rests with the Parish Priest. It should rest with the Bishop, we know that, but it doesn't. It doesn't happen in reality. As far as the school goes, the final authority stops at the principal. If it can't be solved there I'd notify the Catholic Education Office. As long as I was confident I was in the right and everything was above board, I guess the Catholic Education Office have the final say because I mean if you go to the extreme, you've got to always have the Parish Priest and the Catholic Education Office approving it.

Q: What about if the conflict is between say you and the Catholic Education Office?

Well, the Bishop is the ultimate authority. He's the top of the tree if you like, but this Bishop doesn't act that way ... he doesn't have the hierarchical structure ... and certainly if he is not willing to exert his authority, there's nothing you can do ... so I mean, it changes doesn't it? I guess being having gone through a few experiences, you tend to work out whom to go to and how to handle the situation. But it's very flexible, it depends on the situation and it depends what you want for an end result.

Q: What about when the Bishop makes a ruling or gives a direction that you personally disagree with?

Um, who employs the Bishop I mean do you keep going up the line till you get to the Pope in Rome. Where do you stop or do you accept that he has the ultimate authority?

Q: Well, do you?

Well has he? Do you accept it?

Q: Mmmm

Depends on how committed you are to that particular change if you like, or how serious you are about changing it ... I guess it depends on the situation again doesn't it?

Q: So, in an earlier incident we talked about the Johnsons, you said 'if push comes to shove' you still wouldn't change your policy, that the Bishop should stay out of it.

Year, well I guess if it's a Church law. If it's put down by the Church and not by some person then you'd go by that. You accept the Bishop in the Diocese has the

authority, but you could question various things. But we really need to be aware, as it's very difficult personally being a convert, I've missed out on the first twenty years of being a Catholic, which means that I have missed out on all that teaching of the tradition of what goes on. I don't know whether it's a good thing or a bad thing. Maybe it is a good thing in some cases but a lot of the background hasn't been covered. I've done plenty of Scripture courses and faith education courses and things like that, but as far as the real Church law, I guess I haven't done a lot of reading, but I think we need to brush up on some of those things. You can't have degrees in everything to run a school.

Q: But if you had a conscience issue - like your own versus the hierarchy?

If it was a conscience issue, if it was a teaching of the Church, I guess I'd go along with it. Lots of things you have to do that way when you don't personally agree with things. I think if you want to be part of the System, you have to agree with the System. And when you know you can't beat them you go to join them, but you can let your feelings be known.

Like James, Elizabeth also believed that officially the final authority rested with the

Bishop. However:

Theoretically speaking the Bishop is still the ultimate authority, but sometimes practically speaking, the ultimate authority can be the sway of popular opinion - the power of the people, whatever you want to call it. I think ultimate authority doesn't always necessarily stay with the one person or organization. It might in theory but not always in practice. Well, say it was something coming from the Bishop. If it was not against Church teaching or anything like that, then I think I would still recognize that the Bishop is the ultimate authority. I might not necessarily accede to it, but I would still recognize that. But if in that situation a directive came out to do something that was against Church teaching, then I would see that the Bishop is no longer the ultimate authority. I mean, when you come down to the bottom line - yes, he is the ultimate authority, but if you could get that sway of popular opinion you can actually change the ultimate authority, which means it then is no longer the ultimate authority. Is that making sense? I think it's possible then for authority not to be a fixed thing.

Q: So how, as principal, do you decide what should be the final authority?

Well, I suppose the easy thing is the one that agrees with you, but that's no, um ... If I have enough background knowledge and information to know that I was right and I suppose, if you had that, then your conscience would be clear and easy or whatever, then, yes. But it's still, but that's only in - I would still know that in the

final analysis the Bishop is still, I mean, He has the right to sack me, so I know intellectually that he is the ultimate authority.

Q: In reality?

I mean you have to be able to sleep with yourself at night time. That's a fact - that your conscience is ruling you - then yes, and I suppose when I look at it like that, then I see that, in many instances, I am the ultimate authority for me (pause).

Q: Now what about if someone says, "I understand about your own conscience and all that, but your conscience is no more important than my conscience and my conscience is telling me that I have to do the exact opposite." How would you then convince me that your conscience is the one that we should accept?

Well, to start with I'm not all that sure that you can convince someone else that their conscience is wrong anyway. But I suppose it comes back to having evidence, it's a hard thing because that's talking about a feeling, but you perhaps sway people's feelings with factual data I suppose; that whole thing of just getting someone to step outside themselves and take a look at the whole story. I think probably, in that instance, I would have to do that myself too, because if I can actually see that someone else's conscience decisions or feelings are in direct opposition to mine, then that would cause me to question whether mine was on the right track. So if I actually came across a situation where you know someone was in direct opposition to mine, then I think I would have to question mine too.

Q: And then if you still had to choose?

I think probably mine. (pause) If I'm already at the stage where I was convinced that that was the right thing to do, well, I'd say that pretty well it would be, as far as I was concerned.

Brian had no difficulty in identifying a final authority:

It would be the conscience, the moral conscience of the person. You know, even if they go for an annulment say with the marriage situation and the Church rules against the annulment; the person could still believe in the ultimate they were right. I think, we all do allow for that freeing of our conscience, um. (pause)

I think you've got to have an informed conscience. You can't just, you know - we could all have a conscience that says, "Yeah, it's right, it's good, feels good, do it" - that's not an informed conscience. I think through prayer, through discussion, through reflection then and if you're honest and open to God, to your spiritual

adviser, then you're in a better position to make an informed choice. But just doing something for selfish motives is not on.

Q: But what if a third party said, "Listen, what you're really doing is putting your conscience over the Bishop or the Church"?

Well - he's entitled to his conscience, I'm entitled to mine. Um I think if it came to the crunch I could no longer work with a Bishop like that I would resign. I would state my reasons why and send it to him. I couldn't work for something I didn't believe in any longer because that just makes a hypocrite of me.

Q: What do you think the Church's attitude would be about Catholic school principals who make decisions based on more than strictly Church teaching?

I think if the Bishop was in contact with his people, he would feel impressed. One of the problems with a Bishop is a bit like one of the problems with a principal too. You take on an authoritarian job and sometimes the image that the public have of you is too far removed ... So, you know, the right of office can be off putting sometimes.

In the resolution of moral and ethical dilemmas, Malcom's own value base or system formed the ultimate or final authority:

Oh, yes! I don't hesitate with that. I believe that my value basis, where I'm coming from is what is best. I guess I'm the type of person that respects authority. I've always been brought up to respect authority, but I've also been brought up to fight for what I believe in and that sometimes gets interpreted as pigheadedness or stubbornness but, um ... Ultimately, I'd say I'd have to push the System barrow, but my disagreement wouldn't be silent. It would be voiced but it wouldn't be voiced publicly around the place.

Q: What about when your values conflict with the Parish Priest or the Bishop? Who is the final authority then?

I mean, when we are talking as a Catholic school principal, we're always talking that the word 'authority' means Church, doesn't it? Even in the case if I was spoken to by the Bishop, I would still not act straight away. I would still believe that my value base is best - even then I'd say that the final authority would probably be my value basis. I mean, I guess it's the perspective you have on it isn't it? I mean my perspective is to my community and if, or whenever, I leave my community I want them to admire me for whoever I was and for where I took the school and what I did for their children; rather than be seen a rubbery type of

principal who tried to please everybody, who could just bend to fit anyone's perspective or opinion and always bow and beg to what Catholic Education want or whatever ... I mean I've always wondered whether we're getting too gospel value-based and not clinical enough. I guess where I'm coming from there is the fact that there's so much happening or so many dilemmas happening that I tend to get frustrated a little bit about the fact of just solving it and solving it quickly; not trying to look for the right thing to happen and make sure that both sides are happy. That ultimately, sometimes you've got to, you know, cut the cord and have someone unhappy or not happy. You know, I just get a bit frustrated about the wishy -washiness of some times - that really worries me a bit.

Although he believed in being true to his value system, Malcom was aware that it did not necessarily follow that his value base was always correct:

But, I guess my values might tell me that in the vicinity of a road accident I should be doing 80 kilometers an hour, but the law says 60 kilometers an hour. I mean, we need some kind of ultimate authority, but I believe in my value base - I don't know if that borders on selfishness or not. I mean, what drives a school and what drives you I guess. But if we're to make a difference, if we're not to be just a school, but a Catholic school, then we're to be about who are we and what difference do we make. But you'd like to think that Catholic education is on the same road that you are, and you'd also like to think that they value your opinion and value your judgment and your input into whatever directions or policy they want to put on you I guess.

Initially, Maria found it difficult to determine who or what she recognized as the final authority:

I think I can probably answer that a little bit more easily if I can think of a situation (pause). Well, I mean the Bishop would have to be I suppose really. I mean, if he gave out a directive and I didn't agree with it I think ... depending on the strength of my feelings, I would have to, just for my own conscience's sake, I would have to go and speak with the Bishop and say, "Well look, I am really in conflict with what you're saying." I suppose if no resolution is passed between us, well, I mean he is the ultimate employer of the Diocese. I really don't know where else I could go.

Q: In the earlier hypothetical about the Bishop's directive excluding non-Catholics from systemic schools, I think I remember you saying that if you had to, you would resign.

Yeah ... I know I'd have the backing of the Parish Priest there, then if I went to the Catholic Education Office and they still said to me, "Well you know, this is what the Bishop has said and we've got to follow the Bishop's directive," then I feel I would have to go to the Bishop. I would give him a list of all the arguments that I would have, perhaps try to tell him that the whole school community felt this way as well. I don't know, I suppose to be fair to the Bishop he's got to be seen - because I can remember saying somewhere else there too, that the policies are made more or less (pause). If I had a policy and someone, a parent, was asking me to go outside this policy, I know they're not made to be rigid but - oh, I don't know! I suppose my faith is very important to me. If it was a matter of faith and I felt that I had to follow a policy that went against my faith, I would have give up my position I think.

Q: So who's the final authority?

Me! When it comes to my faith it has to be me. I mean as far as I can see the institutional Church is not my authority.

Q: Is not?

No, it's my guide but I think it is my conscience standing before God, that's my authority when it comes to my faith. The Church is there to guide me but I really don't see it as my authority and I'd probably get ex-communicated if you say any of that.

Q: If I came to you as a parent and I had a matter of conscience but you didn't agree with my version?

I suppose if there was a conflict there between that parent's conscience and my own, I think I would have to see whose conscience ran more closely with the Catholic philosophy of the school as a whole, um. Then I would have to go by that. (pause) Gee that's a hard one.

SUMMARY: FINAL COMMENTS

In conclusion of Part Two of Chapter Four, it is appropriate to report some final comments made by the respondents. These comments describe the centrality of the resolution of moral and ethical dilemmas to the role of principal.

I think anyone who considers taking on the role of principal these days ... it is an extremely stressful role and I really don't see it getting any easier. I mean there are so many things going on in the day to day life of the school that things have to be prioritized. Dilemmas have to be prioritized and so therefore things that I would take into consideration are firstly, the severity of it, who is it affecting, is the effect going to be a major thing or this child or this parent or this teacher, what other things are going on at this particular time? I think, how could you put it? I think your own strength in the sense too that if a parent or a teacher comes forward with some sort of a dilemma that, firstly, you've got to make yourself see that it's got nothing personal in it, it's not a complaint made against me. In my own personal experience I think that's something that I've really had to learn and in learning that I think you can approach the dilemma more objectively and maturely. So, I think you know your own self, what makes you has a lot to do with it and the amount of stress level that you get out of it.

(Maria)

Well, the overriding thing is if I can sleep with myself at night. Then I'm fairly certain that I've made the right decision and I guess that comes down to knowing that you've looked into the background of it, that you've done the research, that you've talked to people and you've considered everything. I think if you've done everything and you feel within yourself that you've made a fair and equitable decision, you just sort of know that that's right. I would say that most of the time when you have that feeling that you just know it's right, it works out. The times when you've gone ahead and done something and it just hasn't seemed quite right, then it doesn't work out...

(Elizabeth)

You can have so many dilemmas within one particular day ... and some are important. Certainly with the family structures, the parents, the single families, the de facto relationships, school finances the way they are... it has got a lot worse over the years for various reasons, just the financial economy because most people are working, you know two family incomes and as a result kids are left at home by themselves quite a lot. It all leads to lots of conflict within a family which manifests itself in the school. It wasn't that many years ago, up to fifteen years ago I suppose, that a lot of these didn't surface.

(James)

I think dilemmas are getting harder because society is moving on and the Church is not. In terms of a Catholic school principal, the Church is trying to hold on to its grass roots and all that's doing is creating bigger dilemmas for us, you know, creating more dilemmas for us. Maybe if we're to be so recognized as members of our community, we perhaps should be allowed more input or be consulted on Church issues that so affect lifestyles or create clashes. But, I guess that just

comes back to the old system of the hierarchical Church; that's something that they're going to have to face. The Church, by history, is not noted for its listening or its ability to make common sense decisions in terms of everyday lifestyle so, it would be very hard.

(Malcom)

But I think there will always be tensions between the ideal and the realistic. And that causes us, as principals, a lot of stress, a lot of heartache. I like to get up early in the morning about five o'clock. You know usually if I'm not sleeping at night I'll wake up and say, "Why am I not sleeping?" I'll wake up at two o'clock and I'll wake up at three o'clock and I think, "Hello, yeah, my mind's still kicking over that problem. It's causing me some anxiety." So I get up at five and I go for a walk and I walk down around the lake or up to the lookout. It's just a reflection time and I'm just there alone, there's no one about, just the dog and me and we sit there and I talk to the dog, you know, work it out. I think my dog's a great spiritual adviser.

(Brian)

CONCLUSION

This chapter has reported the findings of the study. The responses of each of the respondents to four specific hypothetical and at least two actual dilemmas from the first and second (retrospective) interviews were recounted in Part One. In Part Two, the principals' resolution of moral and ethical dilemmas in the broad sense were presented.

In Chapter Five these findings are analyzed and interpreted according to the Response Classification Framework. As in Chapter Four, specific evidence from the interviews is cited to support the classification of the responses in line with Elliott's (1985) three step procedure for analyzing dilemmas as outlined in Chapter Three.

CHAPTER V - INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

In Part One of the previous Chapter, the specific responses of the principals in the study to moral and ethical dilemmas were reported. Their responses were given in two separate interviews in which the respondents reported their actions in dealing with particular hypothetical and actual situations. Part Two of Chapter Four reported the same principals' resolutions to moral and ethical dilemmas, but in the general sense.

The respondents were willing participants, speaking freely, openly and at considerable length. They spoke with surprising candor, their ready responses clearly indicative of much experience and critical, personal reflection. Not only did the principals provide definitive responses, they were able and eager to articulate the moral basis of their responses. In general, the respondents appreciated the essence of each dilemma, openly acknowledging the central principles underlying the various perspectives that challenged or supported their position. They spoke willingly of the struggle that characterized the resolution process; the struggle itself evidenced by the apparent contradictions in many of their explanations.

Hypothetical scenarios readily gave way to vivid memories of similar experiences that the principals had previously encountered. At times, individual respondents exhibited signs of tension, worry and some distress as they recalled the circumstances of recent dilemmas. Although some responses evidenced the quick reply that the ready exercise of formal authority affords, more commonly the principals pondered and agonized over

achieving a fair, just and moral solution. Critics might well point to the uses and abuses of the power of office which undeniably were evident on occasion. However, for the most part, the burden of responsibility rested heavily on the principals' shoulders; loneliness and isolation frequently featured in their responses.

Although in no way meant to be judgmental, the study uncovered an obvious incongruence that at times lay between the respondents' articulated values and their actual behavior; idealistic intentions suffering greatly at the hands of practicality. Moral and ethical intent, though readily articulated, often proved elusive in application. On occasions some respondents expressed lingering doubts long after resolution was achieved. Resolution itself was often problematic and incomplete, typically giving rise to a number of new, smaller dilemmas. Nonetheless, the principals were quite forthright, confident of their actions and decisive in their responses to moral and ethical dilemmas. Aware of the complexity of the issues and the dearth of simple solutions, the respondents openly expressed feelings of self-doubt, optimism and some disillusionment, but especially of genuine care for those within their school communities.

For the sake of clarity, the definitions of significant terms used in this study are hereby repeated. *Transrational* (Type I) values are grounded in principle, taking the form of ethical codes, injunctions or commandments. They invoke the will of the individual through faith or commitment. Transrational values involve more than pure reason (*rational* Type II values) and/or personal preference (*subrational* Type III values). *Consequentialism* is a course of action taken to resolve moral and ethical dilemmas. This action is taken primarily because of the perceived benefits or the likelihood of achieving

desirable consequences. Consequentialism is a form of *teleology* which refers to those theories in which the ends justify the means. Alternatively, *non-consequentialism* describes an approach to moral and ethical decision making based on doing one's duty or doing the 'right thing', regardless of the consequences. Non-consequentialism is a form of *deontology* which describes those approaches where action is based on a particular duty or inherent principle. Deontological approaches reject the notion that the ends justify the means.

The purpose of this chapter is to further analyze and interpret the findings reported in Chapter Four. In essence, this chapter addresses the six research questions outlined in Chapter One. To this end, Chapter Five is presented in three parts corresponding to the three main aspects of the study, namely: Part One, the nature of the principals' actual responses (Research Questions 1, 2, and 3); Part Two, the determination of which or whose values prevailed in resolution (Research Question 4); and Part Three, the consistency of the principals' individual approaches to the resolution of moral and ethical dilemmas (Research Questions 5 and 6).

PART ONE: NATURE OF RESPONSES TO MORAL AND ETHICAL DILEMMAS

The purpose of this main section of the chapter is to address the first three research questions. In Chapter Four, the first and second research questions were answered by way of illustration in Part One, and by direct response in Part Two. Here, the primary concern of this section is the analysis and interpretation of the principals' responses to the moral and ethical dilemmas which formed the basis of the study.

Following a brief summary relating to the first two research questions, a detailed analysis of the individual responses given to specific actual and hypothetical situations is provided within the four main categories of the Response Classification Framework: 1) Avoidance, 2) Suspending Morality, 3) Creative Insubordination, and 4) Personal Morality.

A) TYPES OF MORAL AND ETHICAL DILEMMAS

Overall, the dilemmas discussed in the study were representative of the five different types identified by Crowson (1989) and Greenfield (1991) as discussed in Chapter Two. Although the situations addressed by the respondents were many and varied, the study did not seek to delineate an exhaustive, comprehensive or comparative list. Rather, the study identified a number of hypothetical and actual dilemmas which were responded to or recounted by the principals. Many of the real life dilemmas reported by the respondents involved issues relating to teachers and teacher competency (including lifestyle), reminiscent of Kirby, Paradise and Protti's (1992) study which found that principals believed that the overwhelming majority of moral dilemmas they faced involved issues of teacher competence where extensive instructional supervision had failed to achieve the necessary improvement in performance. Nonetheless, a wide variety of actual dilemmas were reported by the principals in the study.

In Chapter Four both actual and real-life dilemmas were grouped under four sub-categories of situations involving teachers, children, formal authority and parents, for the purposes of identification, organization and discussion. Hence, the first research question

concerning the identification of some of the moral and ethical dilemmas experienced by Catholic school principals was addressed by illustration in that chapter.

B) FREQUENCY OF MORAL AND ETHICAL DILEMMAS

The ease with which the respondents were able to identify actual examples from experience, their familiarity with real life scenarios which mirrored many of the hypothetical scenarios, the number of times that in the retelling of one dilemma situation other related situations were referred to, and the general familiarity and interest in the issues under discussion were indicative of the high frequency with which the principals considered themselves to be dealing with moral and ethical dilemmas. When asked directly (see Chapter Four, Part Two), all respondents, except for Elizabeth, indicated that dilemmas occurred daily. Nonetheless, Elizabeth proceeded to outline two dilemmas that she was currently dealing with, including a recurring situation that arose as frequently as "once a week."

C) PRINCIPALS' RESPONSES TO MORAL AND ETHICAL DILEMMAS

The remainder of Part One and a significant section of this chapter deals with the analysis and interpretation of the responses given by the principals in this study to moral and ethical dilemmas. This analysis is presented within the four major categories of the Response Classification Framework outlined previously. A feature of this analysis is the citing of evidence to support the description and classification of the response as recommended by Elliott (1985) for the analysis of dilemmas (refer to Chapter Three).

The allocation of individual responses to particular categories is based on the dominant theme(s) as described by the respondent. As noted in Chapter Three, the categories and their components are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Overlap does exist and where appropriate, more than one category has been used to describe a particular response.

C.1 Avoidance

In an effort to resolve the moral and ethical dilemmas recounted in the interview, many of the respondents frequently posed solutions described herein as avoidance. Cognizant and non-cognizant avoidance occurs when a transrational values conflict is reduced to a rational (Type II) or sub-rational level of preference (Type III), thereby avoiding the irreconcilable nature of the original dilemma. This approach enables consequentialist and non-consequentialist solutions to be achieved. Importantly, the entire dilemma situation itself is not necessarily avoided (albeit a popular option by some principals in the study when possible). Rather the irreconcilable, transrational tension which characterizes the dilemma is avoided when principals reduce or re-classify the conflict to a form where rational processes can be employed. However, the use of rational avoidance strategies in no way suggests any amoral or unethical intent on the part of the principal. Indeed, when the principals in the study chose to adopt consequentialist and non-consequentialist solutions, they typically justified their actions on moral or ethical grounds.

Occasionally the respondents appeared to be unconcerned, if not unaware, that certain moral aspects of a particular dilemma were actually in contention. During these times, the principals failed or refused to acknowledge the significance of certain moral imperatives in favor of adhering to established policies and procedures. Non-cognitive avoidance also describes responses where principals knowingly discounted elements of a dilemma at 'face value', thereby unwittingly discarding serious moral considerations.

Both cognitive and non-cognitive avoidance characterized some of the principals' responses to particular moral and ethical dilemmas. Often principals chose between consequentialist and non-consequentialist approaches to achieve resolution, although in some instances the respondents attempted to honor both teleological and deontological precepts. The ability of each respondent to clearly articulate the basis of their responses, their consistent focus on values other than their personal preferences, and the awareness of some principals of the dangers of acting out of self-interest precluded the classification of any cognitive response given in the study as one of mere preference. Yet, there was evidence to suggest that, at times, personal preference was a factor in avoiding dilemmas through their prevention, as well as a significant component in some of the non-cognitive responses evident in the study.

C.1.1 Consequentialism

Brian related a number of dilemmas situations that he had encountered which involved issues related to teacher lifestyle. In the Catholic school context, questions about a teacher's lifestyle remain a sensitive issue where the values and beliefs espoused by the

Church appear to be compromised by the lifestyle of a person employed by the Church to teach these same values and beliefs. In general, Brian seeks to avoid these dilemmas (an approach recommended by Hodgkinson, 1991), primarily by openly encouraging “teachers not to get into the situation to begin with.”

In the confusing reality of changing societal norms and values, Brian is often unsure of what’s “right and wrong” in questions of lifestyle. For example, Brian agrees with the Church that “there’s a lot of hypocrisy if they’re teaching the sanctity of marriage and that teacher is living in a de facto relationship.” Yet, “half of my parents would be in the same situation, so you really can’t call the kettle black.” In instances of blatant scandal, Brian argues that the Church should take a stand, yet in other circumstances he believes the Church is too idealistic in its teachings: “I think it is a matter of living in the real world.”

On those occasions, where he is not able to prevent a lifestyle dilemma from arising, Brian immediately seeks a consequentialist solution. In essence, Brian attempts to remove the teacher from the school before becoming embroiled in a major issue with parents, the Catholic Education Office and the Teachers’ Union. Brian willingly employs a variety of strategies or means to achieve the pre-determined ends of complete eradication of the entire dilemma situation.

Recently, when Brian encountered a difficult lifestyle dilemma, he encouraged the teacher concerned to apply for an exchange to Ireland. The subsequent success of the application achieved immediate, if short term, relief for Brian: “It took the pressure off me for twelve months.” During the exchange this recently divorced teacher established a

homosexual relationship; his return to Australia with his partner imminent. Brian sought to prevent the potential dilemma of a divorced, homosexual teacher in his school from arising by permanently removing the teacher from the Catholic school situation. Through the enforcement of a contractual variation under the teacher's exchange agreement he could be relocated to another school in the diocese on his return. In fact, Brian had already arranged with the Catholic Education Office to relocate the teacher to a far removed location. Both Brian and the Catholic Education Office had but one end in mind, that "if he was offered one of these positions, he would, I say, resign."

In other lifestyle dilemmas where the removal of the "offending" teacher from the school situation could not be arranged, Brian is content to comply with the Catholic Church's policy of becoming involved only when the issue becomes cause for public concern within the school or wider community. For Brian, the possible negative consequences of formally questioning a teacher's lifestyle certainly justified inaction: "I would be on very tricky ground. I would be on grounds of discrimination." In reply to the obvious criticism that this pragmatic approach was nothing more than 'selective' or hypocritical morality, Brian argues that "if people see it and don't complain ... I don't think the Church needs to complain." In other words, where the people in a Catholic school community are willing to accept a teacher's situation or lifestyle that contravenes formal Church teachings (e.g., divorce, unmarried cohabitation), Brian sees no reason for him or the Church to interfere in an issue with significant legal and industrial ramifications. In such cases, the will of the silent majority, a type of 'consensus by default', takes precedence over adherence to Church teachings.

Like Brian, Elizabeth had also encountered a difficult dilemma in which, among other things, the local school community felt uncomfortable about the lifestyle of a particular teacher. Since the teacher had recently been “coerced by the Director into getting married,” the Catholic Education Office was unperturbed: “Their main thing was that she had married her partner, that on paper her lifestyle was acceptable.” Lacking the support of her own employer, Elizabeth was at a loss: “I had no idea what to do and I probably didn’t handle it very well. I spent a lot of time just praying that she would go to another school.” Eventually, Elizabeth requested that the Catholic Education Office transfer the teacher to another town. As the teacher “was moved and was happy to move,” Elizabeth avoided not only the dilemma but the entire situation itself.

Although Brian and Elizabeth were intent on the removal of the particular teachers concerned as the best means by which to resolve the lifestyle dilemma, neither principal was entirely satisfied with the approach or with the end result. Elizabeth solved her problem, but found herself “on the horns” of a new dilemma as she realized that “by arranging her (the teacher) to be moved, I wasn’t solving the problem ... it was just going to become someone else’s problem.” Increasingly, Brian finds the Church’s position on lifestyle issues to be problematic. In a recent case where a divorced teacher remarried “outside” the Church, Brian felt distressed by the consequences suffered by the teacher: “He’s alienated and he’s going through hell. When I talk to him, my heart bleeds.”

In the final analysis, lifestyle issues presented a complex dilemma for Elizabeth and Brian. Once a particular situation became a matter of public complaint, they felt compelled to act. Their efforts to achieve consequentialist solutions appear to hold scant

regard for deontological considerations. Undoubtedly, the means justified the ends; if a teacher could be relocated, encouraged to take an exchange or a transfer, or even coerced “into getting married,” not only could a transrational value conflict be avoided, but a potentially difficult legal and industrial issue averted.

At the time of the retrospective interview, Malcom was struggling with the dilemma of what to do about teachers who were nearing retirement and no longer coping with teaching. His uncertainty about what action to take “in terms of what we’re on about as a Catholic school and ministering to our staff,” conflicted with his certainty that “clinically at some stage, a judgment has got to be made on the impact of their absence ... and their frame of mind, on the children.” Malcom stated that he wanted to find a balance between “being pastoral, supportive and caring to the teacher and making them realize that they’re doing harm to the school, overall harm to their classes’ education and probably harm to their own reputation.” Nonetheless, Malcom favored a consequentialist approach based on “what is best for the school.” Such a response immediately incurred another dilemma for Malcom in that “what they want to do, which is hang on and keep going would be different from what you would like them to do.”

In reality, Malcom could see no alternative but for the two teachers to retire, a decision he would do everything in his power to encourage. Malcom outlined the strategy he was currently contemplating:

When they’re away again, whenever that may be, but I do know it’s going to happen ... calling them in ... to point out to them the load they are leaving behind. Trying to attack them in their moment of weakness - when they’re trying to prove to you how fit and healthy they are, that’s not the time to do it - it’s when they’re at a vulnerable stage, when they know they haven’t got a comeback.

Despite the seemingly dubious nature of the means by which he was prepared to achieve the desired result, Malcom felt justified in his actions:

I mean it is not something I would back away from ... you're not trying to hurt them ... it comes down to a psychological battle ... you've got to make them realize the load they are actually putting back on the school.

Malcom believed that in reality the teachers “will certainly buck at the fact that you want them to go ... ultimately, you've got to try and turn it around to make them feel as though it's their decision.” For Malcom, his overall obligation as principal to do “what's best for the kids” justifies other tactics which he describes as generally “being less interested, less pastoral.” After all, “principals see things from the whole school perspective. Teachers, by nature, don't. Teachers see it from their own point of view.” Malcom's belief that “individuals are going to see it selfishly” applies to himself as well as to teachers. Being aware of the risk of making a decision based on his personal preference or self-interest, Malcom argues that he is committed to forming “a judgment based on what is best for the school, which may not necessarily be what I want to do.”

Malcom's predisposition to seeking a consequentialist solution apparently overrides his articulated concern for the two teachers who he accepts are “in need, whether it be spiritually or emotionally.” Not only would he make them aware of the precise details of parental complaints that they would find “personally devastating,” Malcom would elicit the support of key members on staff who he is “friendly with” so that the two teachers “are not just hearing it from me.” If necessary, Malcom would approach the Catholic Education Office to visit the school on some pretext when “they're really

coming down to see them.” The purpose of such a visit would be to offer the teachers an early retirement inducement under the pretense that it was open to all teachers, when in fact it would be a “one-off” offer just for them.

Seemingly, the teleological objective of achieving the teachers’ early retirement was justification enough for whatever means had to be employed. For Malcom, the crux of the problem lay not in the morality of the means but in the likelihood of their success: “On one hand you’ve got this overall vision and accountability that we (principals) have to the whole school, but you’ve got people, teachers and parents, coming from their own perspective and that’s difficult, it’s a dilemma and it’s hard.”

In justifying their decision not to change Miss Usher from Year 5 to Year 3 (Vignette #1), Elizabeth and Brian argued that the original decision was rightly made in the best interests of the children. For these two principals, the likelihood of positive consequences for all the children (especially the special needs children) was paramount in their firm intention to reconfirm the original decision. Elizabeth’s main concern was to have a teacher for the class, whether it be Miss Usher or a replacement teacher; the latter alternative clearly being her preferred option, given “the consequences down the track ... if she has to take the class - it talks about her being tyrannical and placing inordinate pressure on the children that could get worse.”

Elizabeth believed that a problem with Miss Usher was inevitable, if not over changing year levels then “something would have cropped up with her.” Brian’s response was more utilitarian in that he envisaged “getting her (Miss Usher) on side” which eventually would result in her coming to realize that “it’s quite rewarding to work with

older ones.” With or without Miss Usher, Brian and Elizabeth were determined to act in the best interests of the children. Reducing the conflict to a rational level which ignored, among other things, Miss Usher’s health problems, these principals chose to nominate different means to ensure similar positive outcomes for the children.

After the failure of a number of strategies over a lengthy period of time to correct the persistent misbehavior of Jonathon, the principal sought to have him removed from the school. By having Jonathon removed James sought to resolve the dilemma of “what to do with him once he has breached every part of the discipline policy.” James’ reasoning was purely consequentialist: “We didn’t want him around because he was a bad influence. So our intention was to, ah, ask him to leave the school - so there was no dilemma then.”

Although lacking the formal authority to expel a child from a systemic school, James suggested to Jonathon’s parents that they seek an alternative placement elsewhere, supposedly to “save the stigma of expulsion.” In reality, this option would enable James to avoid the transrational conflict between trying to meet Jonathon’s needs and “ensuring the safety of the children in that class.” However, the refusal by Jonathon’s parents to voluntarily withdraw him from the school posed a new dilemma for James. Even though their complaint to the Catholic Education Office had brought a reminder by the Senior Education Officer that he did not have the authority to make such a decision, James persisted with the threat of expulsion: “I mean, if you can threaten it, maybe it works.”

When Jonathon’s parents still refused to withdraw him from the school, James looked for other consequentialist solutions. Despite his own misgivings about the validity of Jonathon’s medical diagnosis as a child with an Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD),

James adopted a new concern that Jonathon be placed in a school “better equipped to handle an ADD child.” Whilst harboring his own agreement with the argument “that 90% of children are diagnosed with ADD because it satisfies the parents,” James “pushed the benefit of his attending a school that had a program for ADD children or a supposed program for ADD.” Clearly, James adopted a pseudo-non-consequentialist concern for Jonathon’s medical condition in order to achieve his original teleological objective to remove Jonathon from the school. In retrospect, James believes his efforts to have Jonathon withdrawn were long overdue:

We were trying to be too pastoral rather than thinking about the welfare of the rest of the community ... it was five years that we really tried to do the right thing and maybe it was at the expense of some of the other kids at the school who suffered from his abuse ... maybe I should have done it a lot earlier.

For James, the morality of the resolution was found in the subsequent consequences for the school: “It’s surprising ... how peaceful the playground is and how uninterrupted the classroom is.”

In responding to the dilemma of what to do about Jane (Vignette #2), Malcom based his response on an actual situation he was struggling to deal with:

We have a family in the school who would be undernourished ... and it’s a huge dilemma for me ... the child smells of urine ... is not in uniform, looks terrible, not washed ... you get kids in the class who isolate the child ... you don’t have the payment of fees and levies ... just how far do you go?

As in his dilemma with the two teachers nearing retirement, Malcom again sought a consequentialist solution that avoided the inherent transrational conflict by avoiding the entire situation through “her removal not only from your school but I guess from the school system.” Again his response was firmly grounded in the principal of benefit

maximization: “Ultimately, you’ve got to make the decision for the school ... there must be an out for the school with the impact that it is having on other children.”

Being well aware that his consequentialist approach “seems rather cold,” Malcom expressed his intention to take “an interest in what’s going to happen or to look at a solution to the problem. Not just eradicate it but also look for a solution to it.” Just what strategies he would employ in this regard remain unclear, given his view that the “key would be her father,” currently serving a prison sentence because of his mistreatment of Jane. In hoping that local agencies would offer her support, Malcom was determined “not to have disruptive elements or disruptive times, so the consequences are that confidence in the whole school is boosted, confidence in you is boosted.”

Malcom appeared well aware of the incongruence of his response with his earlier articulated concern for Jane’s welfare. Again he justified his actions by the nature of the perceived outcomes secured for the remainder of the school:

Ultimately, as principal of the school, you are responsible to all the parents and to all the children in the school and whilst you might feel a bit of a bastard so to speak, you’ve got to ensure quality education, quality schooling.

Clearly, Malcom’s teleological perspective precludes all but an articulated concern for Jane’s welfare:

I think Jane has put herself in a predicament where she is beyond any help in terms of what the school can offer and in terms of the impact that she would be having on the other children. I think that you would have to - oh, not think, I know that the school is better off without her. Now that seems rather cold and doesn’t take in the friendly pastoral care we offer as a Catholic school, but this situation is beyond pastoral care

You would be looking to place the child either back as a ward of the State or certainly be looking for her removal ... I’d use expulsion if I had to! ... I don’t

think suspension would solve the problem ... I mean the problem is only going to come back.

C.1.2 Non-Consequentialism

In stark contrast to Malcom's consequentialist perspective, Maria, Brian and Elizabeth believed that a deontological approach was the only appropriate response to Jane's predicament. These respondents felt a fundamental obligation for Jane who they saw as "a victim" (Maria); "a human being who really needs our help" (Elizabeth); a child "crying out for help ... she wants to be loved" (Brian). Thus, 'getting rid' of Jane was not an option, being nothing more than "the easy way out for the school" (Maria).

By adopting a non-consequentialist perspective, these respondents believed that despite the circumstances, Jane's welfare "was of utmost importance to us as a school" (Maria). Drawing on their experiences in real life situations, Maria, Brian and Elizabeth proposed the development of an overall school strategy in which all relevant parties (counselors, teachers, parents and children) would cooperate to improve the situation. They accepted that such an approach would offer no 'quick fix' solutions: "I wouldn't expect results overnight" (Maria). Even if the situation deteriorated, these principals would resist any demand for Jane's removal: "I don't think any kid's a lost cause" (Brian). Suspension and/or expulsion were not options: "If you are going to get into the state of mind that you just get rid of them as soon as they are a problem, then there's some fairly questionable ethics involved ... there's always another Jane around" (Elizabeth). Should all attempts to help Jane fail, then as a last resort an alternative placement would

be sought on the grounds that this “situation is not the best for her” (Elizabeth); “we love her but we just can’t manage with the resources we have” (Brian).

Central to their deontological approach was the recognition of Jane’s fundamental right to “be treated fairly and justly” (Brian). Despite the unfavorable consequences incurred by other children at the school, these principals were undeterred in accepting that “Jane has to be the main concern here.” Brian drew a religious parallel which justified the primacy of his concern for Jane’s welfare: “I think it’s a case of Christ left the sheep and went looking for the lost one didn’t he? (pause) and when he carried it back there was great rejoice.” Nonetheless, the various school-wide strategies proposed included “equipping the others with strategies ... if they’ve been shown how to react to it and so on, I think generally they’ll lean to cope with it” (Elizabeth); “I think the class would cooperate and through this experience come out much richer” (Maria).

Maria’s non-consequentialist response to a real life situation involving conflict between two teachers working in a cooperative teaching environment was based on equal respect for each person concerned. By holding regular meetings with the teachers in which certain ground rules were insisted upon (e.g., each person speaking in their own time, respectful listening, consensus decision making), Maria was able to provide a forum for the details of the conflict to be resolved. Frequent formal and informal meetings between Maria and the teachers continued after the conflict was resolved. By taking responsibility herself for possibly contributing to the problem through infrequent communication, Maria may have provided an example that encouraged the two teachers to take some responsibility for their own part in the conflict.

Part of the benefit of Maria's approach was that it avoided the negative consequences that had arisen when the teachers had individually approached her about the problem, only to feel guilty "about being up here (the principal's office) because it was quite obvious to the other person where she was." Because the teachers were feeling very uncomfortable, Maria purposefully sought a resolution which also dispelled that aspect of the dilemma. In general, Maria felt that when teachers had personal concerns that were affecting their professional lives, the principal had a pastoral role to play in supporting them: "I mean, it's not just a choice on the principal's part but really a responsibility, particular in the Catholic school." This deontological perspective in relation to interpersonal relationships rejects the notion that the principal "might just choose to ignore the personal burdens that a member of staff might have."

In choosing not to change Melissa's placement from Mr. Kent's class (Vignette #4), Elizabeth, James and Malcom ignored the negative consequences perceived by the Johnsons in favor of non-consequentialist considerations such as maintaining consistency with policy, not responding to parental threats and the principals' duty to support his/her teachers: "You've got to be consistent" (James); "Granting an exemption to one parent is going to create a bigger issue" (Malcom); "it's the use of threats and almost bullying tactics" (Elizabeth) and "you don't give in to that" (Malcom); "whatever, you have to support Mr. Kent ... because as principal you have to support your teachers" (Elizabeth); "You have to be fair to the teacher" (Malcom); "that's what we are here for" (James).

These three principals argued that the problem lay with the Johnsons and the manner by which they made their complaint. Malcom maintained that they "are not

committed to the school enough.” James and Elizabeth were intent on making the point that “you can’t really let parents dictate” (James); “So I’d push for Mr. Kent’s sake but I’d also push for my own sake ... to let people know that if they are going to do things there is a right way to do it” (Elizabeth). All three respondents seemed well aware of the possible negative consequences that their position would incur: the Johnson family would be lost to the school and to the parish; the Catholic Education Office may withhold their support from the principal in future issues concerning Mr. Kent; other parents may become disgruntled: “There would probably start to be a few rumblings ... I’d be getting a few more visits” (Elizabeth). Yet, these principals would not change Melissa’s placement “under any circumstances” (James), even though they knew that there would not be “too many positives coming out of it” (Elizabeth).

Elizabeth acknowledged that some parents would argue “that I wasn’t putting the good of the children first.” However, Elizabeth felt that if she believed “that the children were at a great disadvantage, then I’d take steps to overcome that.” Similarly, Malcom accepted that “the really hard issue” in the dilemma was that one class had a good teacher whilst the other had a teacher of questionable competency. Thus, both respondents agreed that “the good of the children and the rights of the teacher ... is a real conflict if you do know that a teacher is not performing to the best” (Elizabeth).

Elizabeth argued that she would resolve this dilemma by putting the children first: “As far as talking to parents you have to maintain your support for the teacher, but yes, ultimately the children, in your own mind, have to come first.” Yet her consequentialist rationale appears to contradict her emphatically stated response in favor of supporting Mr.

Kent: “I would fight it out until the very end ... I would even advise Mr. Kent to contact his Union and I would contact the Union ... and tell them ‘Look, this is what’s happening ... and if it is affecting one of your members’.” Although she “would be thinking about positive steps to take to help him to improve or change the situation, Elizabeth sees no other option than Melissa staying in Mr. Kent’s class “because otherwise that means you are questioning your own teacher’s professional ability.”

For Malcom and James, the dilemma of choosing between what is best for the children and being fair to the teachers is best avoided. In selecting the classes, both principals would ensure that the children of parents who were likely to complain or had previously indicated a preference for a particular teacher, were placed in the appropriate class. Malcom explained:

So it would come down to the fact that you would find children to go into the class. You get other parents who couldn’t care less what class their child is in and you’d be privy to that two, three or four parents who have to come to see you. If you could you would make sure that these children were in the other class and no one need know about it ...

Classes are selected on the academic, social, emotional maturity - all that type of angle. But, you would probably try to work it around that their child wasn’t in that class if you could prevent it. But when it becomes a public issue with parents in your office and all of that, then it’s a whole different ball game.

Similarly, James would hope the dilemma involving Melissa “didn’t arise... by listening to what parents say and while not just actually agreeing with them, you can detour around certain situations.” James and Malcom believed that much of the remaining problem could then be avoided by “releasing class lists on the first day of the next year.”

This teleological approach outlined by Malcom and James which minimizes parental disquiet about class placement gives way to a fundamental concern for protecting and exercising the legitimate authority of the principal “when it becomes a public issue”:

The Johnsons can do what they like ... for the strength you show publicly you will probably draw more people to the school anyway because parents like to see in principals, strength, firmness and the ability to counter power plays and the people who want to run the school ... (Malcom)

I would still stick with the fact that I wouldn't change, um, it's pretty hard to back down on a decision, otherwise your whole credibility goes ... After all, the principal is responsible for the running of the school, for the good of all the school and the teachers, not just one or two kids. (James)

C.1.3 Combining Consequentialist and Non-Consequentialist Approaches

In seeking to resolve the dilemma about Melissa Johnson's placement, Maria and Brian proposed approaches which attempted to combine both consequentialist and non-consequentialist considerations. Maria's concern was that the school be seen as sticking to policy and “also seen to take in parent concern.” Brian rejected the conventional view that principals must give unconditional support to teachers: “I don't think the principal does support the teacher, no matter what.”

Given the legitimacy of the Johnson's complaint, Maria and Brian would seek a win/win solution in which primary consideration was given to ensuring “that the child gets the education for which this school is responsible” (Maria). At the same time, they would work towards finding a just and appropriate alternative for Mr. Kent who “is ill-suited to the position” (Maria). By working with Mr. Kent, the Catholic Education Office and the school, Maria hopes that a remedy will be found “in which the three parties ... will

benefit.” On the basis of an actual teacher competency dilemma previously encountered, Brian would endeavor to organize a redundancy offer for Mr. Kent in order that he not lose accrued entitlements such as superannuation.

Whilst Brian and Maria would look for a solution “where everybody could come out with a bit of a win” (Maria), at the heart of their response is a primary concern for the rights of the child. By admitting that “there is a difficulty with ... this teacher” (Brian) and working towards an alternative, this concern is extended to all children in Melissa’s class. Brian and Maria hope to achieve an appropriate response to a complex dilemma. Their combined teleological and deontological perspective accepts that this type of situation is “a justice issue with the teacher, Mr. Kent, and a justice issue with the parents” (Brian).

In resolving the dilemma expounded in Vignette #2 (Jane), James proposed an approach designed to achieve a win-win situation in which both consequentialist and non-consequentialist solutions were possible. On one hand he believes that:

you have to consider the child herself, where she is at, her home-life, everything else that has happened to her ... You’ve got to look at why they are doing things and if that’s going to take a while I think everyone’s got to be a little patient.

On the other hand, James’ “main concern” is the rest of the children: “You’ve got to weigh up taking one person as compared to taking three hundred ... I guess the majority of people you have to think of rather than the individual. It would be good to do both.”

James’ struggle between achieving justice for Jane and giving priority to the majority of the children, illustrates the two perspectives of the ethic of justice discussed by Starratt (1994). In one view “the individual is conceived as logically prior to society,” whilst in the other “society is the prior reality within which individuality develops”

(Starratt, 1994: 49, 50). Starratt's argument that in school settings it is possible to embrace both understandings is reflected in James' eventual conclusion that "it would be good to do both." Starratt (1994: 51) rejects the notion that the two understandings are irreconcilable, arguing that "the ethic of justice demands that the claims of the institution serve both the common good and the rights of the individual."

James' response seeks more than justice for Jane. His genuine concern for her as a person would lead him to work with the school counselor to "work out some sort of procedure ... I think it's part of our duty to be pastoral carers for those children ... but I mean they need more help than we can give them." This approach would include offering support to the remainder of the children in the form of "some sort of counseling." James accepts that Jane's situation is "long term requiring considerable support and flexibility in the school's dealings with her and her family." Clearly, this aspect of James' response reflects what Starratt and others describe as an 'ethic of care' which "postulates a level of caring that honors the dignity of each person and desires to see that person enjoy a fully human life" (Starratt, 1994:52). Even if the situation deteriorated, James would avoid suspension or expulsion. Eventually, if "the kids are suffering, the teachers are suffering and the school's suffering," then James would recommend her voluntary withdrawal from the school.

James' initial response to Vignette #1 (Miss Usher) was that "I wouldn't go about it the way it's been gone about." Rather, James would have avoided the situation by not changing too many things in the first year of the new principalship. By observing rather than making changes, James hopes to avoid any unnecessary negative consequences that

may arise by upsetting the school community or one of the teachers. In addition to teleological considerations, James preferred to delay making changes on deontological grounds as well: "You really need to know the person ... even her health and you need a profile as you do on all teachers." In particular, James believes that "obviously she (Miss Usher) had some fears and those fears had to be allayed first before you dump something onto somebody."

In relation to the action taken by the principal, Ben Jones, and the actual circumstances presented in Vignette #1, James would not change the allotted class. Although James believes that Miss Usher was "only worrying about herself," he would still "try to get her on side and allay any fears that she can handle it." His approach is based on both consequentialist and non-consequentialist grounds including: the consequences of giving into "tantrums," maintaining consistency with his policy of never changing class placements once determined; being firm in his decision making because "that's what teachers want, no wishy-washiness"; and countering the pressure that Miss Usher may have put on the other Year 3 teacher to offer to swap classes.

C.1.4 Non-Cognizant Avoidance

Non-cognizant avoidance describes those responses whereby the respondents were unaware, failed or refused to recognize the real nature and significance of certain moral aspects of a dilemma. Typically, this approach involves resorting to established policies and procedures to achieve resolution. Since such policies are often the product of ongoing, long term negotiation between various parties such as educational, legal and

industrial authorities in a broader context, it may well be argued that such a response, although obviously rational, is the only morally justifiable response. In other words, principals may purposely choose to follow formal policies in the belief they have been formulated especially for those very occasions when irreconcilable, transrational value conflicts arise.

The very nature of this response poses quite a challenge to the researcher, the inherent complexities typifying many of the difficulties of conducting research in the values area. These general difficulties were introduced in Chapter Three and will be further discussed in the next chapter. At this point in the analysis of the principals' responses, a number of specific considerations seem pertinent. Firstly, where one or more respondents offer a response to the same vignette which includes moral elements of the dilemma not raised by the others, the researcher is clearly in a position to identify non-cognizant avoidance as a factor in the latter instance. Secondly, on some occasions when certain aspects of a dilemma were not raised by the respondent but were subsequently raised by the researcher, direct questioning was used to determine if these aspects were subject to mere oversight, insufficient deliberation or simply dismissed 'out of hand'. Where a respondent actually identified a particular aspect only to apparently disregard its importance, non-cognizant avoidance describes the principal's failure or refusal to consider all moral aspects of the dilemma. Finally, after a comprehensive consideration of a number of responses by the principals to the same hypothetical situation and to actual dilemmas, instances where some or all of the respondents appeared to be unaware of significant moral aspects became apparent. The identification of these omissions was

informed by the relevant literature (as discussed in Chapter 2) and by the past experience, reflection and interpretation of the researcher. Obviously, this is not to suggest that each and every possible moral element of all of the dilemmas was delineated in the study.

Given their inherent complexity, those responses which are classified herein as non-cognizant avoidance are further categorized within the Response Classification Framework. Since non-cognizant avoidance describes relevant moral aspects which appear to have been omitted or are absent in the principals' responses, other categories describe the nature of the response that is actually made. In other words, those responses discussed herein as non-cognizant avoidance have or will be discussed as examples of other response categories within the Classification Framework.

In stark contrast to James' concern, neither Brian nor Malcom identified Miss Usher's health (Vignette #1) as a significant consideration in their efforts to achieve resolution. Despite basing their responses on actual past experiences that were very similar, these principals did not identify illness as an issue from either the principals' or Miss Usher's perspective. Even in predicting the outcomes of their responses, no apparent consideration was given to the possible effects of their actions on her health. Although Brian seemed to simply ignore Miss Usher's health concerns through choice or lack of awareness, Malcom's attitude was somewhat more cynical: "Well, I would be a bit worried about Miss Usher. She has had seven weeks holiday and she's stressed. Imagine what she'd be like after seven week's school!"

When asked directly whether Miss Usher's health would be a factor in future decisions about class allocation, Elizabeth acknowledged that although:

It certainly would be there, but I don't think that. I think my decisions as far as that would be more practical. For example, if someone has difficulty in getting up or down stairs, then I wouldn't give her a class upstairs.

Despite acknowledging that her decision not to change the class "would probably affect her (Miss Usher's) health," Elizabeth also refused to accept Miss Usher's ill health as a relevant factor in resolving the dilemma. Rather, Elizabeth argued that "she has a professional responsibility to take the class that she has been allocated." Similarly, Maria was aware of the significance of Miss Usher's ill health, agreeing with her principal's comment that "if she was too ill to teach Year 5, then she is certainly too ill to teach Year 3." However, in making her decision, Maria chose not to consider Miss Usher's health on the basis of her belief that "the school is there primarily for the children ... and anything that negatively affects that, for example, the health of the teacher, then I feel the effective education of the children must come first."

Wignall (1994: 3) draws attention to the plight of the people "living and working with life threatening illness." Recent advances in medical diagnosis and treatment allow many teachers to live active, working lives whilst suffering from chronic and/or terminal illness. Increasingly, principals are responding to dilemmas relating to issues of competency and the legitimate rights and needs of teachers who choose to continue to work whilst suffering from life threatening illness. Central to the problem of chronic illness is the ongoing suffering experienced by the sick person and their families. Kleinman (1988: 30) argues that:

suffering is not easily put aside by biomedical science, it remains central to the experience of illness ... yet the societal response is almost entirely limited to the

rational, technical manipulations aimed at controlling practical problems, with scant attention to their deeper significance.

Thus, Elizabeth's decision about Miss Usher's health would be "more practical," while Maria's would consider offering concessions to Miss Usher such as making "some other arrangement" to reduce the demands of Friday afternoon sport on her health.

Part of James' reluctance to condone the approach adopted by the principal, Ben Jones, (Vignette #1), was his concern for Miss Usher's "fears" and for "allaying those fears." This concern acknowledges the significance of what Kleinman (1988: 31) refers to as the "lifeworld" of a person suffering from disability or illness whereby: "acting like a sponge, illness soaks up personal and social significance from the world of such a person." Subsequently, the person and his or her circle of family and friends create their own meanings of chronic illness, their own lifeworld. Further, because cultural meanings label the sick person with "stigma or social death ... these meanings present a problem to the patient, family and practitioner every bit as difficult as the problem itself" (1988: 26). In Vignette #1, the problem presented by cultural meanings is evidenced by Malcom's attitude to the question of whether he thinks Miss Usher will return to work after a week's sick leave:

Who cares? ... I mean the school's going on without her and that's going to hurt her ... for so long she's thought the school could not do without her, but yet the school is now happily moving forward.

Apart from James, the respondents either were unaware or simply refused to acknowledge the possible meanings that Miss Usher's illness held for her. In choosing a variety of responses, these principals shared a general lack of awareness and/or concern

for the health related aspects of the dilemma. Although other classifications have and will describe the nature of the principals' actual responses, their common failure to countenance any consideration of Miss Usher's illness exemplifies the response described herein as non-cognizant avoidance.

In contemplating a teleological response to his current dilemma with two teachers nearing retirement, Malcom appeared to be unaware of the possible consequences of 'forced' retirement on the two teachers concerned. Clearly Malcom understood that the teachers will "buck at the fact that you want them to go"; that what "they want to do, which is hang on and keep going, would be different to what you would like them to do." In his still incomplete deliberations, Malcom has failed or chosen to ignore the likely effects of early retirement on the two teachers concerned. Obviously, should his "psychological battle" waged "in their time of weakness" be carried out, there would be significant psychological, emotional and financial consequences for both teachers. For whatever reason, these consequences are apparently not a factor in Malcom's determination to make an "informed judgment, not a judgment based on what I want to do, but a judgment based on what is best for the school."

The extent to which Malcom is prepared to go suggests that he is well aware of the teachers' determination to actively resist any pressure that he might apply. He is also aware of some deontological considerations, recognizing that "they're in need, whether it be spiritually or emotionally." In adopting the perspective that teachers see things "from their own point of view," Malcom has apparently disregarded the consequences of his response for the teachers themselves. Alternatively, he may have a predisposition not to

consider such factors because “individuals are going to see it selfishly.” Either way, his overall consequentialist approach discounts significant moral aspects of the dilemma.

Non-cognizant avoidance is a response clearly apparent in James’ response to his dilemma involving Luke, a cancer suffering student whose parents subsequently refused to accept the school’s policy on hair cuts. In this instance James was aware of the basis of the parents’ opposition, but “there was an alternative way of cutting the hair that the parents would not have a bar of it because of the stress that they had been through, the stress that the child had been through and they refused to do anything about it.”

Moreover, James was also aware of the opinion of the social worker from the Royal Children’s Hospital who was somewhat astounded that teachers “picked on a little issue like that, after all the trauma the child had been through.”

James’ insistence on adherence to the school’s unwritten hair style policy contrasts with many of his other dealings with the boy and his family. In the first instance, the child was only diagnosed after his parents sort medical advice on James’ recommendation. During the child’s subsequent absence for treatment, James ensured that the school community “prayed about it every day and supported them in that way.” Yet, even when the parents expressed their belief that the school “should be more sympathetic towards it and stop causing them so much stress,” James concluded that “it was a parenting problem ... the parents were just being very, very negative to the whole thing and didn’t want to support the school in that way.”

Clearly, non-cognizant avoidance in this instance is not based on a lack of awareness by James of the effects of the school’s position on the child and on his parents.

Rather James' response is purposefully chosen in spite of the accompanying stress and trauma for the boy and his family. Even though James knew that the child wanted to "wear a hat all the time because obviously he was embarrassed by it," the teacher refused to allow him to wear one in class: "You just don't wear hats in school. There is no sun in here ... the kids were informed that he's had his 'chemo' and there was a certain amount of hair loss and people understand that." Although James was well aware that his insistence on enforcing the hair style policy meant that "these parents were enraged that this issue had been directed to their son," he appears to lack any real understanding of the significance of cancer for the lifeworld of the child and his parents:

I guess it's a situation which you'd like to avoid because of concern for the child in that situation with cancer, um, but rules are rules and you can be flexible if you have to be but when we feel that there is no need to be flexible, I think you've got to stick by your policies and your rules.

In Vignette #4 (the Johnsons) already discussed, Malcom, James and Elizabeth chose deontological responses which failed to consider significant aspects of the dilemma. In choosing to "be consistent with policy" (Malcom), "not letting parents dictate" (James) and "pushing for Mr. Kent's sake" (Elizabeth), these respondents apparently gave scant consideration to the moral issues raised by Mr. and Mrs. Johnson. Each of these principals ignored the fact that the Johnsons were right - Melissa would do better in the other class. Seemingly, Elizabeth, James and Malcom refused to give any real consideration to the rights of the parents and to the educational rights of the child, Melissa. Somewhat ironically, both James and Malcom argued that in reality they would have avoided the scenario by not putting Melissa in Mr. Kent's class in the first place.

Again, this alternative was not based on a consideration of Melissa's or any other child's rights, but on ensuring that the children whose parents were likely to complain were placed in the other class. Hence, Mr. Kent's class would include the children of parents "who couldn't care less what class their child was in" (Malcom). After all, "you can detour around certain situations ... with some parents you would know that you would see a potential problem" (James).

Although Malcom and Elizabeth accepted that the Johnsons would leave the school as a consequence of their decision, both respondents failed to express any regard for the consequences of the subsequent dislocation on Melissa and her family. Elizabeth hoped that "they would feel that they've lost face and they'd go," while Malcom argued that "the Johnsons can do what they like" Thus, the end result of Mr. and Mrs. Johnsons' efforts to have their daughter placed with a competent teacher would be that the entire family would lose their place in the school and possibly parish communities. As a result, Melissa's education would be further interrupted by a change of schools.

Both Malcom and Elizabeth felt that losing the Johnsons would actually benefit the school community: "You will probably draw more people to the school anyway because parents like to see in principals strength, firmness and the ability to counter power plays and people who want to run the school" (Malcom). Similarly, James also argued that he was more concerned for the overall school community than for the Johnsons: "After all, the principal's responsible for ... the good of all the school and the teachers, not just one or two kids."

In stark contrast, Maria and Brian chose to accept the expressed concerns of Mr. and Mrs. Johnson as legitimate. The priority given by these principals to the rights of all the children in Melissa's class formed the basis of their response: "My priority is to make sure that the child gets the education for which this school is responsible" (Maria); "I would be saying to them: 'Okay, I hear your concerns and I realize there is a difficulty ... and I am prepared to take it up'" (Brian). The acknowledgment by Maria and Brian that the Johnsons have a legitimate complaint which they have a responsibility to address, contrasts with the non-cognizant avoidance response proffered by the other principals in the study.

C.1.5 Preference

In analyzing the principals' responses to determine which, if any, were based on personal preference it is important to acknowledge the various forms that preference might take. At one level, preference refers to a simple choice between what Hodgkinson (1991) calls Type III values, based on an individual's predisposition for one value over another. Thus, mere preference describes a response where principals choose between two alternative, but equally appropriate courses of action on the basis of their preference for one response over the other. At another level, preference may be a factor in those conflicts which arise because of the tension between the idiographic and nomothetic aspects of the organization; when principals knowingly or unknowingly place self-interest over the common good of the organization (Hodgkinson, 1991).

Despite the warning of March's (1978) in Crowson (1989: 416) that "decision makers are seldom aware of their own preferences; or may hold inconsistent ones;" there was no evidence to suggest that mere preference was a factor in any of the principals' responses once they were confronted with a particular dilemma. Indeed, such a simplistic approach appears unlikely given the serious and complex nature of many of the dilemmas under consideration. Principals often felt that the circumstances of particular dilemmas presented no real options, let alone the luxury of deciding between two equally appealing courses of action. The inappropriateness of this level of preference as a classification for the given responses was further confirmed by the ability of the principals to clearly articulate the actual basis on which their considered responses were formed, none of which included their particular, individual preferences.

Nonetheless, the findings of the study did suggest that personal preference may be a significant factor in the way in which some principals perform their role. Certainly, a number of principals indicated their preference for avoiding dilemmas before they arose, not by resolving transrational values conflicts, but by preventing potential dilemma situations from arising in the first place. For example, Malcom and James preference for avoiding dilemma situations arising from the placement of children into particular classes has little to do with social justice principles or democratic selection processes. Their practice of pre-selecting children of potentially concerned parents such as the Johnsons (Vignette #4) and releasing class lists on the first day of the school year ensures that potential problems are averted, albeit at the obvious expense of those children whose parents "who couldn't care less what class their child was in" (Malcom).

Similarly, Brian's attempts to avoid potential lifestyle dilemmas by encouraging his "teachers not to get into the situation to begin with" do not fully recognize the individual rights of teachers. Brian used this approach to help avoid situations where he might have been forced to consider taking action despite being "on very tricky ground ... on grounds of discrimination." In the same way, James' preference for principals in their first year of principalship at a new school (Vignette #1) to observe rather than make changes was designed to ensure a more peaceful and stable beginning for a new principal.

While outside the scope of this study's concern for actual responses to moral and ethical dilemmas after they have occurred, the findings nonetheless suggest that the personal preference of principals may be a pervasive influence of their leadership on the culture of the school. Specifically, the significance of the principal's personal preference in relation to the adoption of particular strategies and practices to prevent, reduce or avoid potential moral dilemma situations seems worthy of further investigation.

When principals consciously or otherwise seek to protect their own self-interest, they may well be choosing to hold a particular personal preference (e.g., career enhancement, avoiding 'hassles', projecting a positive self-image) at the transrational (Type I) values level. Preston (1996: 44) refers to the approach whereby self-interest becomes the goal of human action as "a form of consequentialism referred to as ethical egoism." Thus, responses which take the form of self-interest could arguably be referred to as indicative of Type I value conflicts rather than preference (Type III), this study produced some evidence that preference in the form of self-interest was a significant factor in some of the responses given.

Maria readily acknowledged that self-interest posed a very real danger in her efforts to resolve moral dilemmas:

because, once again, just looking at a couple of situations perhaps that have happened. You always get the feeling, well, you know, why am I following this procedure or why am I following this plan? Is it because I am just worried about how I will look or is it because I really am sticking to school guidelines, school policy and what I feel is best for the school as a whole? I think that sometimes comes into it to a certain degree.

In the same way, Malcom was wary of the potential for self-interest to jeopardize the achievement of appropriate outcomes: “Parents love strength in their leadership, no matter over what issue ... you’ve got to temper that by not being arrogant and not being pig-headed, not being seen to be doing things for your own motives.” For Maria and Malcom the threat of self-interest was consciously averted by acting “in the best interests of the school” (Maria); “I don’t just push to get my own way ... to be able to make an informed judgment ... a judgment based on what is best for the school which may not necessarily be what I want to do” (Malcom).

The problem that self-interest poses for principals is particularly pertinent when the principal disagrees with a system policy or directive. In seeking a resolution to Vignette #3 (Bishop/Catholic Education Office), James and Malcom were acutely aware of the negative consequences that disobedience would incur. Under those circumstances the principal disobeys or resists implementing the directive “to the detriment of her career” (Malcom), probably resulting in the principal being “black listed” (James). For these two respondents who indicated that they would implement the directive despite their own personal misgivings, their preference for not damaging their careers or jeopardizing their

employment was a significant factor in their responses (later described as suspending morality). Similarly, Elizabeth and Brian's cautiousness in secretly resisting and then attempting to subvert the same directive was partly due to their desire to avoid the backlash that outright refusal might incur. When their career prospects were threatened, these principals employed 'creatively insubordinate' responses designed to protect their own particular interests.

Overall, there is no evidence to justify the classification of any of the responses given as predominantly one of preference. This is not to say that all responses were determined free of preference or self-interest, rather that mere preference was not the primary motivation for the chosen response. Self-interest was a significant factor in some of the responses given and posed a recognized threat by at least two principals to the morality of their responses to moral and ethical dilemmas. Arguably, when personal preferences are held at the transrational level in the form of self-interest, they cease to be mere preferences. In such instances, it appears that Type III, sub-rational values are held as Type I values and Hodgkinson's (1991) distinction between Type III and Type I values becomes blurred, a difficulty previously noted by Evers (1985). Preference gives way to egoism ("looking after number one"), a form of consequentialism indicative of cognizant and/or non-cognizant avoidance. It seems reasonable to assume that the principals may have been unaware or at least very reluctant to admit that self-interest lay at the heart of any of their given responses. Within the terms of this study, personal preference in the form of self-interest is clearly identified as a significant (perhaps understated) factor in at least some of the responses given by principals to moral dilemmas.

Avoidance, in a variety of forms, describes a response commonly made by the respondents to a large number of the dilemmas considered within the study. Typically, the principals chose consequentialist and non-consequentialist perspectives in order to reduce transrational value conflicts to a level whereby a resolution could be achieved. On a small number of occasions some principals sought both teleological and deontological solutions as they struggled to achieve an ethical outcome for the parties concerned. In other instances, the respondents seemed to ignore or simply refuse to take certain moral aspects of a dilemma into account (non-cognizant avoidance). Principals did not appear to base their responses on their own personal preferences, although some principals were aware of the danger of allowing their own self-interest to interfere in the resolution process. Personal preferences held at the transrational level (ethical egoism) were a significant factor in some of the responses described herein as avoidance.

C.2 Suspending Morality

On a limited number of occasions, some respondents used a process (described earlier as 'rationalized compliance') to resolve moral dilemmas where organizational ethics and imperatives conflicted with their personal morality. Through 'rationalized compliance' individual principals 'suspend' their own morality, deferring to system or school imperatives.

Campbell (1994: 1) argues that "being right and being wrong are not characteristics peculiar to either the individual or the group at all times without exception." By deferring to the organization, principals in her study put aside personal

moral misgivings in favor of the former's moral position. The respondents in the study were not only well aware of the conflicting values of a particular dilemma, they were cognizant of the incongruent moral perspectives held by the organization and themselves. Importantly, the principals did not necessarily act immorally, nor did they willingly adopt an amoral perspective. In other words, although they may have felt uncomfortable about their response, the principal's rationalized compliance did not constitute a deliberate or casual rejection of the principles of right and wrong. On the other hand, results of this study do not suggest that moral grounds were the primary consideration in the respondents' decision to defer to the organizational perspective. Rather, in a small number of instances and for a variety of reasons, some principals chose to elevate organizational considerations, moral or otherwise, above their own personal morality.

The responses of principals in this study described as 'suspending morality' illustrated the three motivational bases of rationalized compliance: Moral Accommodation, False Necessity and Self-Delusion.

C.2.1 Moral Accommodation

Moral Accommodation or 'situational adjustment' (Lacey, 1977) exists in three forms which were all evident in the principals' responses: conforming, conversion and measured resistance.

Conforming

When principals acquiesce or comply with an official directive despite personal misgivings, they suspend their own morality. For a variety of reasons, individual principals make a 'situational adjustment' (Lacey, 1977) or moral accommodation in order to conform with system policies and directives. In Vignette #3 (Bishop/Catholic Education Office), James felt there was no real option for the principal other than to conform with the directive. As a married man with a family, James was very aware that he had to follow the direction, resign or "get sacked":

I mean your employer says to do this, if you don't do this what happens? I mean you can buck the system and say, "Well, I'm not going to agree with that policy" but how long will you last? I mean, it's all very good to go with your conscience and your policies, your own policies, but when you get a direction like that from the person in charge, there's nothing much you can do.

In a study of school administrators, Campbell Evans (1988) found that principals implemented system-wide policies and directives they disagreed with before working to change them. Similarly, James would conform with the policy and then cautiously attempt to have the directive reviewed. Any effort to "overthrow the decision" would be through the appropriate channels and with the support of his own school community. In no way would he actively resist implementing the directive; to do so would be to risk significant negative consequences: "You could be black-listed I should imagine."

Measured Resistance

In response to the same Vignette, Malcom would temporarily suspend his own morality on the basis that "if the Bishop speaks out, one must do what he says." Despite

initially attempting to morally accommodate the directive, Malcom would mount a “calculated resistance” strategy designed to contribute towards an eventual, “strategic redefinition” (Lacey, 1977) of the policy. Malcom would delay making the announcement in order to encourage the Parish Council and the school community to take issue with the directive through the Catholic Education Office. In announcing the directive as instructed, Malcom would ensure that his community (but not the Catholic Education Office or the Bishop) were aware of his “extreme displeasure” in making the announcement.

Throughout the dilemma his response is one of measured resistance: “Ultimately, the Bishop holds the authority ... you can’t change that, you have to work within it ... She (the principal) could spend a lot of time publicly debating the issue to the detriment of her career” (Malcom).

Underlying Malcom’s response is his fundamental belief that “the Church structure is such that it is not answerable to us.” As an employee of the Church, Malcom is prepared to “lose the occasional battle” in the hope that where necessary ‘measured resistance’ will eventually achieve a redefinition of system policies: “I am a system’s man ... ultimately we’re a system and I guess you have to play the system’s game.”

Conversion

The concept of moral accommodation includes those occasions when individuals actually ‘take on’ certain values inherent in a policy or a directive, after initially being opposed to its implementation on moral grounds. In a real life situation involving the appointment of a new Parish Priest, Elizabeth initially struggled to accept not only the

appointment, but the manner in which it was made. Although she attempted to overturn the decision, she was eventually instrumental in assisting the community to accept the decision and to cooperate with the appointee in order to make the most of the situation.

Central to Elizabeth's initial moral conflict was the potential community backlash to the priest's appointment, her fear of losing school families and her increasing concern that, on a personal and professional level, she "would not be able to work with him." However, as rumor and innuendo spread through the community, Elizabeth began to feel that "we were not giving him a chance, we were being really unfair and maybe in a different situation he will be quite different." Subsequently, Elizabeth spoke to groups of parents, teachers and the parish community, stressing "the fact that we have to give him a chance as we would expect if we were going into the situation ... So I mean the mass panic and the mass hysteria before he came died down, yeah."

Shortly after the appointment was made, a group of parents approached the Bishop to "register their dismay." Surprisingly, Elizabeth willingly accepted that the Bishop took no action: "Of course, nothing came of that." Somewhat ironically, Elizabeth was converted to the Bishop's perspective when she realized that he was in an all too familiar position:

The appointment had been made and in the same way that if a parent came to me to complain about a teacher, I might listen and know that what they are saying is true, but I am not going to say anything. Well, obviously the Bishop was in the same position when a group of people went to him to complain about one of his Priests. He was not about to say, "Oh, yes, you are absolutely right, um, yeah!" I mean I knew nothing would come of it anyway, because he obviously wasn't going to stop the appointment.

Elizabeth came to accept that her initial concerns had been expressed to the appropriate Church authorities so that “if something happened in the future I would be back there again ... So I don’t expect any comment from him but I do know that I now have a history.” As for her relationships with the new Parish Priest that she had earlier believed to be untenable, Elizabeth had now adjusted to the situation: “So I knew that I wasn’t going to change his behavior, so I changed mine.” Thus, through a difficult process over a significant period of time, Elizabeth had gradually suspended her own moral convictions in relation to the situation, eventually ‘converting’ to those demanded by the situation.

C.2.2 False Necessity

Principal James Hegarty described a situation in which a boy’s parents refused to cooperate with the school’s policy on hair style. Almost immediately after enrollment, Luke and his siblings made a negative impression on the teachers; their language and general behavior considered “to be absolutely atrocious.” At the principal’s instigation, Luke was diagnosed as having cancer and subsequently underwent an operation to remove a lump from his throat. During this time the school community were sensitive to the situation, praying daily for Luke and his family. The teachers spoke to the other children about the likely effects of the treatment (including hair loss) and encouraged Luke’s class to support him upon his return.

Luke returned to the school with partial hair loss; his remaining hair cut in a zigzag style that “to me, broke all sorts of rules of hair” (James). The class teacher and the

principal believed that there was an alternative style in which his hair could be cut. Luke's parents were formally requested to comply with the school's hair style requirements. The parents refused, arguing that Luke and their family had suffered enough stress.

Luke attempted to wear a hat "all the time because, obviously, he was embarrassed by it, but he was the one who wanted the hair cut in a particular way." His teacher steadfastly refused to allow him to wear his hat in the classroom because "You just don't wear hats in school. There is no sun in here." Further efforts by the teacher and the principal to enforce the policy enraged the parents who could not accept that such requirements would be enforced under the existing circumstances. They found ready support for their position from the hospital's social worker assigned to Luke's case.

Despite not having a written discipline policy at the time, nor a written hair style policy, James persisted with enforcing the required hair style stipulations. The parents actively resisted: "So, I mean, it was a problem ... certainly we had the dilemma with the parents - what were we going to do?" Eventually, the parents withdrew Luke and his siblings from the school "so, no dilemma in the end, but there was" (James).

Campbell (1992: 57) describes one form of rationalized compliance as "the false necessity trap," whereby school administrators believe that there is no choice but to adhere to organizational imperatives. In this situation James felt obligated by a professional role ethic that "as always, I mean you support your teacher" and a school level ethic to "stick by your policies and your rules." For James, there was simply no choice but to honor these ethical imperatives, even in Luke's difficult circumstances.

Part of the problem for James appears to be the teacher's attitude to the entire situation. Certainly, during the final stages the parents' problem certainly lay predominantly "with the teacher." Luke's class teacher steadfastly refused to allow him to wear a hat in the classroom despite his expressed wish to the contrary. She persistently reminded Luke to get his hair cut to the extent that she "got the backs of the parents up." Perhaps an understated issue that affected the teacher's and the principal's overall perspective was Luke's "atrocious language and behavior ... Certainly he was hyperactive and he would do as he liked, his behavior certainly wasn't the best ... I suppose it was a parenting problem" (James).

Another difficulty seemed to be James' past strict adherence to the hair style regulations despite some parental dissent. His long standing adherence to the policy generated an obvious reluctance to make any exception in its application, although James admitted his embarrassment about the lack of a written policy: "Yes, because we didn't have it written down, which was a mistake." In addition, James believed that Luke's father was "very, very negative to the whole thing"; his "antagonistic, aggressive" manner thwarting any possible chance of achieving a successful outcome.

James was not unaware of the parents' position who argued that "we should be more sympathetic ... and stop causing them so much stress"; nor that this opinion was shared by Luke's case worker, incredulous about the school's attitude to a young cancer patient. In seeking the parents' cooperation, James expressed this awareness to them: "We realize, you know, that lots of things have happened over the holidays and there was stress and everything else." This awareness was also evident in the efforts made by James

to encourage the school community to support Luke, praying for him on a daily basis during his absence from the school for treatment. Nonetheless, James felt obliged to stick to the school policy even though “this was a little bit different in the fact that there was a lot of stress and that involved, but you can’t sort of make too many exceptions.”

In resolving this dilemma James appears to have suspended his own personal morality because of the absolute necessity of supporting his staff and being consistent in the application of school policy. Even in retrospect, James was clearly caught in the ‘false necessity trap’, preferring to have avoided the situation entirely “because of the concern for that child in that situation with cancer, but rules are rules ... I think you’ve got to stick by your policies and rules”

In dealing with Mr. and Mrs. Johnson (Vignette #4), Elizabeth also felt bound by professional role and organizational ethics. Her first duty as principal was to support the teacher: “I think that, whatever, you have to support Mr. Kent” She refused to admit to the Johnsons that she was aware of the truth of their claims of teacher incompetency, choosing to concentrate on the way in which the parents addressed the problem, rather than the problem itself. Elizabeth felt obliged and determined to “fight this issue out” because of an organizational imperative that parents voice their concerns in an appropriate manner: “Even though the teacher has his problems ... it’s not so much the teacher, it’s the use of threats and almost bullying tactics.”

For Elizabeth, the absolute necessity of her actions overrode a number of significant considerations including the likely loss of the family to the school and parish; the probable lack of support for her related actions from the clergy and the Catholic

Education Office now and in the future; her awareness of the truth of the Johnsons' claim that Melissa would perform better in the other class; and the criticism from the general parent body who would "probably say that I wasn't putting the good of the children first." Despite the obvious weight of such factors, Elizabeth saw no other option than to follow the course of action she decided upon.

In both situations, James and Elizabeth saw no alternative but to respond in the manner they describe, although they were well aware of extenuating circumstances that could be expected to mitigate against the position they adopted. The perceived 'absolute necessity' of honoring professional role and organizational ethics overrode all other considerations, even the probable loss of the other party from the school community. Aligned with the concept of false necessity, Campbell (1992: 59) describes the closely affiliated state of self-deception whereby "individuals attempt to hide from themselves truths that they find unpleasant or untenable." As part of their response to actual dilemma situations, Elizabeth and James appear to have deceived or deluded themselves into accepting the 'false necessity' of their responses.

C.2.3 Self Delusion

James was defensive about his response to Luke's refusal to comply with the hair style policy of the school. He justified his actions by arguing that he would make an exception to organizational imperatives when the circumstances required it, believing that "you can be flexible if you have to be." Yet, it is difficult to imagine more extenuating circumstances than a child suffering from cancer related hair loss being unable or unwilling

to meet the requirements of a non-written school policy on hair style. Nonetheless, James was adamant that in this situation he felt “no need to be flexible.”

Similarly, Elizabeth proffered an uneasy justification for her response to the Vignette #1 (the Johnsons). Fully aware of the lack of support from the Catholic Education Office, the clergy and the parents, she steadfastly maintained her support for Mr. Kent, despite recognizing that the good of the children had to be the main priority. Even though all the children in Mr. Kent’s class were clearly disadvantaged by their placement, Elizabeth claimed that “if I genuinely felt that the children were at a great disadvantage, then I’d take steps to overcome that” She accepted that when a teacher’s performance is lacking “then it is a real conflict, the good of the children and the rights of the teacher.” Yet her determination to “fight it out to the very end” belied her stated belief that “yes, the children ultimately in your own mind have to come first.”

In these particular dilemma situations, James and Elizabeth may have attempted to hide certain truths from themselves that they acknowledged as existing within the dilemma, but were unaccounted for by their response. Interestingly, these principals did not claim ignorance as a defense, but rather chose to argue that the particular circumstances did not actually warrant a different response. James and Elizabeth argued that in other circumstances their response would accommodate those contentious factors that did not feature in the position that they have actually adopted. In other words, James would be “flexible” when necessary and Elizabeth would “put the children first” when and if those responses were appropriate. In the meantime, they appear to have deceived themselves, thereby justifying the (false) necessity of their actions.

Suspended Morality or rationalized compliance describes a number of responses made by some respondents to actual and hypothetical moral and ethical dilemmas where they held personal reservations about the morality of organizational policies or directives. On occasion, the respondents underwent a process of moral accommodation where they chose to conform, resist or convert to the articulated value stance of the organization, be it at system or school level. At other times, some principals felt that their 'hands were tied' as professional role and organizational ethics 'forced' them to respond in a certain way. Typically, principals caught in the 'false necessity trap' deceived themselves about the significance of relevant moral aspects not acknowledged in their responses to the point of arguing that if such aspects were relevant then they would be taken in to account.

C.3 Creative Insubordination

Vignette #3 (Catholic Education Office) is indicative of those moral dilemmas that occur when the implementation of system policies and directives fits uncomfortably with the particular situation of an individual school. School administrators are often torn between their professional duties as agents of the Church, and meeting the needs and interests of their own communities. One response to the dilemma is 'creative insubordination' which occurs when principals unofficially adapt or modify system policies, programs and procedures in a way that they believe will better fit the values, attitudes, expectations and practicalities of their local situation.

Creative insubordination is generally considered as harmless disobedience, best understood as "countering the dehumanizing effects of bureaucratic authority" (Haynes &

Licata, 1995: 21). Bending or breaking centralized policies and directives is usually aimed at avoiding possible negative consequences that would impinge unfairly on teachers and children. Crowson (1989) notes “that this disobedient behavior is benign, sometimes mischievous and possibly (although rarely) destructive. Creative insubordination is veiled in secrecy in order to avoid the possible ‘backlash’ that open defiance or disobedience might incur.” Hence, on the surface, principals pretend to conform or acquiesce with a Catholic Education Office directive, choosing to ‘do their own thing’ as determined by the situation.

Malcom Burnes frequently encounters a dilemma which arises from the Catholic Education Office’s ‘Replacement Teacher Policy’. In essence, the policy states that the Education Office will meet the cost of a replacement teacher only when a sick teacher is absent for three or more days. According to Malcom, systemic Catholic schools do not have the financial means to meet the cost themselves, leaving teachers who are sick for one or two days feeling pressured to come to school because they know they won’t be replaced. At the same time, parents pay school fees and expect that if their child’s teacher is absent through illness, then a replacement teacher will be provided. For Malcom, part of the dilemma is the Catholic Education Office’s expectation that rather than a supply teacher, as principal, he will personally cover for the sick teacher himself. Malcom believes that this expectation not only unfairly takes him away from his professional duties and responsibilities, it fails to recognize that in a school of 406 students and 22 staff there is often more than one teacher away on the same day. The major dilemma for Malcom is

how to provide replacement teachers for staff members who are absent for one or two days because of illness. Malcom argues that:

The bottom line is that teachers are human beings not robots, they are entitled to get sick and the children are entitled to have a teacher in front of them, every day of the year. I disagree with the policy - it shouldn't be a dilemma as the Catholic Education Office should pay for replacement teachers whenever teachers are sick.

Malcom responds to this type of dilemma in a variety of 'creatively insubordinate' ways in order to minimize the negative effect the policy has on the teachers, the children, the school and himself. For example, Malcom frequently reminds teachers of the three day policy, to the point of encouraging teachers who are sick for two days to be absent for three. As this response gives rise to another dilemma in that any obliging teachers forfeit one of their eight days yearly sick leave entitlement, Malcom stops short of 'forcing' the teacher to cooperate: "It is their sick leave - so ultimately it is up to them."

At other times, Malcom has made an internal arrangement such as doubling classes or spreading the children from one class amongst other classes, only to find that the condition of the sick teacher deteriorates to the extent of needing three or more days absence. Under such circumstances, Malcom would not hesitate to claim for the total number of days from the Catholic Education Office, leaving the supply teacher 'owing' the school for days not worked. This 'trading' between the school and the individual teachers is not disclosed to the Catholic Education Office. Internal pay office claim forms are completed incorrectly to show that the supply teacher relieved for the total number of days that the teacher was absent, not the number of days that the replacement teacher actually

worked. The next time a teacher is absent for one or two days, the same replacement teacher 'repays' the days owing, at no cost to the school.

At the time of the interview, Malcom had notified his staff in writing that as there were no funds available for replacement teachers in future, the physical education teacher would take those classes where the teacher is away through illness. To counter the reluctance of the physical education teacher to forgo his own professional role in favor of being an 'internal relief' and the general staff concern that the physical education program will be severely disrupted, Malcom verbally reminded his staff of the three day policy and the desirability of teachers being away for either none or at least three days due to sickness.

The frequent use of 'creative insubordination' strategies such as those employed by Malcom incurs an inherent disparity between a principal's articulated values and the level of actual commitment to his/her moral principles. Haynes and Licata (1995) argue that principals can often avoid subsequent criticism through embracing what they refer to as 'the legitimacy of the justifiable'. Essentially, when experienced principals choose to take the high middle ground to preserve or protect the rights and needs of students and teachers, they are unlikely to be criticized for adapting or modifying a policy or procedure. In fact, Malcom readily admits that he is not concerned that the Catholic Education Office will find out about this strategy as he believes that "they know the policy doesn't have much ground to stand on anyway." His belief that he would escape 'punishment' or reprisal for the use of such strategies because they are justifiable on moral and ethical grounds, supports Haynes and Licata (1995: 33) argument that:

no superintendent ... would be in a hurry to reprimand or dismiss a principal who had the courage, integrity and good judgment to adapt the policy in a way that maintains or improves teaching and learning.

Malcom believes that by using these strategies he is doing his best for the children and teachers in his school under the circumstances. Both Crowson (1989) and Haynes and Licata (1995) observe that when principals use creative insubordination, the counter-bureaucratic behaviors they adopt often contain a moral element designed to balance anti-educational consequences. Similarly, Blumberg and Greenfield (1986) observe that principals often pretend to implement a district policy in order to preserve their threatened personal integrity, only to feel uncomfortable about the subversion. Choosing to tell a 'white lie' is the morally expedient alternative to compromising one's own integrity by implementing the policy or incurring formal or informal sanctions by taking a moral stand against the policy. Thus, while Malcom admits that he is not happy about the replacement teacher arrangement at his school and that he feels uneasy about the deception, he believes that he has a greater responsibility to the teachers and children to act in their best interests: "Well, it's just hard - I mean my first priority is the children in the class, the parents who pay the school fees and the teachers' right that they are entitled to sick leave."

In responding to a hypothetical dilemma arising from a Catholic Education Office directive to announce a significant, unheralded change to the Diocesan Enrollment Policy for Systematic Schools, principal Brian Davis would seek to change the policy before making any announcement to the school community. Brian believes that the mandate of the new Bishop to restrict enrollment in all systematic primary schools to baptized Catholics compromised the existing school level processes of consultation and shared

decision-making, threatened the survival of his school and contravened his understanding of the Catholic school's missionary role to share the faith, not guard it. Initially, Brian's reaction would be to find a means by which to convince the Bishop and the Catholic Education Office of the likely ramifications of the policy, either through personal approach or by letter.

In the event that the policy remained unchanged, Brian would announce the policy as directed. However, he would include a 'rider' advising parents to direct any concerns about the policy directly to the Bishop. Brian believes that "if the Bishop makes a statement like that then he has to wear the consequences." For his own part, Brian has followed the official directive as instructed, thereby avoiding the backlash that might result from outright refusal. Given that his own efforts to have the policy changed or rescinded were unsuccessful, he would set about undermining the policy by encouraging parents to voice their concern, not to him nor to the Catholic Education Office, but directly to the Bishop himself.

Campbell (1992) refers to this type of creative insubordination as 'covert subversion', suggestive of a secretive, perhaps devious, undermining of formal system expectations and directives. Having unsuccessfully attempted to have the policy rescinded through open or 'overt' means, Brian would seek to undermine or sabotage the policy through a more subtle strategy. By including a 'rider' with the announcement, he has indirectly informed parents, not only that he expects them to have concerns, but that as the instigator of the policy the Bishop is the person with whom to take issue. Further, by acknowledging that parents might have concerns and by advising how these concerns

might best be acted upon, Brian has made it clear to his school community that while it is his task to announce the policy, he does not support the policy himself. The awkwardness of the position Brian finds himself in, the prolonged nature of the subsequent turmoil and the uncertainty of the final outcome contribute to a situation like many others that Brian finds “extremely stressful.”

In the same circumstances, Elizabeth Wright, a principal of eight year’s experience, would announce the policy as directed after a period of some initial resistance. Subsequently, she would work behind the scenes to organize parents to voice their concerns directly to the Bishop. Although she would announce the new policy, her real intention would be secretly not to enact it:

... until she had made as loud a noise as possible ... until everything had been done that possibly could be done ... there would be a lot of hurt if the policy had to be enacted ... bitterness about the Catholics being back in the Middle Ages and the school as part of the town community would suffer enormously too, I think.

In the meantime, she is hopeful that the parental pressure is strong enough to overturn the policy. Elizabeth would find the situation very difficult:

Generally, it would be very upsetting ... It’s scary because it reminds you that there is no higher authority than the Bishop - they are protected by the Church ... Even though your hands are ultimately tied - it doesn’t matter if it is the Pope - you can still let people know of the possibility of an unjust situation.

Both Brian and Elizabeth would resort to creative insubordination in order to avoid what they perceive to be the grave consequences of a system policy. After an initial period of open resistance, they would comply with the formal directive from the Catholic Education Office to announce the new enrollment policy. By subsequently advising and

assisting parents to voice their concerns directly to the Bishop, Elizabeth and Brian hope to subvert, if not sabotage the new enrollment policy.

Creative insubordination was a response chosen by some principals when they disagreed with system directives that they felt impinged unfairly on their particular situation. As an alternative to suspending personal morality, creative insubordination was chosen in an effort to protect significant moral and ethical considerations judged to be compromised by the implementation of such policies and imperatives. Somewhat ironically, one of the inherent problems with this response is that some form of dishonesty, secrecy or deception is necessary. Principals who used this strategy accepted this pretense as the lesser of two evils, preferring the morally expedient “white lie” to the foreshadowed negative consequences that implementation would incur.

C.4 Personal Morality

Personal morality describes those responses where individual principals chose to act on the basis of their own moral code. With its parallel in the political world, personal morality has two forms, moral stands and moral stances (postures). When principals choose to ‘stand their ground’ whatever the consequences, their response can be described as taking a moral stand. Although much is at risk, taking a moral stand ensures that an individual’s personal integrity remains intact. Moral stances, more typical of the give and take in the day to day life of a school initially resemble moral stands. However, as the dilemma unfolds, moral stances or postures are exposed as more temporary, more calculated and less honorable than the moral stands for which they are often mistaken.

C.4.1 Moral Stand

Although taking a moral stand was not a common response by principals to the moral and ethical dilemmas discussed in the study, there were occasions when some principals believed that the circumstances demanded such a response.

In a real life example, Maria Antonez was approached by the parents of a Year 7 boy with a request that he be placed in the Advanced Math's group. Upon her refusal on the grounds that he had not met the pre-determined criteria, the parents became very aggressive; the request quickly became a demand to the point of threatening Maria with taking the matter to the Bishop, the Catholic Education Office and their solicitor.

Initially the dilemma for Maria was that their request contravened school policy. She could not see anything in their request "that could justify me changing that policy ... I have three teachers ... telling me one thing and the parents saying another and to me the dilemma was that I couldn't seem to get any kind of resolution." As the situation developed, her concern changed from one of finding a resolution to taking a stand to protect the principles upheld by the school and Maria's personal integrity. After Mr. Atwell commented to her that he had heard that if parents complain long enough to the school they get their way, Maria decided that she would take a stand as "policies aren't written up lightly ... I think for the stability of the whole school we have to be seen to stick to those policies." The basis of Maria's stand was not confined to 'sticking to school policy':

To me, one of the main issues here was that the school needed to be seen as an organization that stuck to its Catholic principles really; that it could be seen as a leader within the community; that it wasn't going to be dictated to by parents;

while it invited parent involvement at the same time it had to be seen in the community as a leader within the community ... perhaps really showing parents like these Atwells that we really do believe in what we are doing as a school.

Maria was aware that her stand may appear to be very idealistic and even that she was “not really too sure how to go about achieving it.” Nonetheless, she was able to illustrate the essence of her moral stand:

A lot of our parents come from backgrounds where parents are professional, that perhaps they feel that their position either as a doctor, solicitor, executive manager or whatever, gives them some weight in society, that perhaps the school is an area in which the influence of their position is felt ...

I suppose for people to see things in their true perspective; that “Okay, while I may be a doctor or manager of a certain firm, that this role doesn’t flow over into every other area ... that while I would expect, perhaps my employees to respect, um, our business ethics here, that I would also respect perhaps the policies of the school to which my child goes.”

In retrospect, Maria believed that her response to the demands and threats of the Atwells was an example of those times when it was necessary to take a moral stand: “It still makes me very angry that parents will use the school like this and will think that a school will bend to its wishes, even though they are incredibly unjust.”

Similarly, Maria’s commitment to her personal beliefs and to upholding the beliefs and values of the school formed the basis of her response to Vignette #3 (Bishop/Catholic Education Office) in which she believed that an official directive contravened both. Maria believes that while a Catholic school principal is “an instrument of the Church and its beliefs,” to be effective “she also has to give witness to her own faith conviction.” In general, Maria tries as best as she can “to marry the two, if possible.” However, in circumstances such as those in Vignette #3 where her personal beliefs and values

conflicted with those espoused by official representatives of the Church, Maria elects to protect her own personal integrity: “While I am faithful to the hierarchy, yes - I don’t sacrifice my own beliefs in favor of the hierarchy.”

Maria is well aware that by taking a moral stand against a directive issued by her employer that she was “placing my reputation as principal at risk. However, I think to live with my conscience after that I would have to do it.” Maria would keep her Parish Priest and the Director fully informed of any action she took, ensuring that she was not “vindictive” in any way. Nonetheless, she was well aware of what the consequences of her stand might be:

Do you think he might ex-communicate me? ... Oh, I don’t like this! I think I would really have to put my job on the line ... this directive doesn’t really go with my beliefs and I would have to give my resignation as principal I think.

Clearly this “St. Thomas More Response” (Grace, 1972: 9) is not an easy option or welcome path for Maria to choose. Taking a moral stand against one’s employer is a high risk strategy which ensures only that the principal’s personal integrity will remain unscathed. Resignation is a distinct possibility of stands such as the one taken by Maria. Although ex-communication from the Church appears an improbable outcome, Maria is obviously aware of the potential ‘backlash’ that she may suffer in response to the position she has adopted. Even her non-confrontationist approach to explain her conflict to someone in the Church hierarchy was no guarantee that her conscience would be spared, or that her reputation would remain intact. As Nelson (1984: 115) argues, in spite of the obvious risks, stand takers “see stands as the only way to exercise personal responsibility.”

In a real life situation involving a number of off campus fights between a boy, David, and other pupils from his school, Brian faced a dilemma in choosing whether to take action when he was unsure of his jurisdiction. In the beginning Brian adopted a posture whereby he declined to become involved in these incidents: "Well, I thought, I'm just not going to get into it ... I'll just let it ride ... I thought I was on shaky ground."

Initially, Brian maintained this approach, even choosing to ignore a warning by a staff member that there was to be a fight between some of the Year 7 students on the next Saturday. Brian's adopted position changed dramatically when on the following Monday "the buzz in the school was that there had been a fight and that weapons had been used and about twenty kids were involved in it." Although Brian knew his "jurisdiction didn't cover the boys on Saturday," he decided it was time to take action: "It had nothing to do with me but I thought the issue of weapons - chains, billiard balls, whatever, was going too far." Brian put aside his previous stance and decided to take a stand on the issue.

The basis of Brian's stand was his decision to assume some personal responsibility for the incident itself and for the overall welfare of the boys. He felt partly responsible for the fight taking place: "That's where I came unstuck I think, because the fight could have been prevented." In addition, Brian felt obliged to honor the school's commitment and duty to keep David "on the straight and narrow, because I think that if we wipe our hands of him, he will go to another school and be just as aggressive. He will be a problem in society unless he's helped."

A considerable number of factors challenged Brian's stand: David's father threatened to "take it to the newspaper that his child was being victimized in a Catholic

school and he was going to have me sacked for not doing anything about it”; a growing band of teachers (about two-thirds of the staff) asserted their common opinion that it was time to ‘get rid’ of David; other parents were “talking at the shops, repeating the saga of David’s aggression and that the school is seemingly powerless to do anything about it.” Nonetheless, Brian was determined to remain firm. If a similar incident occurred in the future, he would take the same action in contacting the Juvenile Police despite his initial reluctance in this instance: “Whilst I felt uncomfortable about that, it clearly had the desired effect.” In the meantime, Brian was immovable in his determination to help David:

We’ve just got to persevere with him and if we do take the easy option of expelling him, we just pass the problem on to someone else and, ah, I think his anger and frustration would be just continued and magnified. Surely in a Christian context here, if we can help I think we’ll do society and David a much better job.

The circumstances of Vignette #1 (Miss Usher) immediately reminded Malcom of a moral stand he had taken in a similar real life situation: “I’ve certainly had this scenario.” Initially, Malcom’s concern was fulfilling his responsibility to do “what’s best for the children.” As Miss Usher’s and the principal’s respective positions polarized, the issue for Malcom became one of credibility. The question now was “the strength the principal was going to show in terms of standing up to Miss Usher.” Malcom believed that Miss Usher “wants to bring you down or take your scalp or damage you in some way.” Malcom is conscious that the issue could develop into a personality conflict, the consequences of which could be disastrous for him; being caught in “a confrontationalist mode ... just gives her more ammunition to bring you down.” Rather his moral stand was based on principle:

You must maintain your integrity and a belief in yourself ... not being arrogant and not being pig-headed, not being seen to be doing things for your own motives ... you are not asking her to move for the sake of moving, but to move for the sake of the children and the benefit of the children.

Previous experience has taught Malcom that even if a successful resolution is achieved, the outcome is unlikely to be clean cut. In the aftermath of an actual dilemma involving the contested placement of one of his teachers over a two year period, Malcom faces a lingering tension on a daily basis:

But it does present a huge challenge to come to work and have to work with someone that you really have to try to get on with ... the uncomfortableness that you have with that person is God asking you to reach out and extend the hand of Christian values.

C.4.2 Moral Stance

Maria's initial response to the same dilemma (Vignette #1: Miss Usher) was very similar to Malcom's: "My gut feeling tells me that I really do have to stand my ground because ... the school is there primarily for the children." Unlike Malcom, Maria could not entirely divorce her primary responsibility for the children from the responsibility she felt for Miss Usher, "because this teacher is apparently undergoing stress related illness because of my decision." In practice, this consideration would take a number of forms such as providing release for Miss Usher from Friday afternoon sport and allocating her to a classroom with a sunny aspect. Despite her earlier claim that the "effective education of the children must come first" over anything that negatively affects the children such as "the health of the teacher," Maria decided to "ask her, I suppose, to meet me halfway."

In essence, Maria has adopted a moral stance or posture based on her responsibility to act in the best interests of the children and tempered by the reality of Miss Usher's non-compliance. As the dilemma unfolded, Maria began to calculate her chances of achieving the required outcome. In a political context, Nelson (1984) describes moral stances as those approaches or postures that are foreshadowed by a rational appraisal of probable outcomes. Similarly, after a realistic appraisal of the situation, Maria concluded that success depended on attaining a degree of cooperation from Miss Usher:

Okay, I haven't got much hope have I? If I have got the Catholic Education Office against me and I haven't got a Union ... there has got to be some hope that perhaps I could come to some kind of, um, I don't think it would be win-win, but perhaps a compromise.

Unlike Malcom who was firmly committed to his moral stand, Maria's stance gave way to offers of support and concessions in order to achieve a workable situation. Maria's intention was to change Miss Usher's perception of the principal as someone who has to be controlled to "someone she works with." At the same time, Maria is not confident that her response will achieve all that she desires: "It sounds terribly idealistic. I mean I really wonder whether happening in real life. I don't know."

Described earlier as moral accommodation, Elizabeth's response to an actual dilemma involving the appointment of a new Parish Priest, also contains elements of a moral stance. The imposed decision to appoint an apparently unsuitable Parish Priest in the face of established consultative processes caused Elizabeth to agonize over her response: "My dilemma was what do we do? I mean I am fairly helpless in this." Her

decision to adopt a moral posture based on the likely effect on the school, acknowledged her assessment that the decision was unlikely to be overturned.

On one hand, Elizabeth felt her own integrity was in question. On the other, Elizabeth realized that compromise was the only real option if the perceived disastrous consequences were to be averted. How could she support the Church's decision and the manner in which it was made? After voicing her own personal concerns and those of the community's to the Bishop and the Catholic Education Office, Elizabeth eventually worked to achieve the community's acceptance of the inevitable: "Yes, well, again I think I already knew that all of the meetings and things were going to come to nothing."

Personal integrity aside, Elizabeth acknowledged that given the imbalance of power between the hierarchy and the community, much of the compromise would be on her part and on the part of the community:

So at the moment things are okay, but we have our days where it's a bit of a shock for everyone. But we know now to expect the unexpected and I think once you work out where the other person is coming from, even if it's an erratic thing, you can cope with it. ... I wasn't going to change his behavior, so I changed mine.

Elizabeth's decision to adopt a stance or posture rather than face the consequences that a moral stance would incur, incorporated a form of moral accommodation described earlier in this chapter as conversion. A form of rationalized compliance characteristic of suspending morality, her response is also indicative of the moral stances that principals sometimes adopt in order to achieve workable solutions to moral and ethical dilemmas.

Included amongst the responses given by principals to actual and hypothetical situations were those where the individual's personal morality was engaged in the

dilemma. At times when individual responsibility and personal integrity were at stake, some respondents chose to take a moral stand despite considerable risk to themselves and their careers. More frequently, some principals adopted a temporary posture or stance whereby they initially chose the high moral ground, but in the search for a workable solution readily turned to compromise and re-negotiated patterns of relationships.

SUMMARY

Part One of this chapter has addressed the major focus of the study: the nature of principals' responses to moral and ethical dilemmas in Catholic school settings. Taken together, the vignettes and the real life dilemmas provided examples of the variety of dilemmas confronted by Catholic school principals (Research Question One). Although dilemmas involving teachers, children, formal administrative authority and parents were common to all respondents, dilemmas involving teachers represented a major component of the dilemmas encountered by the principals in the study. Research Question Two asked how regularly Catholic school principals perceived themselves as dealing with moral and ethical dilemmas. Four principals reported that such dilemmas occurred daily. Although the exception, Elizabeth, believed dilemmas occurred less regularly, she readily reported two dilemmas in which she was currently involved.

Research Question Three, the study's focus, sought to determine the nature of the principals' responses to moral and ethical dilemmas. Knowingly or unknowingly, the respondents commonly chose consequentialist and non-consequentialist approaches to achieve practical solutions by avoiding the transrational value conflicts inherent in the

dilemmas. At times, the principals suspended their own morality by deferring to organizational imperatives either through moral accommodation or by resigning themselves to the inevitability of the organizational perspective. On occasion, some principals chose to modify, subvert or even sabotage an official directive, thereby seeking to avoid the perceived negative consequences for their particular situation. Responses based on a principal's personal morality describe a common response whereby the principals sought to preserve their own moral convictions in the resolution. Although in extreme circumstances, principals were prepared to take a moral stand no matter what the personal consequences, more commonly principals adopted a temporary stance or posture as a calculated strategy designed to achieve pre-determined ends.

In all, the principals responded to moral and ethical dilemmas in a variety of ways, often agonizing over achieving fair, just and equitable solutions. Frequently, their responses formed part of a complex, incomplete and stressful resolution process. At times, articulated values gave way to practical considerations and obvious contradictions. Nonetheless, the principals were in no way reticent to take action, actively struggling with the inherent moral issues to achieve workable solutions.

PART TWO: PREVAILING VALUES

The purpose of this section is to address the fourth research question, the determination of which or whose values prevail when individual Catholic school principals resolve dilemmas arising from a conflict between their own personal and/or professional values and those of (a) individuals and groups within the school community (e.g., parents,

teachers, children) and (b) formal or higher administrative authority (e.g., Catholic Education Office, Parish Priest, Bishop). The distinction between these two groups acknowledges the formal authority and position of the principal in relation to those within the school community and those to whom the principal is held formally accountable in terms of performance and employment. Both parts of the fourth research question are addressed in two ways: firstly, by a consideration of the individual responses to direct questioning (Interview Three), and secondly, by the particular responses given to specific dilemma situations (Interview One and Two).

DILEMMAS BETWEEN PRINCIPALS AND SCHOOL COMMUNITY MEMBERS

When asked directly what type of dilemmas occur the most frequently, none of the respondents identified value conflicts with formal administrative authority such as the Catholic Education Office or the hierarchy of the Church. Rather, the respondents were quick to nominate situations involving teachers, parents and/or children as the source of most dilemmas. Yet surprisingly, in their third interview many of the respondents failed to confirm that their personal and/or professional values did in fact conflict with those held by teachers, parents or children in the school community. Despite the previous two interviews in which they responded to a number of such situations, both actual and hypothetical, only Malcom acknowledged that conflicts of this nature “would have happened a few times, yeah.” Brian argued that he did not believe that his values clashed with others in the school community because, even though he held the ideal, he was “more flexible with the rules.” Maria, Elizabeth and James discounted this type of value conflict,

claiming that the real value conflicts were with “the hierarchy of the Church” (Maria). Similarly, Brian acknowledged a small number of previous value conflicts with Parish Priests and many more conflicts with official Church teachings, resulting from the “tension between the ideal and the realistic.”

At face value, the perception by the respondents that in general, value conflicts between themselves and the community did not occur, obviously contradicts their own assessment of the most frequently occurring dilemmas. In addition, this contention belies the majority of the actual dilemmas which they themselves reported; dilemmas involving numerous situations dealing with teachers, children, and parents. In the same way, the respondents’ immediate identification of the Church hierarchy as the major source of value conflicts contradicts their failure to identify such conflicts as a source of frequently occurring dilemmas. Whilst sufficient at this point to note the anomaly, this apparent contradiction will be considered later in this chapter.

A careful analysis of those dilemmas involving members of the school community reveals that whatever the type of response chosen by a particular respondent, the values held and expressed by the principal prevailed over those expressed by the members of the community, be they teachers, parents or children. For example, none of the principals would forego their own position and allow Miss Usher (Vignette #1) to teach her preferred year level. In relation to Vignette #2, all of the respondents followed the course of action they personally believed appropriate, whether it was to support or ‘get rid’ of the unfortunate child, Jane. When dealing with the Johnsons (Vignette #4), the respondents

took the course of action they believed appropriate, whether in support of the teacher, Mr. Kent or Melissa's parents.

Similarly, the respondents recounted actual dilemma situations involving significant value conflicts with teachers (e.g., lifestyle), parents (e.g., hairstyle policy) and children (e.g., behavior) in which their own values consistently prevailed over the other party. James succeeded in removing the cancer suffering Luke and the misbehaving Jonathon from the school, in spite of the express wishes of their respective parents and significant others that the school be flexible enough to meet the particular needs of these children. In the same way but to the opposite effect, Brian maintained his support for the aggressive David and his place in the school, whilst under considerable pressure from two-thirds of the staff to remove him. Both Brian and Elizabeth orchestrated the removal from their respective staffs of teachers whom they believed had compromised the values of the school by their lifestyle choice. Maria believed that the school had a special role to play in 'educating' parents to respect the values and policies of the school, just as they expected others to do in the work place. Currently, Malcom was planning a strategy to 'encourage' two of his more senior teachers to take early retirement, their removal deemed by him to be in the best interests of the children and themselves.

As noted previously, all of the respondents (except Malcom) failed to verbalize that such dilemmas as those reported by them actually represented value conflicts between themselves and the parties involved. Malcom readily acknowledged that "your value base is where you work from ... I would work from my value base on anything." Malcom

believed that his value base would and should prevail in dilemmas involving the school community:

Oh, I've got no hesitation, I'd go from my value base which gives me the confidence. My value base drives who I am ... I know that it's going to take time, but I know, ultimately, I'm going to win people over with all my values and beliefs.

In sum, whether the principals acknowledged the existence of values conflicts with members of the school community or not, in all of the relevant hypothetical and actual examples they reported, the values of each of the respondents prevailed over teachers, parents and children in the school community. Even though it was not uncommon for such dilemmas to result in a win-lose outcome in which the teacher, child and/or parent left the school community, the respondents did not generally acknowledge or perceive that values conflicts with members of the school community even occurred.

DILEMMAS BETWEEN PRINCIPALS AND FORMAL AUTHORITY

When asked directly, but in the general sense, each respondent identified formal administrative authority in the form of the Church hierarchy as the major, if not only source of value conflicts.

In stark contrast to his approach with teachers, parents and children, Malcom readily deferred to the System when his values conflicted with those expressed by a higher authority:

Are you acting from your own value base or are you acting as a system-orientated person? Yes, it's a hard question that ... probably I would have to work for my System, um. I guess that's happened a few times with things that I've disagreed

with, um ... I will speak my mind but if it's the bottom line and I'm told to pull my head in, I pull my head in.

James identified his 'biggest' dilemmas as those involving financial dealings

between himself and the Parish Priest, the latter's values consistently dominant:

It does worry me and the teachers are concerned about it. But they are quite aware that I can't do anything about it which causes a little bit of a dilemma - a rift between the Parish and the school. How you really address it is difficult because, well, you can't get anywhere ...

Brian admits that there are times when his values conflict with those of the Church, usually in the form of particular teachings rather than personalities. Nonetheless, he acknowledges that he's had "conflicts in the past with Parish Priests" which he sought to resolve by talking it through with the Priest concerned. For Brian, the basis of his approach in such instances is that "my perspective is not always right either ... I can pour my heart out and tell him how I feel and sometimes he shifts ground, sometimes I shift ground." In other circumstances where dialogue is not possible or a particular Church teaching conflicts with Brian's values, he believes that the latter prevails. If he was ever placed in a position where he was expected by formal administrative authority to act against his conscience, Brian is adamant: "I would resign."

Elizabeth accepts that as the Church, in the person of the Bishop, is her employer, then his values are likely to prevail: "I mean he has the right to sack me." However, if the value conflict became a matter of conscience she would immediately reflect on her position to ensure that she "was on the right track." If she was confident that she "had enough background knowledge and information to know I was right," she would persist in her value stance, despite the risk of losing her employment.

Maria referred to numerous past situations in which she had value conflicts with a previous Parish Priest, “more or less on a daily basis.” Typically, she would discuss the issue with a person whom she trusted and respected to “just confirm within myself the way I’m thinking is on track.” Once she received “self-affirmation,” Maria would pursue the matter. Though she accepted that in many instances her values lost out, there was some satisfaction in knowing that she tried:

It’s a little bit hard if you feel very strongly about something just to sit back and ignore it. I think even though you may not be successful in trying to do something about it, at least you’ve got that own satisfaction that well, at least you tried.

Maria felt very strongly about conflicts with the Church hierarchy that challenged her personal faith and beliefs. Again she would express her conflict to the relevant party and say, “Well, look you know, I am really in conflict with what you are saying.” Should no resolution be reached, she accepts that as the Bishop is the “ultimate employer of the diocese,” his values will likely prevail. However, “if it was a matter of faith and I felt that I had to follow a policy that to me went against my faith, I would have to give up my position I think.”

In responding to the hypothetical example of a values conflict between the principal and higher authority provided by Vignette #3, Malcom and James proffered responses consistent with their stated view that in such conflicts the values of the System prevailed. Malcom would resist the implementation of the policy privately until such time as it became more prudent to enact it. James would immediately conform with the directive and then work through the appropriate channels to seek to change it. Both forms of suspended morality (measured resistance and conforming) are indicative of a

response in which the principal has put aside his/her own values in deference to those of the formal administrative authority.

The 'creatively insubordinate' responses given by Brian and Elizabeth to this same dilemma (Vignette #3) were designed to subvert the directive. Although both individuals recognized the limitations of their own position in such circumstances, they would work with and through others to affect a change to the policy through sheer weight of community opinion. Their responses substantiated their stated reluctance in the third interview to defer to higher authority when value conflicts occur. Nonetheless, both Brian and Elizabeth conceded that their position was unlikely to succeed: "Your hands are ultimately tied" (Elizabeth); "Eventually, I have no option but to make the announcement" (Brian).

On one level, Malcom's decision to secretly adapt the System's sick leave policy to better fit his particular circumstances appears to be an example where the principal's values have prevailed over those of the System. However, at a deeper level it is apparent that Malcom has compromised his own integrity by acting dishonestly to achieve what he considers to be just outcomes. In order to achieve satisfaction in relation to certain professional values, he has compromised personal values held dear by himself and the Catholic Church. Ironically, Malcom is left feeling unhappy and uncomfortable about the pretense: "Well it is just hard, as principal of the school my first priority is to the children in the class"

In a real-life situation, Elizabeth's initial resistance and final conversion to the Bishop's decision to appoint an unpopular individual as the Priest in her parish,

exemplifies her stated intention in times of conflict to immediately question her own position. Upon reflection and discussion with a significant other, Elizabeth was 'converted' to an acceptance of the Bishop's action. Again, the values of the higher authority prevailed.

Maria's decision to take a moral stand against the System's directive (Vignette #3) was based on her values: "I don't sacrifice my own beliefs in favor of the hierarchy." She accepts that her response was unlikely to succeed: "This directive doesn't really go with my beliefs and I would have to give my resignation as principal I think."

Taken together, the respondents' replies to direct questioning and their specific responses to actual and hypothetical dilemmas clearly indicate that in times of value conflicts, those values held by the formal administrative authority (especially the Bishop) usually prevailed over those held by the principals in the study. In the same way, the study reveals that those values held by the principals pre-dominated over members of the school community in the resolution of value conflicts. Importantly, the predominance of the values held by the higher administrative authority was not always immediate, nor totally comprehensive. Rather, these values were often contested by some principals who used a variety of overt and covert means in their efforts to resist, modify or overturn the value position adopted by formal administrative authority. Given the power of this authority as their employer, the respondents accepted that such attempts rarely succeeded. Even if a principal were to resign, the value position of this authority remained unchanged.

As mentioned earlier in this section, it is interesting to note that in their consideration of value conflicts in an overall sense, the principals declined to describe

dilemma situations involving members of the school community as value conflicts, thereby contradicting their many specific responses to specific dilemma situations outlined in the first and second interviews. The same principals were quick to nominate formal administrative authority (in particular the Church hierarchy) as the common source of such conflicts, further contradicting their earlier identification of teachers, parents and/or children as the most frequently occurring dilemma situations. These surprising findings beg the question of whether the principals identified value conflicts as occurring only on those occasion when they felt that their own personal and professional values were actually contested, that is, when their preferred outcome was jeopardized by the pervasiveness of the expressed values of formal administrative authority. Has the extended exercise of their own authority over members of the school community contributed to a perception by the principals that their own personal and professional values are not in conflict in such circumstances, since the predominance of their own values is assured by virtue of position? In turn, the respondents' perception that the real source of value conflicts rest with those formal administrative authorities which, by virtue of position, exercise power and authority over them as principals certainly supports such a contention.

SUMMARY

In the final interview, one principal reluctantly acknowledged and four of the principals denied outright that they experienced value conflicts with members of their school community. This finding was quite surprising in light of their earlier identification

of value conflicts with members of the school community as the most frequently occurring dilemmas. Close analysis of specific dilemma situations reported by the same principals indicated that the personal and professional values of all the respondents consistently prevailed in such circumstances. Although not identified by principals as a frequent source of conflict, the values expressed by formal administrative authorities dominated the resolution of specific conflicts that occurred between the principals and higher authorities. The predominance of the values held and expressed by formal administrative authority in conflict situations over those of the principals was confirmed by the principals themselves. These respondents readily described their ongoing struggle in such dilemma situations to contend with a higher authority against whom “you were helpless in the end” (Elizabeth).

PART THREE: THE GENERAL RESOLUTION OF DILEMMAS

The purpose of this final section of Chapter Five is to ascertain whether there are consistent patterns in the way that individual principals operating within formal Catholic Church structures respond to moral and ethical dilemmas. In order to uncover such patterns, Research Question Five (a) sought to determine if the individual respondents could articulate a general rule, strategy or set of guiding principles for dilemma resolution. Question Five (b) asked whether in their approach to dilemma resolution, the principals recognized a final authority to which they deferred when resolution was difficult. Finally, Research Question Five (c) addressed whether each respondent’s practical resolution of moral and ethical dilemmas actually reflected his or her articulated approach and the legitimacy of the nominated final authority.

Although not a comparative study, in conclusion Question Six asked whether there were differences amongst the approaches of Catholic school principals in the study to the resolution of moral and ethical dilemmas and how important it was to the principals themselves that their responses be consistent with those of other Catholic school principals.

GENERAL RULES, STRATEGIES OR GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR RESOLUTION

The respondents' responses to the question of whether they could articulate a rule, strategy or set of guiding principals were reported in Chapter Four, Part Two. The findings were striking on two counts, firstly that each principal could readily verbalize their particular approach and secondly, that each approach was individualistic and quite unique. James took a case-by-case approach depending on the situation, but designed to achieve a 'win-win' outcome if possible; Elizabeth gathered all of the relevant background information before acting in accordance with her conscience; Brian modeled his approach to resolution on the person and example of Jesus Christ; Malcom acted in the best interests of the children, putting the majority over the minority if and when necessary; Maria initially put her own feelings to one side and attempted to understand the other person's perspective in order to work cooperatively towards a resolution.

Having ascertained that each respondent could verbalize an overall strategy for dilemma resolution, Research Question 5(b) sought to identify a final authority or 'bottom line' to which the respondents deferred when the immediacy of action was unavoidable and the resolution elusive. Research Question 5(c) addressed the issue of whether the

practical resolution of moral and ethical dilemmas reflected the principal's stated approach in such a manner as to be consistent with the final authority identified by each respondent. For ease of explanation, Research Question 5(b) and 5(c) are considered concurrently.

Consistent with James' case-by-case approach was his recognition of different forms of a final authority in different situations. In a parish situation then the "final authority rests with the Parish Priest. It should rest with the Bishop, we know that but it doesn't." At school level, James argued that the "final authority stops at the principal." If a school related issue could not be resolved, then the Catholic Education Office "has the final say." James sought to take some advantage of his belief that in different situations the final authority took different forms: "Having gone through a few experiences you tend to work out whom to go to and how to handle the situation ... it depends on the situation and it depends on what you want for the end result." In other words, where possible James attempted to manipulate or at least influence the resolution process by referral to preferred forms of higher authority in order to achieve what he believed should be the outcome.

In situations where James' values conflicted with the formal administrative authority, James accepted the ultimate authority of the Church. Interestingly, he differentiated between the Bishop as an individual and official Church teaching: "The Bishop in the diocese has the authority, but you could question various things." Though he would not recognize the person of the Bishop as the final authority, James would defer to the Church itself, even on matters of conscience:

If it was a conscience issue, um, if it was a teaching of the Church, I guess I'd go along with it. Lots of things you have to do that way when you don't personally agree with things. I think if you want to be part of the System you have to agree with the System ... when you can't beat them, you have to join them.

James' overall approach and his recognition of a flexible and changing final authority were reflected in the practical resolution of the dilemmas he discussed in the first and second interviews. His efforts to achieve a 'win-win' outcome where possible (e.g., Vignette #1 and #2), his strict adherence to school policy and his determination to adhere to established practices (e.g., Vignette #1 and #4, actual dilemmas involving Luke and Jonathon), and his immediate implementation of an official directive that he personally disagreed with (Vignette #3) were all responses entirely consistent with his articulated approach. James' refusal to make an exception to his policy of not changing class placements once determined, even if requested by the Bishop (Vignette #4), was clearly indicative of his belief that an individual in the Church hierarchy could be challenged. Yet, his response (described in this chapter as suspended morality) whereby he immediately conformed to an official system directive (Vignette #3) before working to change it, reflects his acknowledgment of the System as the final authority.

Elizabeth distinguished between the ultimate authority in theory (the Bishop) and in practice which did not "always necessarily stay with one person or organization." Like James, she argued that if an individual Bishop gave a directive "that was against Church teaching, then I would see that the Bishop is no longer the ultimate authority." In such cases his official authority could be changed by the "sway of popular opinion - the power of the people." Given her belief that "it's possible for authority not to be a fixed thing,"

Elizabeth struggled to identify just what or who she did acknowledge to be this authority. At one extreme she accepted “intellectually that he (the Bishop) is the ultimate authority,” and at the other, “the easy thing is the one which agrees with you ...” Eventually, Elizabeth concluded that given she possessed the necessary background information then, “your conscience is ruling you-then yes, I suppose when I look at it like that, then I see that in many instances, I am the ultimate authority for me (pause).”

The responses given by Elizabeth in the first two interviews reflected both her ‘conscience’ approach and her realization that she was her own final authority. Her decisions to leave Miss Usher (Vignette #1) as the teacher for Year 5 and to support Jane (Vignette #2) despite considerable opposition from the school community, her efforts to sabotage the Bishop’s directive in relation to the enrollment of non-Catholics (Vignette #3) and her desire to support Mr. Kent (Vignette #4) by focusing on the manner in which the Johnsons made their complaint rather than the complaint itself, clearly illustrate Elizabeth’s stated approach to dilemma resolution. Moreover, the two real life situations that Elizabeth recounted further illustrate the importance of her conscience in shaping her response. Firstly, her efforts to organize a groundswell against the Bishop’s appointment of a Parish Priest led her to subsequently feel guilty about her stance to the extent that she proceeded to work towards community’s eventual acceptance of the appointment. Secondly, Elizabeth’s regret that she arranged for the removal of a teacher from the school because of a lifestyle related concern can be explained in terms of a troubled conscience: “I know now looking back in hindsight that was not a good way to handle it, but it was the best way I knew at the time.” On one hand she “felt very much for the parents who

were upset, because they were right” and on the other, she realized that her actions would ensure that “it was just going to be someone else’s problem.”

Malcom’s general approach of acting in what he considered to be the best interests of the majority of the children was reflected in his stated belief that his own value base was his ultimate authority, especially in dealings with parents, teachers and children. Even though he acknowledged that he may not always be right, he still believed that his value base was best. In dealings with formal administrative authority Malcom would defer to the System because he “respects authority” and is a “System’s man.” Nonetheless, he would still believe in his own values, finding a way to “work around it somehow ... I would still believe that my value base is best.”

Malcom’s decision to leave Miss Usher in Year 5 because of the special needs of some children, his efforts to remove Jane in the interest of the majority (Vignette #2), and his intention to ‘force’ two of his current staff members to opt for early retirement are obvious examples of Malcom’s approach. In the same way, his measured resistance to an official System directive (Vignette #3) and his creative insubordination in relation to the System’s sick leave policy illustrate his reluctant deference to formal administrative authority in the first instance and his ultimate belief in his own value system in the second. Malcom’s approach to all of the dilemmas under discussion is consistent with his articulated approach of acting in the best interests of the majority of the children while relying on his own value base as the final authority in the determination of what form those interests might take.

Underlying Brian's overall strategy of using the person of Jesus Christ as a model and measure by which to determine the most appropriate response is his stated belief that the "moral conscience" of the person should be the final authority. By developing an "informed conscience," the principal avoids the trap of "just doing something for selfish motives." Brian's approach recognizes that even though the moral conscience of the person is the final authority, there is no guarantee that the person is right. His attempts to initiate discussion between the parties allow either side to 'shift ground': "If I'm wrong I just have to admit, yeah okay, I'm wrong on this." Nonetheless, once the issues are understood and a values conflict remains unresolved, Brian would act from his own conscience accepting that "there will always be tension between the ideal and the realistic." Even if Brian's conscience was in direct opposition to the Bishop's, Brian would remain undeterred: "Well, he's entitled to his conscience, I'm entitled to mine."

Like the other respondents, Brian's practical resolution of moral and ethical dilemmas clearly reflects his overall strategy and his identification of a final authority. Brian's consequentialist approach to Vignette #1 and a number of actual lifestyle dilemmas was based on the importance that he placed on the perceived outcomes in terms of gospel values: his response to Jane was based on the Parable of the Lost Sheep, his efforts to subvert the System's official directive (Vignette #3), and his moral stand in relation to the physically aggressive David, are all consistent with his approach of acting in accordance with how he believes that Jesus Christ would act.

Underlying Brian's approach to the resolution of dilemmas is his respect for the individual's conscience. A feature of the responses he gave was the effort on his part to

discuss the issues with the other party in order to achieve resolution. His belief in his own conscience is clearly evident in Vignette #3, and in his dealings relating to Jane (Vignette #2) and the Johnsons (Vignette #4). In these examples Brian initially reconsidered his position and then followed his own conscience in forming a response.

Given Maria's approach whereby she puts aside her own perspective in order to fully understand someone else's, it is not surprising that she had some initial difficulty in identifying who or what she considered to be the final authority. After some reflection on actual situations, Maria nominated the Bishop as the final authority: "I mean, he is the ultimate employer of the diocese. I really don't know where else I could go." Hence, in matters of conscience she would approach the Bishop to explain her conflict. At the same time she was empathetic to his position and the need for him to be consistent in matters of policy. Yet, as Maria struggled to justify her reconciliation of values conflict, she came to the realization that in matters of conscience and faith she was her own final authority: "As far as I can see the institutional Church is not my authority ... it is my conscience standing before God ... the Church is there to guide me but I really don't see it as my authority and I'd probably get ex-communicated if you say any of that." When her conscience conflicted with others in the school community she would try to determine whose values ran more closely to the "Catholic philosophy of the school as a whole."

Maria's approach to dilemma resolution was reflected in the resolution of the dilemmas discussed in the first two interviews. Her attempt to get Miss Usher "on side" (Vignette #1) and to offer her concessions without changing her year level, her non-consequentialist concern for Jane (Vignette #2) and for the two teachers involved in an

interpersonal conflict, the moral stand she took against a System directive she disagreed with (Vignette #3) and against parents demanding that their child be included in an Advanced Math's group, and her combined teleological and deontological approach to dealing with the Johnsons (Vignette #4) are all examples of responses which exemplify her approach.

Maria's recognition of her own conscience as being her final authority is well illustrated by the moral stand she would take against the implementation of a system policy regarding the enrollment of non-Catholics (Vignette #3). She would not acquiesce to the demands of the System and would prefer to offer her resignation if necessary.

Taken together, responses given by the principals in this study indicate that they clearly operate from a definite moral framework. They were able to articulate their particular moral framework which they actually applied to the resolution of real and hypothetical dilemmas. With some reflection and some probing they were able to identify a final authority to which they deferred in order to effect a difficult or elusive resolution. Interestingly, despite the very different frameworks employed, three of the respondents (Brian, Elizabeth and Maria) placed their own moral conscience over any official Church teaching, hierarchical authority or System policy. Similarly, Malcom relied on his own value base which prevailed in his dealings with his school community. In dilemmas involving formal authority, he would only resist or adapt System policy to the extent of not running 'foul' of formal administrative authority. James lacked the confidence to 'take on' the official Church, preferring to seek win-win situations and/or manipulate the outcome through the manner in which he handled the dilemma:

It's very difficult personally being a convert, I've missed out on a lot, say the first twenty years of being a Catholic ... as far as the real Church law, I guess I haven't done a lot of reading ... if it's a Church law put down by the Church and not some person ... if it was a conscience issue, um, if it was a teaching of the Church, I guess I'd go along with it ... when you can't beat them you have to join them.

DIFFERENCES AMONGST PRINCIPALS' APPROACHES TO RESOLUTION

Although not a comparative study, the final research question asks if there were differences amongst the respondents' approaches to the resolution of moral and ethical dilemmas and if the respondents believed that their individual approach should be consistent with other Catholic school principals.

The analysis of the principals' responses thus far illustrates the many differences that existed amongst the general resolution approaches taken by the principals in the study. There is no one general approach or strategy that describes their responses, nor one recognized final authority as might be expected from individuals employed by and operating within an overarching Catholic Church structure. Although at times some principals responded in similar ways to others when dealing with the same dilemma, on occasion different principals did the same thing for different reasons or different things for the same reason. For example, all of the principals in the study refused to change Miss Usher's class allocation for a variety of reasons and because they disagreed with a particular System directive (Vignette #3), the principals responded in a variety of ways, including taking a moral stand, creative insubordination and suspending morality.

Even though there were many differences amongst the principals' responses as evident throughout Chapters Four and Five, what was common among the respondents in

this study was their reliance on a moral framework best described as idiosyncratic. A feature of each principals' framework was the acknowledgment of a final authority to which they deferred when final resolution proved difficult or elusive. Only one respondent, James, would knowingly put aside his own values and conscience in order to resolve moral dilemmas where he personally disagreed with the Church. After resisting system imperatives he disagreed with, Malcom would defer to the Church should further resistance potentially damage his career prospects. Yet, even in such circumstances, Malcom would employ creatively insubordinate strategies to circumvent such directives if possible. Maria would defer to the Church on some occasions, but never on matters of her faith or conscience. Similarly, Elizabeth would rely on her own conscience, while Brian would respect the moral conscience of others without compromising his own.

Although one might assume that the moral framework of each individual Catholic principal is largely based on the same religious beliefs, it is interesting to note that all of the principals, (except for James), felt little moral obligation to follow the directives of the Catholic Education Office and/or the Catholic Church hierarchy in those instances when their own values were in conflict. As adherence to their own individual values or moral conscience was of paramount concern to many of the respondents, the principals were unconcerned as to whether their responses were consistent with what other Catholic principals might do in the same circumstances. In post-interview discussions, many of the respondents indicated that they would like to hear how other respondents dealt with the same dilemma, believing that the exercise of responding to hypothetical case scenarios was itself a worthwhile learning experience that could be enhanced by sharing their responses

with their peers. They appeared to be confident and quite forthright in defending the appropriateness of their own responses, yet eager to learn from the different perspectives that others might take. These principals were not concerned that their individual approach to the resolution of dilemmas be consistent with other principals, recognizing that in other schools and other circumstances different approaches may be more appropriate (Malcom).

SUMMARY

The principals in the study clearly articulated a particular approach or general strategy which they employed in the resolution of moral and ethical dilemmas. For each respondent, this approach rested firmly on the existence of a final authority to which they deferred as necessary in order to effect resolution. Analysis of their stated responses to hypothetical and actual dilemmas reveals that both their articulated approach and their acknowledgment of a final authority were consistently apparent in the principals' individual responses to specific dilemmas. Despite their idiosyncratic differences, principals in the study did operate from a clear moral framework. Importantly, this is not to suggest that each or any of the principals' moral frameworks were 'right' per se. Rather, each principal could articulate a general approach that, for better or worse was reflected in the actual resolution of moral dilemmas. For all the principals, except James, this approach rested firmly on their own conscience (Maria, Elizabeth, Brain) or value base (Malcom). Hence, there were many differences among the principals' approaches to dilemma resolution. Although consistency was a feature of each of the respondent's

individual approach to the resolution of dilemmas, the principals were not concerned that their particular approach be consistent with other Catholic school principals.

CONCLUSION

In Chapter Five, the findings of the study have been analyzed and interpreted in order to address the six research questions. Part One, the bulk of this chapter and the main focus of the study has dealt with the nature of the principal's responses to moral and ethical dilemmas. Four major categories were found to describe the principal's responses, with significant and at times, subtle variations evident in a number of sub-categories within each main category. Some overlap between the categories did occur and at times a principal's response was explicated in more than one category or sub-category. In particular, when there was evidence of non-cognizant avoidance on the part of principals who were unaware or unwilling to acknowledge significant moral aspects of a dilemma, their actual cognizant response was separately classified.

In Part Two, the question of which or whose values prevailed in the resolution of moral and ethical dilemmas arising from a values conflict between the principal and members of the school community and between principals and formal administrative authority was considered. In a startling contradiction of the extensive findings of the first two interviews, none of the respondents (except for a somewhat reluctant James) accepted that their values actually conflicted with members of the school community. Despite nominating the teachers, parents and/or children as the most frequent source of moral and ethical dilemmas, responding to 'familiar' hypothetical situations and recounting numerous

actual examples of such value conflicts, the principals readily dismissed the school community as a source of such conflicts in favor of formal administrative authority (the hierarchy of the Church). Interestingly, in the former instance the principals' values consistently and comprehensively prevailed over those in the school community, while in the latter, the outcome of the values conflict was contentious to a degree, albeit considered by the principals to be somewhat inevitable. In other words, the principals only acknowledged value conflicts to exist in those dilemma situations when their values were unlikely to prevail.

The question of whether the principals in the study resolved moral and ethical dilemmas in consistent ways was answered in Part Three. Although the principals were surprisingly articulate in expounding their own particular approach, their general resolution strategies were quite distinct. Whilst at times certain elements within each approach were common to more than one principal, the overall approach to dilemma resolution taken by each principal was essentially idiosyncratic. With some probing, the principals were able to identify a final authority to which they deferred when resolution was both pressing and elusive.

For some, the realization that their articulated authority was inconsistent with the authority they actually deferred to came as a surprise. These principals nominated their employer, the Bishop, as the final authority, only to eventually realize that ultimately they held their own conscience or value system above the values or imperatives of the official authority. Although accepting "intellectually, that he is the ultimate authority ... I see that

in many instances, I am the ultimate authority for me (pause)” (Elizabeth); “the institutional Church is not my authority ... it’s my conscience before God” (Maria).

An analysis of the specific responses given in the first two interviews indicated that the individual principals were very consistent in the application of their own stated approach and the acknowledgment within this approach of a final authority. Yet, there were significant differences among the respondents themselves in their approach to dilemma resolution. They were not concerned with adopting a pre-determined or general approach in an effort to be consistent with other Catholic school principals.

Given that research about the values and value conflicts of educational administrators is in its infancy (Leithwood & Steinbach, 1995), many of the conclusions reported in this chapter have significance in view of the theoretical and empirical considerations outlined in Chapter Two. By way of closure, important theoretical issues and relevant implications of the study’s findings are discussed in Chapter Six, the final chapter.

CHAPTER VI: IMPLICATIONS, DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Chapter Six, the final chapter of this study presents a summary discussion of the findings, delineates significant implications in the light of existing knowledge and current research, and identifies implications for the practice of values research in educational administration. The specific sections that deal with these purposes are preceded by a brief summary of the overall organization of the research study.

This qualitative investigation into how Catholic school principals who operate within a postmodern environment respond to moral and ethical dilemmas was introduced in Chapter One. The Australian Catholic school setting in which the study was conducted was briefly described and the crucial importance of a distinctive 'Catholic' school culture acknowledged. Subsequently, Chapter One considered the significance and purpose of the study, arguing for much needed investigations into the complex task of Catholic school principals charged with the ongoing development of a distinctive Catholic school identity in a postmodern climate. Within this context, the pivotal role of values in the administration of schools was recognized. In particular, Chapter One presented a statement of the research problem in terms of determining how principals in Catholic school settings respond to moral and ethical dilemmas, the most difficult of value conflicts. Ultimately, this introductory chapter explicated the six research questions and defined relevant terminology. Limits of the study were identified and a general outline of the study's organization provided.

Beginning with a consideration of the historical context of the Church, Chapter Two reviewed the literature relevant to the research problem and the Australian context in which it exists. Notions of organizational, school and Catholic school culture were introduced and the relationship between school culture and values explored. The chapter also addressed concepts of values and value conflicts, introducing Hodgkinson's (1978) typology of values as a means of differentiating rational from non-rational motivational value bases. Various types of value conflicts described herein as moral and ethical dilemmas were identified. A review of the relevant research delineated four general responses by administrators to value conflicts. In addition, Chapter Two presented the conceptual framework of the study based on intra-role moral and ethical dilemmas involving the principal's own personal and professional values system. The study's conceptual frame included the Response Classification Framework developed from the four general responses identified in the literature: 1) avoidance, 2) suspending morality, 3) creative insubordination, and 4) personal morality.

Chapter Three presented the research methodology developed for the specific purposes of the study. A feature of this chapter was a detailed rationale which explained and justified the various components of the research design. In recognition of the infancy of inquiry in the field of values and the inherent difficulty of research into values, this chapter specifically focused on the justification of the research methodology. Chapter Three described the nature of the interviews conducted and provided the four hypothetical scenarios (vignettes) to which the principals responded. In all the methodology chapter

identified the sources of data and explained the procedures for data collection, management and analysis.

The research methodology provided a rich array of findings, presented in the 'first person' literary format which allowed the findings to be recounted in the principals' own voice. Chapter Four reported these findings in two parts, the former concerned with principals' responses to specific dilemma situations and the latter to the general resolution of dilemmas by individual principals. The findings in relation to each vignette or actual situation were described in line with Step 1 of the procedure for the analysis of data adopted by this study (see Chapter One). Hence, the analysis and interpretation of the findings presented in Chapter Five actually began in Chapter Four.

Chapter Five provided a detailed analysis and interpretation of the research findings. This chapter addressed the six research questions explicated in Chapter One. The responses of the principals were described, explained and categorized according to the Response Classification Framework developed for the study and included within Step 2 of the data analysis procedure. In this way, Chapter Five laid the foundation for the consideration of the implications of the findings and for the future practice of research (Step 3) addressed by the remainder of this chapter.

A) TYPES AND FREQUENCY OF MORAL AND ETHICAL DILEMMAS

As noted in Chapter Five, all of the different types of dilemmas identified by Crowson (1989) and Greenfield (1991) were represented in the actual dilemmas reported by the principals in the study. Further, the readiness with which the respondents

confirmed that the hypothetical scenarios were familiar dilemmas contributed to the subsequent identification of a significant number of dilemmas that ranged across the various dilemma types identified in the literature review. The principals' responses to the vignettes frequently 'triggered' the re-telling of similar or related real-life dilemmas. In simple terms, the types of actual and hypothetical dilemmas encountered by the principals could be described as involving teachers, parents, children and formal administrative authority (usually in the form of the Church hierarchy or System policy).

The main focus of all but two of the actual dilemmas recounted involved interpersonal conflict, consistent with the findings of a number of studies (e.g., Ashbaugh & Kasten 1984; Leithwood & Stager, 1989; Begley & Johansson, 1997) that these were the most difficult problems for administrators to resolve. Although the study made no attempt to compile an exhaustive or comparative list of types of moral and ethical dilemmas, a number of interesting observations are possible.

Firstly, although a number of dilemmas did involve personnel, issues of teacher competency did not dominate to the extent suggested by Kirby, Paradise and Protti's (1992) study. The range of dilemmas included the particular circumstances and behavior of children, the implementation of school and system policy, teacher lifestyle, and issues that were related to competency. Secondly, findings related to Malcom's dilemma concerning two teachers suffering from ill health as they neared retirement coupled with the principals' common agreement that they had encountered similar situations to that described in Vignette #2 (Miss Usher), support Wignall's (1994) observation that principals are increasingly affected by dilemmas related to competency and the legitimate

needs of teachers coping with illness. Finally, although the principals themselves nominated dilemmas involving teachers, parents and/or children as the dilemma type occurring most frequently, four of the five principals immediately nominated dilemmas involving parents as the most frequently occurring dilemma type. This finding along with the frequency of teacher lifestyle issues reflects the high level of parent participation and the religious nature characteristic of Australian Catholic primary schools.

Four of the principals in the study perceived that they encountered moral and ethical dilemmas on a daily basis. The exception, Elizabeth, recounted two such dilemmas that were on her mind “at the moment,” confirming that value conflicts of this nature were a frequently (daily) occurring phenomena. Even though this finding concurs with the contention of those that argue that administrators increasingly encounter value conflicts (e.g., Leithwood, Begley & Cousins, 1994), it contrasts with those research studies to date which suggests that for administrators non-rational value conflicts occur infrequently (e.g., Campbell-Evans 1988; Campbell 1992). Further, this study’s finding supports Begley and Johansson’s (1997) reluctance to dismiss non-rational values as significant influences on administrative practice, despite the contention by the likes of Evers and Lakomski (1991) that non-rational value types ought not be important influences on administrative practice. Finally, while this finding agrees with Begley’s (1996a: 574) observation that Type I value conflicts do occur, it also suggests that his contention that “fortunately for educational administrators, value conflicts occurring at that level are relatively infrequent” may be premature; their insignificance in the literature perhaps due in part to the fact acknowledged by Begley himself (1996a: 574) that “few researchers have

chosen to explore this class of values conflict.” Similarly, Leithwood’s (1996:2) scepticism about “the practical utility of scholarship aimed at promoting more ethical administrative practice in schools” partly because “virtually all relevant evidence suggests that administrative practice is already highly ethical” may reflect this lack of research attention given to transrational value conflict.

B) PRINCIPALS’ RESPONSES TO MORAL AND ETHICAL DILEMMAS

This section discusses the findings and considers their implication in relation to the main focus of the study, the responses of principals to moral and ethical dilemmas.

Overall, the four types of responses were clearly evident in the data. Subtle variations of each response existed within each category. The Response Classification Framework proved to be an invaluable organizing mechanism for the analysis and interpretation of the principals’ responses to moral and ethical dilemmas. The expected overlap which occurred between the categories served only to inform the understanding of their responses which were often explicated by the principals at some length.

B.1 Avoidance

In championing his own value paradigm as a mechanism for value adjudication, Hodgkinson (1991: 145) claims that his analytical model of the value concept “can be applied to the most tortuous and vexing of complex controversial issues and conflicts.” Inexplicably, when it comes to moral and ethical dilemmas, the most difficult of value conflicts, Hodgkinson’s (1991: 151) only advice to the would-be ethical principal is that

it should be the administrative maxim to avoid for as long as possible, or at all if possible, the emergence of this category of value conflict to the extent that it is within the leader's power to do so.

Although this study focused on Type I value conflicts which could not be avoided, there was enough evidence to suggest that total avoidance of moral and ethical dilemmas was a popular option when possible. For example, Brian actively sought to avoid teacher lifestyle dilemmas by openly encouraging his teachers "not to get into the situation to begin with." Similarly, James and Malcom avoided potential dilemmas in relation to the placement of children into particular classes by pre-selecting children of potentially difficult parents in their preferred classes. This strategy was consistent with many of the studies that clearly identified outright avoidance of Type I value conflicts as a preferred option of administrators (e.g., Ashbaugh & Kasten, 1984; Campbell-Evans, 1988).

In its consideration of those avoidance responses in which Type I dilemmas were reduced to rational and sub-rational levels, this study sought to determine whether the personal preferences of principals constituted a basis for resolution. At face value the finding that mere personal preference did not form such a basis was hardly surprising given the gravity of the dilemmas discussed. Interestingly, personal preference was identified as an influence on administrative processes, particularly evident in the principals' commonly held preference for the prevention of moral dilemmas. At times, personal preferences for avoiding moral dilemmas contravened issues of equity and social justice (e.g., the practice of encouraging teachers not to commit themselves to certain lifestyles situations and the biased pre-selection of classes at the expense of those children whose parents "couldn't care less what class their child was in"). Although such preferences could well be

understood as a desire to promote organizational peace and harmony on one hand to avoid trouble or 'hassles' on the other, such practices obviously undermine a principal's claim to moral authenticity.

This study's findings that personal preferences were an influence on administrative practice, although not sufficiently strong to form a basis for resolution is consistent with Begley and Johansson's (1997: 26) conclusion that "values of personal preference are definitely evident as influences on administrative processes." At times personal preference took the form of self-interest which potentially appeared to be a much stronger influence than mere preference. As responses which take the form of self-interest are arguably indicative of Type I rather than Type III values, the question of self-interest versus the common good will be considered later in this chapter. Suffice it to note at this point that further investigation is needed into the nature and influence of personal preference on administrative practice.

B.1.1 Cognizant and Non-Cognizant Avoidance

Total avoidance notwithstanding, this study found that a significant number of responses by principals to moral and ethical dilemmas could be described as avoidance whereby transrational value conflicts were reduced to the rational (Type II) value level. To a limited extent this finding is consistent with the studies of Begley (1988), Campbell-Evans (1988), Leithwood and Stager (1989) and Leithwood and Steinbach (1995) which found that when dealing with value conflicts, principals select from essentially rational

values. However, principals in this study at times chose from a number of responses, rational and non-rational.

In their endeavors to resolve moral and ethical dilemmas, principals in this study frequently selected consequentialist and non-consequentialist approaches. The frequent employment of non-consequentialist strategies and, to a lesser extent, the attempt by some principals in specific circumstances to achieve both consequentialist and non-consequentialist solutions contrast with those studies (e.g., Begley, 1988; Campbell-Evans, 1988) which found that consequentialist approaches dominated principals' decision making processes. Importantly, the findings of this study that principals' rational responses to moral and ethical dilemmas include both consequentialist and non-consequentialist solutions also contrast with Campbell's (1992: 416) findings that principals' responses to such dilemmas can be defined "for the most part, by consequentialist approaches to decision making and conflict resolution."

Although it is not the intention of this study to judge the morality of principals' responses, nor to identify 'best practice', it is obvious from the findings that the consequentialist solutions proffered by the respondents included actions and intentions that could variously be described as moral, amoral and (rarely) immoral. Although there were examples of principals adopting the apparently "rationalistic, technocratic, consequentialist, and bureaucratic perspective" which characterized the principals in Campbell's (1992: 447) study of moral and ethical value conflicts, there were also many instances of principals employing approaches which were both consequentialist and moral. For example, principals often selected a response motivated by their intent to do what was

'best for the kids' and/or 'best for the school'. Similarly, at times some respondents defended their non-consequentialist perspective such as 'supporting the teacher no matter what' when in instances of incompetency for example, any subsequent claims as to the morality of such a principle are dubious at best. These findings suggest that in any consideration of the morality of principals' responses to moral and ethical dilemmas which by definition require two equally necessary but mutually exclusive courses of action, the inference that consequentialist approaches are inherently amoral and non-consequentialist moral is both simplistic and inaccurate.

A significant, albeit rare response to moral and ethical dilemmas occurred when principals attempted to satisfy both consequentialist and non-consequentialist considerations. Although Starratt's (1994) argument that in schools the ethics of care and justice should embrace a fundamental concern for both the individual and the common good, there were many instances where these ethics proved to be incompatible (at least from the perspective of the principals in the study). However, there were some instances (e.g., Vignette #1; Vignette # 4) where a number of principals (e.g., James; Maria/Brian) were intent on adopting a combined approach. For example, in James's attempt to care for Jane (Vignette # 2) and give priority to the majority of the children, he argued that "it would be good to do both." Thus, to a limited extent the study's findings supported Starratt's (1994) rejection of the notion that these two principles are irreconcilable. Yet, there were many more instances where the respondents appeared unconcerned about reconciling both ethics. Whether both principles could have been reconciled in these dilemma situations remains somewhat problematic.

In this study, non-cognizant avoidance describes those responses where the principals were unaware, failed or refused to recognize the real nature of a dilemma. Despite the many difficulties inherent in conducting specific research into this aspect, there was ample evidence to suggest that non-cognizant avoidance was a common response by all of the principals in the study. Typically, these principals appeared to knowingly or unknowingly ignore certain moral aspects in favor of relying on established policies and procedures. Even though at times the principals seemed unaware of particular moral considerations (e.g., Miss Usher's health), on other occasions they freely chose not to acknowledge that certain moral precepts were in contention. James preferred to avoid dilemmas such as that posed by Luke's non-compliance with the school's hairstyle policy "because of concern for the child in that situation with cancer," yet refused to give any special consideration to Luke's circumstances because of his overriding belief that "you've got to stick by your policies and your rules."

Whilst the incredulity of Luke's case worker may well be shared by the reader, it nonetheless seems unlikely that when actively and knowingly choosing to ignore significant moral considerations principals freely opt for amoral or immoral alternatives. Despite the readiness that some researchers adjudge such examples to be indicative of a principal's "apparent lack of a clear moral framework" (Campbell, 1992: 445), findings from this study suggest the plausibility of other interpretations.

Implicit and Explicit Values

As noted in Chapter Two, Schein's (1984: 3) conception of 'espoused' and 'assumed' or unconscious' values recognizes a cyclical relationship among values, behavior and assumptions:

as a value leads to a behaviour, and as that behaviour begins to solve the problem which prompted it in the first place, the value gradually is transformed into an underlying assumption.

If applied to individuals, this conception suggests that 'unconscious' or 'assumed' values were once espoused values which over time and through experience became 'taken for granted'. On one level, Catholic school principals, as agents of the Church and society, might well be legitimately expected and morally bound to follow established policy (perhaps developed specifically for such purposes). At another level, it seems likely that with experience principals hold or develop a host of personal and professional values consistent with those on which particular policies or procedures are based. Similarly, an experienced principal may employ a number of organizational and professional role ethics (such as supporting the teacher 'no matter what') as a matter of routine. With repeated applications over time these explicit values and ethics become 'unconscious' or 'assumed', added to those other non-confrontable, non-debatable implicit assumptions held by the principal and/or the school. Over time related principals' behavior becomes 'automatic' as the regular, unquestioned application of policies and procedures become matters of mere routine.

Such a possibility may in part explain the findings of Leithwood and Stager (1989), Campbell-Evans (1991) and Begley and Johansson (1997) that where principals know a

lot about a problem they rarely acknowledge the influence of values. Conversely, this possibility is also consistent with the finding of Begley (1988), Leithwood and Steinbach (1991) and Begley and Johansson (1997) that when domain specific knowledge is absent or unavailable, Type I values are employed because high ambiguity and/or urgency makes rational processes (such as the application of existing policy) impossible or inappropriate. When principals knowingly or unknowingly choose to resolve Type I value conflicts by 'rational' processes which seemingly ignore the inherent transrational values, they rely on specific policies and procedures based in part on 'unconscious' or assumed values. Arguably, these assumptions form part of the domain specific knowledge available to principals in the more common instances where principals do know a lot about a problem. When unique and/or urgent moral dilemmas occur which escape the ready application of existing policy and practice (and their inherent assumptions), principals look to Type I (transrational) 'espoused' values to effect resolution.

From this perspective, the principals' common concern in this study that they be consistent in the application of policy is more than an expressed concern that they appear to be fair, just and equitable in their dealings or decisive (no 'wishy-washiness') in their decision making. Persistent adherence to established policy, rules and procedures such as a school's discipline policy or a principal's professional role ethic to do 'what's best for the kids' exemplifies the rational application of policies and procedures once based on espoused values, but now subsumed into the realm of 'unconscious' assumptions. Perhaps the apparent reluctance on the part of some administrators to reflect on the appropriateness of the basic assumptions underlying established policy and practice in

specific instances and current circumstances lies at the heart of those non-cognizant responses where principals were unaware, failed or refused to acknowledge important moral considerations. Purposely or otherwise, the principals in this study frequently adopted non-cognizant avoidance as a response to moral and ethical dilemmas. Although arguably indicative of a lack of a clear moral framework (Campbell, 1992), this study suggests that the problem is as much a result of uncritical, non-reflective practice indicative perhaps of poor administrative expertise.

In light of this perspective, the findings of this study that principals frequently employed cognizant and non-cognizant avoidance in a rational approach to resolve transrational value conflicts are also consistent with the findings of the afore-mentioned studies of Begley (1988) and Campbell-Evans (1991) that over time the value orientations of principals could perhaps be “best described as movement towards the center of the values hierarchy, a movement away from the nonrational value types towards the rational” (Begley, 1996a: 581).

Understanding ‘Rational’ Responses

The point of departure of this study’s findings from these early studies is their apparent assumption that the rational values at the ‘center’ of Hodgkinson’s hierarchy are restricted to consensus and consequences. Rather, the findings reported here indicate that rational values include consequentialist and non-consequentialist avoidance approaches which principals wittingly and unwittingly employ in order to resolve moral and ethical dilemmas.

These findings stand in stark contrast to the claims of those (e.g., Campbell, 1992) who infer that the pre-disposition of administrators towards the rational resolution of transrational value conflicts is somehow inherently amoral. Given that principals do frequently employ rational processes which include consequentialist and non-consequentialist perspectives, this study contends that subsequent responses may be moral, amoral or (rarely) immoral. Campbell (1992: 430) asserts that principals often based their responses to moral and ethical dilemmas on consequentialist rather than ethical arguments designed to “avoid trouble as much as possible rather than ‘doing the right thing’ ... right and wrong in the larger sense were usually ignored.” Alternatively, this study argues that principals often base their responses to moral and ethical dilemmas on consequentialist and non-consequentialist arguments that reflect the espoused (explicit) and assumed (implicit) values on which their policies and practice are based. Moreover, this study contends that principals are not necessarily unconcerned with issues of right or wrong simply because they employ consequentialist solutions. As the findings clearly indicate, consequentialist and non-consequentialist solutions employed by principals were typically justified on moral and ethical grounds. Which is not to say that all responses were in fact moral or ethical (as evidenced by the practice of ‘getting rid’ of troublesome children and “attacking teachers in their time of weakness”).

B.2 Suspending Morality

On a number of occasions some of the respondents used a process described herein as ‘suspending morality’ to resolve moral and ethical dilemmas where organizational ethics

and imperatives conflicted with their own personal morality. The defining characteristic of these responses is a principal's deference to system or school-level imperatives despite personal misgivings. Importantly, this is not to suggest that moral considerations were the primary motivation for such a response. Seven out of eight principals in Campbell-Evan's (1988) study chose to suspend their morality when they implemented system wide policies they disagreed with before working to change them. In similar circumstances within the context of this study only one principal (James) indicated that he would take the same approach. Another principal, Malcom would initially resist the policy before putting aside his own misgivings to implement same. While the implications of the responses of the remaining principals will be considered later in this chapter, it is interesting to note that despite a number of other instances in which principals suspended their own morality, only on one occasion did a principal (Elizabeth) actually 'convert' to the moral position expressed within an organizational imperative.

At other times principals who suspended their morality did not adopt the strategy because they were attracted by the moral principles inherent in the organization's perspective. Campbell (1992) rightly argues that being right or being wrong is not a defining characteristic of individuals or groups as clearly neither has a monopoly on morality. Nonetheless, this study found that principals often suspended their own morality because of the inevitability and/or desirability of the outcome rather than the moral appeal of the alternative position. Professional duty, fear of reprisal and a professional role ethic to 'stick to policy' variously described important influences on the decision by principals to put aside their own misgivings. Often principals were caught in what Campbell (1992)

calls 'the false necessity trap' believing that they had no choice. Brian observed that "if the Bishop speaks out, one must do what he says." Others felt obliged to honor organizational and professional role ethics such as doing 'what's best for the kids', 'supporting the teacher no matter what', and 'sticking to policy'. Given the comparative consequences incurred by principals who disobey system wide imperatives instigated by formal administrative authority as opposed to making an exception to school level ethics, it seems that 'genuine necessity' more aptly describes those former instances where the choice is to "follow the directive, resign or get sacked" (James).

Principals who argued that they had 'no choice' but to follow established school level policy and practice often appeared to deceive themselves that in other circumstances they would be more flexible or able to make an exception. James acknowledged that the situation of the cancer suffering Luke was "a little bit different in the fact that there was a lot of stress involved" yet still concluded that "you can't make too many exceptions." Elizabeth realized that her own parent body would criticize her for not "putting the good of the children first," yet she was determined to "fight this issue out" because "whatever, you have to support Mr. Kent." Although both principals argued that in other circumstances they would act differently, it is difficult to imagine more extenuating circumstances than the actual circumstances to which they responded.

B.3 Creative Insubordination

Although much of the literature relating to value conflicts (e.g., Ashbaugh & Kasten, 1984; Campbell-Evans, 1988; Leithwood & Steinbach, 1995) ignores principals'

recourse to creative insubordination, this response was clearly evident in the study. On various occasions principals sought to modify, adapt or overturn system policies (e.g., sick leave, non-Catholic enrollment) that they believed impinged unfairly on teachers, children and families in their school community.

The problem with all forms of creative insubordination is that to employ the strategy some form of dishonesty is necessary. When principals sought to achieve or protect a moral or ethical principle by pretending to implement the policy as directed, they often felt guilty or uncomfortable about the pretense. Thus, Malcom's creatively insubordinate strategies in relation to the System's sick leave policy appeared to achieve his desired objectives, yet he continued to feel uneasy and unhappy about the deception. It is possible that principals pretend to implement a policy for dubious personal reasons or inappropriate intentions rather than for any possible benefit to teachers and children. However, when principals in this study used creatively insubordinate strategies to resolve moral and ethical dilemmas it was for the perceived benefit of their own communities rather than any personal gain.

The findings of the study in this regard suggest a subtle but important distinction which appears to exist between creative insubordination and 'covert subversion'. Creative insubordination occurs when principals adapt, modify or undermine system policies and directives in order to ensure that they do not impinge unfairly or inappropriately on teachers and children; 'covert subversion' describes a secretive, perhaps devious subversion of legitimate system expectations and directives (Campbell, 1992). From this perspective, creative insubordination appears to be a genuine moral response which may

well avoid subsequent criticism on the basis of what Haynes and Licata (1995) call 'the legitimacy of the justifiable'. Covert subversion on the other hand lacks the moral legitimacy of creative insubordination which contains a characteristic moral element designed to balance anti-educational consequences. The distinction is illustrated by Malcom's lack of concern that System authorities may discover his insubordination because "they know the policy doesn't have too much ground to stand on anyway." Covert subversion lacks the moral justification afforded by creative insubordination, thereby increasing the importance of secrecy to those who use the strategy.

Covert subversion as such was not a response evident in this study. The three principals who employed creative insubordination had clear moral intentions and a firm belief that the System's demands as expressed in particular policies were not only detrimental to their community, they were neither legitimate nor morally justifiable. While Elizabeth and Brian both sought to undermine, if not sabotage the new enrollment policy in relation to non-Catholics, they believed that the policy threatened the survival of their schools, hurt members of their school community and contravened their understanding of the missionary role of the Catholic school. These principals' belief in the morality of their own position was apparent in their initial response to openly oppose the policy. The failure of their initial stance coupled with the unattractiveness of taking a moral stand and thereby risking termination, led these principals to the use of creative insubordination as an alternative response designed to overturn the policy without suffering the backlash that further open defiance would incur.

B.4 Personal Morality

The many responses that were based on the personal morality of the principal challenges the traditional perspective of the school administrators as rational, technocratic bureaucrats. Those that agree that administrators are politicians who mediate among conflicting values (Sproull, 1977) will not be surprised that principals' responses based on personal morality have their parallel in the political world where they exist in the form of moral stands and stances. Responses based on the personal morality of the principal were clearly evident in the study.

B.4.1 Moral Stances

Detailed analysis of the reported findings highlight the close resemblance of creative insubordination responses to those described in this study as moral stances or postures. In the first instance the response is covert, designed to ensure that system policies do not impinge unfairly or inappropriately on a particular school community. Taking a moral stance is overt, chosen as a calculated strategy by principals who initially claim the 'high moral ground' but realize that any subsequent advantage is likely to be short lived. A crucial distinction between the two responses is that creative insubordination is more genuinely concerned with achieving certain desired ends, one way or another; moral stances involve 'holding out for a better deal' than that originally offered within the terms of the policy or directive. Compromise lies at the core of both responses. Creative insubordination may well achieve the desired ends and avoid (but nonetheless

risks) possible backlash, but it is at the expense of the principal's personal integrity. Moral stances avoid backlash and preserves personal integrity but at some cost to desired ends.

Data collected in this study suggest that principals (such as Elizabeth and Brian) turned to creative insubordination as a 'last resort', after their initial moral stance had unsuccessfully run its course. In all, moral stances while perhaps very common in the 'cut and parry' of everyday administrative practice were a far less frequent response to the moral and ethical dilemmas that were the focus of this study. On one occasion Maria chose to adopt a moral stance against a teacher (Miss Usher) rather than her preferred option of the moral stand, because of a perceived lack of support for her position from formal administrative authority. At other times, a moral stance was taken by principals who believed that the comparative morality of their position justified their open disapproval of a particular policy or decision, if only for a short time. Whenever principals in the study did adopt a moral stance or posture, they accepted that any subsequent negotiation and/or compromise represented the 'best case' scenario. In other words, principals were resigned to the fact that the achievement of their preferred outcome was unlikely, if not unrealistic. The best result that a principal could expect was that the other party would be open to a re-negotiation of their original position. For example, after writing to his parish priest to no avail, James informed the Catholic Education of his school's inability to meet Workplace, Health and Safety regulations with regard to the provision of fire extinguishers because his parish priest refused to authorize the expenditure. Because James accepted that he was powerless to "do anything about it," he covered himself "by passing it over to the relevant authorities."

B.4.2 Moral Stands

At first glance, the findings of this study that three of the principals would take the supposedly rare moral stand in five instances (Maria and Malcom on two occasions each) are surprising. Though the stand has its appeal in the preservation of personal integrity regardless of the consequences, the severity of the possible consequences are such to discourage its common usage. James explained the difficulty: "I mean you can buck the System..... but how long will you last?" Closer analysis reveals that only one occasion did a principal (Maria) indicate that she would take a moral stand against her employer. All other stands were taken against teachers or parents, indicative perhaps of the difference in degree that possible repercussions could incur when moral stands are taken against one's employer as opposed to members of the school community.

Campbell (1992: 441) does not advocate unconditionally that principals should take moral stands since an individual's "own sense of right and wrong may represent little more than personal subjective preference, emotivism or self-interest." This observation appears to underlie her conclusion that "in many cases one may indeed question their lack of moral courage" (1997:442). Findings reported here identify personal morality as a significant basis of principals' responses to moral and ethical dilemmas. In contrast to her contention that principals favored covert subversion to taking moral stands, the evidence in this study indicated that they frequently took moral stands and stances rather than resort to covert subversion. At other times the principals 'suspended' their own morality in complying with official directives they disagreed with or employed creatively insubordinate strategies as distinct from covert subversion. Typically these responses

embraced a strong moral component where principals were not only aware of the moral precepts at risk, they took active (if not always overt) measures to protect and preserve the integrity of the moral principle in contention. The finding that personal preference was not a factor in the resolution of moral and ethical dilemmas in this study does not discount the possibility of self-interest influencing principals' responses. The relative influence of self-interest on the resolution of moral and ethical dilemmas will be addressed later in this chapter.

C) PREVAILING VALUES

The frequency by which principals took moral stands against teachers and parents as compared to formal administrative authority underscores the distinction between transrational value conflicts which occur between principals and their school community and between principals and their employer. The findings of the study in this regard confirm that the relative degree of power that those in positions of authority have over others is a critical factor for the determination of whose values are to count in the final resolution of moral and ethical dilemmas.

C.1 Moral Dilemmas between Principals and the School Community Members

When the dilemmas reported were analyzed from the perspective of the relative power position of the principals a number of significant findings emerged. Invariably, the principals' values prevailed when they resolved moral and ethical dilemmas involving members of their own community. At times, principals sought quite opposite outcomes

from the same or similar dilemmas (e.g., Vignette # 4: The Johnsons), often based on contrasting ethics such as supporting (James, Elizabeth) or not supporting (Malcom, James) the teacher 'no matter what'. Nonetheless, whatever the nature of the principal's perspective their values prevailed in resolution. In other words, the prevailing values in the resolution of moral and ethical dilemmas involving members of the school community were a reflection of the principal's own personal and professional values, rather than any determination of right or wrong.

When the power balance favors the principal (i.e., in dilemmas involving teachers, parents and children) the full range of responses are available as options. Given that there were comparatively few occasions when principals in this situation suspended their own morality or resorted to the moral responses of stands and stances, the large majority of their responses could be described as avoidance. Typically principals chose from consequentialist and non-consequentialist strategies indicative of the more general cognitive and non-cognitive avoidance responses.

C.2 Moral Dilemmas between Principals and Formal Authority

By way of contrast, when dilemmas involved formal administrative authority the prevailing values in resolution were generally (but not always) those of the employing authority. Resolution was often hotly contested, the principals not readily accepting the limits of their own authority, often resorting to overt and covert responses such as moral stances and creative insubordination in order to resist, modify or overturn system policies and directives. Whilst they agreed with Elizabeth's summation that "ultimately your hands

are tied,” they actively contested the imposition of system imperatives with which they disagreed. Only on one occasion did a principal (James) immediately conform to such a directive. Nonetheless, for the most part the values expressed by formal administrative authority eventually prevailed. Even when Maria opted to take a moral stand, she expected that her resignation was the likely result, leaving the prevailing values of the hierarchy intact.

These findings clearly indicate that principals do not employ avoidance strategies in the resolution of moral and ethical dilemmas involving formal administrative structures, if for no other reason than that their subordinate position precludes them from doing so. The relative ‘powerlessness’ of the principal in relation to their employer (particularly the Church hierarchy) restricts the principals to choosing from the other forms of responses. This choice is further restricted by the impracticability of taking a moral stand (as discussed earlier). In effect, the principals are limited to responses which can be described as suspending morality, creative insubordination and taking a moral stance.

In terms of actually achieving their desired outcomes (usually to meet and protect the needs of their school community) the ‘moral surrender’ invoked by suspending morality and the characteristic compromise of moral stances leave the principals with few alternatives if they are to be successful in achieving such outcomes. For all its obvious disadvantages, creative insubordination was the only response taken by principals which allowed their values to prevail upon resolution. Although taking a moral stand remained an option for principals interested in preserving their own integrity, this response was unlikely to achieve the desired outcomes for the members of the school community.

C.3 Discretionary Power

Hambrick and Brandon (1988) found that the direct and indirect influence of executives' values on managerial problem solving was modified by the degree of discretion allowed by the executives' work environment. Similarly, Leithwood and Steinbach (1995) argue that since most expert administrators adhere strongly to values, a significant direct influence of values on subsequent action is highly probable. Leithwood and Steinbach (1995: 184) acknowledge that this assertion "assumes considerable discretion for school leaders to act in concert with their values since organizational constraints on administrators' actions will blunt the influence of values on action."

The significance of the principals' discretionary power in administrative practice involving the resolution of the most difficult of value conflicts is underscored by the study's startling finding that principals did not consider that moral dilemmas involving members of their school community actually constituted value conflicts. As noted in the previous chapter, this finding contradicts the principals' own responses to the first two interviews in which they recounted and responded to numerous actual and hypothetical dilemmas situations. Moreover, the principals' identification of situations concerning parents, teachers and children as the most frequently occurring dilemmas stands as a further contradiction to the finding that, according to the principals themselves, formal administrative authority (especially the Church hierarchy) was the major source of moral and ethical dilemmas.

This puzzling contradiction may be explained in terms of this study's distinction between those dilemmas which involve the principals and formal administrative authority

and those between the principal and the school community. Put simply, principals believe that value conflicts occur only when the prevalence of their own values in resolution is contentious, namely when dilemmas involve formal administrative authority. When moral and ethical dilemmas occur where the prevalence of the principal's values is assured, namely between the principal and members of their own school community, principals do not consider their own values even to be in conflict. Hence, the influence of the principals' values on resolution is greatly moderated by the discretionary power afforded to the principal by the context in which the dilemma occurs.

Taken together these conclusions have dramatic implications for the understanding of administrative practice and what goes on in schools at a time when principals are called to move away "from traditional hierarchical perspectives as a basis for control and influence to notions of leadership as service, as stewardship and as a value-driven, transformational force" (Duignan, 1997: 3). Certainly, the implication of the findings of this study concur with Leithwood and Steinbach's (1995) observation that as the attraction of self-managing schools takes hold increasing attention will likely be given to the influence of principal's values on administrative action, particularly for the purposes of administrator selection.

In addition these findings shed new light on Campbell's (1992: 423) conclusion that principals "consistently failed to recognize moral conflict, and identified problems as being merely strategic, political, professional or practical in nature." Contrary to Campbell's claim, principals may indeed recognize moral conflict which from their relative position of power does not necessarily include the moral challenges put forward by teachers, parents and children to their own value systems. The discretionary power

inherent in their position as principal ensures that their value system will prevail in such encounters. Malcom provided a vivid expression of this contention:

I've got no hesitation. I'd go from my value base which gives me confidence ... I would act on my own value base on anything ... it may take a year, it may take two years, but the values you espouse, once parents have confidence in that, I think they would expect you to go from those values ... I think your value base is where you work from, it's what people see in you and admire or not admire in you...I know that it's going to take time but I know ultimately I'm going to win people over with my values and beliefs.

Expressions aside, this contention was also evident in those many disputes in which teachers, parents and children were forced or encouraged to leave the school community. In many instances the principals were well aware from the outset that this possibility was a likely, if not planned outcome of their resolution strategy; whether it be by threatening expulsion (James/Malcom), surreptitiously encouraging teachers to retire (Malcom), or requesting that a teacher be transferred from the school (Elizabeth, Maria, Brian).

This conclusion is consistent with Campbell's (1992: 416) finding that the principals themselves believed that the reason why they experienced so little conflict was "because they have the power to do what they believe to be right." However, her subsequent conclusion that principals lack a clear moral framework based on their inclination not "to acknowledge situations as being ethically or morally significant" (1992: 445) appears to be ill-founded. Findings reported here suggest that principals do not perceive situations as being ethically or morally significant unless they are in a position where their power to do what they believe is right is actually contested, that is in moral and ethical dilemmas involving formal administrative authority in which the principal's discretionary power is severely restricted. Conversely, principals do not acknowledge as

value conflicts those moral dilemmas between themselves and teachers, parents or children where they enjoy the discretionary power to do what they believe is right.

The question of whether or not principals possess a clear moral framework is not central to this study. However, the nature of the findings so far discussed suggest that such a determination could be more appropriately made by a consideration of dilemmas in which the principal's value system may be more exposed, namely in moral and ethical dilemmas involving the principal and formal administrative authority. Assuming for the most part that principals believe in the values of the education system in which they work, specific research into those times when these values are in conflict with those of the principal may provide a clearer picture of this important question.

D) THE GENERAL RESOLUTION OF DILEMMAS

The specific purposes of this study were further informed by the findings in relation to whether there were consistent patterns in the principals' general approaches to the resolution of moral and ethical dilemmas. As noted previously, the principals could each articulate a general rule or strategy for dilemma resolution. There was no one general approach. While similarities often existed, at times different principals responded differently to the same dilemmas perhaps for similar reasons or responded similarly for different reasons. In essence, this rule or strategy was idiosyncratic with each respondent nominating a final authority to which the dilemma was referred when resolution was very difficult. For two respondents this authority did not "necessarily stay with one person or authority" (Elizabeth). Rather, it depended "on the actual situation and what you wanted

for the end result” (James). This approach alluded to the principal’s ability to manipulate the outcomes of certain dilemmas where they did not have full power or authority. Even though the principals did not openly discuss manipulation, a number of responses such as creative insubordination and taking a moral stance featured attempts by the principal to manipulate the final determination. At the same time these principals were nonetheless able to identify a final authority which was not restricted to situation specifics. For most, this final authority rested with their own conscience.

Critics (including some Church officials) may wish to take issue with Catholic school principals who do not recognize the Bishop as their final authority since he is the person ultimately responsible for Catholic Education in the diocese. Others, may be inspired by the likes of Maria who respects the Church and its teachings but assumes ultimate responsibility for her own actions:

As far as I can see the institutional Church is not my authority ... it is my conscience before God ... the Church is there to guide me but I really don’t see it as my final authority.

Regardless, the finding that principals act either from their own conscience, value base or the official teachings of the Church (James) adds weight to the other findings in this study which suggest that principals do in fact possess a clear moral framework. Further, a detailed analysis of their approaches to actual and hypothetical dilemmas reveals that each principal consistently applied the general resolution strategy which they later described. Moreover, the application of these strategies although quite different, one from the other, consistently recognized the nominated final authority.

From a different perspective the finding that all the principals (except James) recognized their own conscience or value system as their ultimate authority can be linked to the earlier findings in relation to which or whose values prevail on resolution. As adherence to their own values and conscience was of primary concern to the principals themselves, the finding that principals were unconcerned as to whether their particular approaches to dilemma resolution were consistent with those of other Catholic school principals was predictable. In fact the principals themselves acknowledged that in other schools and in different circumstances varying approaches may be more appropriate than those taken by them in the study. Be that as it may, their reliance on their own moral conscience and the prevalence of their own values in the resolution of moral and ethical dilemmas hold significant implications for the training, employment, and professional development of Catholic school principals. Within the terms of this study which seeks neither to determine what principals 'ought' do, nor even why they do what they do, it is sufficient to leave the detailed consideration of these implications to others.

E) CENTRAL THEMES

The following section addresses a number of recurring themes that pervaded the study. At this point it is not intended that an exhaustive treatment of each issue be provided but rather a synthesis of the study's findings in relation to important issues identified in the literature.

E.1 Self-Interest Versus the Common Good

Within the context of this study concerned with intra-role dilemmas in which the principal's own personal and professional values conflict with others the problem of self-interest existed in two forms. From one perspective self interest referred to those occasions when System imperatives impinged on the principal's own personal interests. Alternatively, the principal's own personal interest was represented by what the principal believed to be the best for the individual school rather than any personal consideration. This second form of self-interest included those many occasions when the rights of an individual in the school community were at odds with the good of the whole.

Earlier, this chapter noted that the personal preferences of the principal was an influence on but not the basis for the resolution of moral and ethical dilemmas. Typically, personal preference was in the understandable form of avoiding dilemmas from arising usually through a number of strategies which principals developed over time to prevent certain dilemmas from re-occurring. The findings did not support the possibility that personal profit or gain was a basis for dilemma resolution, nor was there any actual example in which the influence of the principal's own personal interests appeared to be a factor in the resolution process. However, this is not to suggest that self-interest was inconsequential to the resolution process in general, only that the principal's did not give any practical illustration of such an influence.

On those occasions when a principal disagreed with a System policy or directive, self-interest was evident as a strong influence on the nature of the subsequent response. In particular, when principals chose to suspend their own morality or to use creatively

insubordinate strategies their subsequent action often accommodated the avoidance of potential backlash that might have incurred from outright refusal. Thus, self-interest in this sense was limited to avoiding trouble or 'hassles', protecting one's career prospects and projecting a positive self-image. Although the principals did not readily admit to motives of self-interest, Maria and Brian acknowledged that their own self-interest posed a considerable threat to the integrity of the dilemma resolution process.

Although the findings are inconclusive in relation to what extent self-interest actually influences the resolution of moral and ethical dilemmas, this study contends that personal preference in the form of self-interest is a Type I value since self-interest is a matter of will and therefore transrational in nature. Even though Hodgkinson's (1991) distinction between Type I and Type III values is blurred by such a perspective, the findings of this study relating to the relatively weak influence of personal preferences do not necessarily apply to the principals' self-interest. Future research into the possible influence of self-interest on administrative practice could greatly inform this question.

The problem presented by the second form of self-interest included reconciling the rights and needs of the individual while acting in the best interests of the whole school. Numerous examples in the study supported Hodgkinson's (1991: 67) contention that the central problem of administration is "one of reconciling two often divergent interests: those of the individual and those of the collectivity or organization." Many of the dilemmas described by the respondents hinged on this fundamental difficulty as evidenced by the following comments: "the good of the children and the rights of the teacher ... is a real conflict if you do know that the teachers is not performing to the best" (Elizabeth);

“we were trying to be too pastoral rather than thinking about the welfare of the rest of the community” (James); I think it’s a case of Christ left the sheep and went looking for the lost one didn’t he?” (Brian); “the school is there primarily for the children ... anything that negatively affects that, for example the health of the teacher, then I feel the effective education of the children must come first” (Maria); “Principals see things from the school point of view. Teachers by nature don’t. Teachers see it from their point of view” (Malcom); “After all, the principal’s responsible for the running of the school, for the good of all the school and all the teachers, not just one or two kids” (James).

That principals chose variously between the rights of the individual and the good of the majority is no surprise, for ultimately a choice had to be made and “neither the group nor the individual is always right or always wrong” (Campbell, 1992: 450). The findings of this study suggest that practicalities often preclude principals from following Starratt’s (1994) advice to serve both the claims of the majority and the rights of the individual. Moral and ethical dilemmas have no easy solution. The many responses that different principals made to the varying described circumstances in which this fundamental problem was critical serve only to illustrate that “conflict cannot be eliminated from organizations; it is an essential, necessary and healthy part of their life. The leader has not so much to solve value conflict as to resolve it, continuously” (Hodgkinson, 1991: 76).

E.2 Articulated Versus Assumed Values

Literature reviewed in this study suggests that conceptual confusion compounds many of the difficulties of conducting values research. Findings reported herein suggest

that central to this confusion is the earlier-identified problem posed by the difference between articulated (explicit) values and 'unconscious' (implicit) values. Schein (1984) contends that implicit assumptions are learned behavioral responses that originated as espoused (articulated) values, but as these responses began to solve problems the espoused values are transformed into 'unconscious', implicit assumptions. Findings discussed earlier in this chapter indicate that these assumptions include both consequentialist and non-consequentialist principles.

Begley and Johansson (1997: 4) raise the difficulty caused by articulation when they suggest that the less frequent articulation of non-rational values by principals might be related to "prevailing social bias towards the rational value types." Hodgkinson (1991) postulates that over time values lose their moral authenticity or force. In a variation of this contention, Begley (1996a) argues that the value orientation of principals move with time towards the center of the values hierarchy. At face value, Schein's (1995) contention that over time and with experience espoused (articulated) values become 'unconscious' assumptions as policy and practice become routine is consistent with the assertion that values move away from the non-rational value types toward the rational. However, there was no evidence in this study to suggest that articulated values that become 'assumed' over time become more or less rational merely because they are articulated less often. The critical point here is that contrary to the accepted understanding (e.g., Hodgkinson, 1991; Campbell, 1992) rational values are not restricted to values "analogous to consensus and consequences" (Begley, 1996a: 581). As discussed earlier, findings in this study extend the understanding of rational values to include non-consequential values which may have

have become implicit or unstated but are nonetheless held at the rational level as a result of experience over time. Thus, non-consequentialist values may be rational or non-rational, implicit or explicit.

At the center of the conceptual confusion that surrounds the determination of what constitutes rational values is the problem of articulation. Explicit (articulated) values which become assumed or 'unconscious' may be no less potent or influential simply because they have 'disappeared from view.' Whether non-consequentialist (or consequentialist for that matter) values are held at the rational or transrational level does not necessarily depend on a person's ability to articulate their presence in teleological or deontological terms. This study contends that while moral and ethical dilemmas are transrational by nature, the administrator's subsequent response may be motivated by values held across the three levels of Hodgkinson's typology. Thus, this study challenges the inference that transrational values (Type I) are only influential in administrative circumstances which are ambiguous, unique or urgent (Begley, 1996a).

Compounding the problem of articulation is the apparent assumption in the literature and particularly in Hodgkinson's (1978, 1991) values theory that deontological (non-consequentialist) principles are by definition non-rational and that teleological (consequentialist) are rational. There were many examples in this study where non-consequentialist values were articulated at the rational level and where values articulated at the rational level were held at the transrational level. Whilst this differentiation has important implications in terms of the apparent misconception that rational values are inherently neutral or amoral (as discussed elsewhere in this chapter), the crucial contention

in the context of this discussion is that consequentialist and non-consequentialist values may be held at the rational and transrational levels in both implicit and explicit forms.

This study further contends that with experience principals rely on established policy and practice (often for deontological reasons) which may be justified in the socially preferred rational terms of consensus and consequences. Importantly, this is not to suggest that all deontological principles are rational but that particular rights, duties and principles can be held at the rational level. Such a contention casts a shadow over Hodgkinson's (1991: 103) postulate that there is a natural tendency to resolve value conflicts at the lowest level of the hierarchy because administrative practice typically "seeks to avoid moral issues." Given the findings of this study that Type III (the lowest level) values do not form a basis for principals' responses to moral and ethical dilemmas and the contention that Type II values may well include particular non-consequentialist values, the claims that administrators typically seek to avoid moral issues or to resolve them at the lowest level become somewhat contentious generalizations.

Many of the intricacies of this complex question are well illustrated in an example from the study. Over the course of three separate interviews the data revealed that James valued a number of organizational and professional role ethics including both consequentialist and non-consequentialist perspectives: being consistent, supporting the teacher 'no matter what', 'sticking' to policy, following rules, and being decisive. When particular circumstances appeared to warrant an exception to these ethics as in the case of the cancer suffering Luke not adhering to the school's unwritten hairstyle policy, James became trapped by his own values. In particular, past strict adherence to the same policy

and the class teacher's adamant support for its application in Luke's circumstances precluded James from making an exception, despite being well aware of the extenuating circumstances including the stress on the child and his family.

Even though many of James's values may at one time been held at the transrational level, they now possibly existed in the form of explicit and implicit values at the rational and transrational levels. Although James justified his decision to enforce the existing policy in the socially preferred terms of 'sticking to policy', his final determination not to make an exemption resists simple explanation. James's unwavering position may have been informed by a number of implicit and explicit values (e.g., being decisive, supporting the teacher) which together precluded James from making a seemingly justified, even trivial exception to an unwritten policy in somewhat grave circumstances. Perhaps part of the dilemma for James was that these implicit and explicit values may have clashed with numerous other values held by James such as 'doing the best for the kids', treating each child as an individual and giving witness to the gospel values of love and compassion held dear by Catholic schools in general. Thus, while such values may underlie James's decision to actively encourage the school community to pray for Luke during his course of chemotherapy treatment, because of the strength of other conflicting values he could not bring himself to allow Luke's non-regulation hairstyle despite the hair loss he suffered as a result of the treatment.

This dilemma situation, like many others in the study reveals no lack of problem-relevant information, nor of rational and transrational values. Whilst many of these values were implicit, their relative influence appeared to be more a factor of which values were

pre-eminent in James's mind than whether they were transrational or rational. Although unclear on this point, Hodgkinson (1991) himself admits that rational values can be held at the transrational level. Clearly, the dilemma itself was transrational in nature; James's response based on some internal determination of which implicit and explicit values would prevail. Leithwood and Steinbach (1995) observe that even when conflicts between two unequal values within the principal's value system arise, they do not simply choose the one that carries more weight and reject the other. Whether the final selection is made consciously or intuitively is a moot point, indicative of another problem central to this study and to the study of values in general--the problem of articulated values versus actual commitment to stated values.

Before discussing this problem in the next section it is important to note that while James may have decided to enforce the policy he may not have fully articulated the nature and mix of all the values that were involved. Part of this problem may reflect the lack of moral and ethical language constructs that inhibits administrators (and people generally) in their verbal expression of values, hinted at by Begley's (1996a) reference to the prevailing social bias towards the articulation of rational value types. Further compounding this problem is the administrator's own possible lack of awareness of all of the values in contention. For example, other findings reported in this chapter suggest that part of the 'driving force' or will behind James's staunch adherence to particular organizational and professional role ethics may be a fundamental (transrational) belief that as principal his own values should prevail in the resolution of moral dilemmas involving members of the school community. As James himself explained:

I think you've got to stick by your policies and your rules ... it's pretty hard to back down on a decision, otherwise your whole credibility goes. I think once you start doing that, it's going to come to everything else. After all, the principal is responsible for the running of the school, for the good of all the teachers, not just one or two kids.

The fact that he allowed Luke and his family to leave the school community rather than make an exemption to an unwritten hairstyle policy suggests that a principal's unexamined, assumed values may be crucial influences on administrative practice.

E. 3 Articulated Versus Actual Commitment to Values

Critics of administrators and administrative practice might well point to the numerous examples within this study's data where articulated values stand as an obvious contradiction to the lack of demonstrated commitment to those same values. When a school community perceives a significant degree of dissonance between what school leaders say and what they do, the apparent hypocrisy often results in a credibility or authenticity crisis for the principal concerned. When school principals espouse Christian values on one hand but display inconsistent or little apparent commitment to those same values, the resultant perception of double standards can demoralize teachers, parents and children. Such a situation has enormous implications for the development and maintenance of Catholic school cultures.

This study's clear intention not to judge or criticize the actions of the respondents has been asserted from the outset. The very nature of the topic at hand involves the resolution of moral and ethical dilemmas which by definition occur when two principles of right and wrong conflict at the same time. That the respondents' responses were at times

contradictory is to be expected as to honor one principle is to deny the other. The principal may in fact value both precepts. Any suggestion that principals purposely espouse one value while being committed to another is not supported by the findings of this study. On those occasions when the problem of dissonance was evident in their responses, the principals seemed to be genuinely unaware of the disparity.

The dissonance that did occur was often evident in those afore-mentioned instances when the rights of the individual had to be weighed against the best interests of the majority, such as: putting the rights of Mr. Kent over what was best for Melissa and the rest of the class (Elizabeth); falsifying leave records to burden the System rather than his own school with the replacement costs (Malcom); respecting the perspectives of others but discounting the 'lifeworld' of a teacher suffering from chronic health problems (Maria); deciding to 'get rid' of a persistently misbehaving child by threatening expulsion when such a decision lay outside of the principal's jurisdiction (James); and announcing a System-wide policy while working to undermine it (Brian).

As noted earlier, Begley (1996c) posits that part of the problem of administrators articulating one value while being committed to another raises the possibility that one knowledge schema might reflect a commitment to one set of values and a selected procedural schema might articulate a response to another set of values. Certainly when principals resolve that the "focus of any decision you make is what is best for the children" and yet pre-select children into a class with a less than competent teacher because "some parents couldn't care less what class their child was in" (Malcom), Begley's contention seems well illustrated. Similarly, Begley and Johansson's (1997) contention that

dissonance usually occurs between articulated values and actual commitment to values lower down the hierarchy is aptly illustrated by the same example.

Other findings in this study suggest that these issues may be compounded by the problem of articulated (assumed) and implicit values as discussed in the previous section. Implicit values that are at play may or may not be further down the hierarchy. In fact, the possible existence of any pre-determined hierarchical relationship between implicit and explicit values is as yet undetermined. Further, the interplay of transrational values that transform over time into 'unconscious' assumptions and rational values held at the transrational level is as yet unclear. A further complication arises when principals lack administrative expertise, fail to reflect on their administrative practice, or allow self-interest to influence the resolution process. Obviously these questions are vital to the development of a comprehensive and coherent values theory and the subject of much needed investigation. Meanwhile, the findings from this study are somewhat inconclusive in relation to understanding why dissonance might arise between an administrator's articulated and actual values.

F) IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

In accordance with this study's three step procedure for data analysis (as outlined in Chapter Three), this section considers the implications of the findings for the practice of research. There is common agreement that research in the values domain is fraught with complexity. As Hambrick and Brandon (1988: 30) observe:

To study executive values is to delve into the murkiest of organizational phenomena. Yet the role of values in influencing organizational processes, membership and outcomes is enormous.

Overall the findings from this study confirm the growing significance of values research. In particular, the findings suggest that the recent attention of a small but growing number of researchers (e.g., Begley, Campbell, Johansson, Leonard) in the area of values, variations in value orientations and values conflict is well justified with much left undone and unexplored. Nonetheless, significant progress has been made, not only in the establishment of a still fledgling knowledge base but also in the development of what may eventually become an established research methodology.

Chapter Two identified a number of limitations of the current research which will not be repeated here. Nonetheless, a critical problem identified in that chapter and that pervaded this study was the difference already discussed between what people say they do (articulated values) and what they in fact do (actual values). Begley and Johansson (1997) rightly argue that this problem is further complicated by the potential divergence among the varying perspectives of the first (respondent), second (participant) and third (researcher) persons involved in the study. A related problem which this study brings to the forefront is the difference between the motivational bases from which respondents claim to act and those from which they knowingly or unknowingly do act. It has been a repeated contention of this study that this problem in the research to date has been further compounded by the misconception that administrators (and people generally) act from either rational, transrational or subrational bases.

As findings herein indicate, in order to resolve moral dilemmas which occur at the transrational level, principals may draw from a number of implicit and explicit values which span the three levels of Hodgkinson's typology. These implicit and explicit values guide policy, practice and the actions of principals. The fact that these values may be rational or non-rational, consequentialist or non-consequentialist, explicit or implicit further adds to the principal's dilemma. In times of moral crisis they present a confusing plethora of possible motivations, the interplay of which may be described in predominantly rational terms. Hence, any study into moral and ethical dilemmas is worthwhile if for no other reason than the possibility that in the resolution of the most difficult of value conflicts, more of these values may surface and therefore be uncovered.

These contentions have a number of implications for the practice of research. Firstly, the study of values must be approached cautiously, with due care given to the definition of terms, the overall research design, data collection and analysis methods, and especially to the strength of any subsequent claims arising from the interpretation of the findings. Such an approach must recognize that in the final analysis the researcher presents but one interpretation, what Hughes (1990) calls a 'second order' construct, itself open to the interpretation of others. This problem is reduced by the reporting of findings in the 'first-person' and the use of memory checks or other techniques whereby the respondents themselves confirm the initial interpretation ascribed by the researcher to their responses.

This study concurs with Begley's and Johansson's (1997: 11) contention that "the researcher must almost certainly collect data in face-to-face situations; through interviews,

stimulated recall, perhaps case problems and through participant observation.” The use of well developed and piloted hypothetical case scenarios has much to offer in that they are non-threatening and apparently enjoyable, providing a valuable opportunity for the researcher to develop with the respondent the open, non-judgmental and non-defensive rapport that is crucial to the success of studies of this nature. Further, they serve as excellent memory ‘triggers’ as evidenced by the number of times the different respondents in this study discussed actual circumstances in addition to those provided in the vignettes. Perhaps their success in this study lay partly in the lack of opportunity for principals to prepare their answer. In the absence of time to reflect on their replies at length principals relied on their short term memory to inform their responses. Typically, this information was drawn from recent similar or related experiences, highlighting the need for context specific scenarios that are relevant, appropriate and familiar to the respondent.

Researchers need to be aware that complex administrative problems require much consideration. The findings reported here suggest the need for one-on-one rather than group approaches (also recommended by Begley & Johansson, 1997). Considerable time should be allowed in an interview situation for the principals to work through the issues and to outline their intent in taking certain action. Once a genuine rapport has been established between the researcher and the respondent the likelihood of ‘stock’, ‘trade’, ‘official’ or ‘quick fix’ responses diminish and with them the myth of the technocratic, bureaucratic, consequentialist administrative approach to the resolution of transrational values conflict.

Due consideration must be given to the confidentiality aspects of the study. If respondents are to 'bare their souls' as candidly as did the respondents in this study, then every effort needs to be made to ensure that their anonymity is protected. Researchers entreated to the administrators' inner world should not be surprised or shocked to uncover human weakness, conflicting emotion and unexplained intent. Administrators, like all people, are vulnerable, at times uncertain, and frequently in error. Thus, empathy and respect for administrators and for the complexity of their task are key ingredients in any researcher's investigation of the values underpinning administrative practice.

A FINAL COMMENT

In the context of the Catholic Church this study may have something to offer those who seek to understand and improve administrative practice within its schools. Increasingly, school administrators everywhere are expected to be conscientious moral agents, acting, making decisions, and resolving dilemmas in a distinctly moral manner. Similarly, the task of Catholic school principals includes responding to resolve moral and ethical dilemmas, often in the face of a myriad of competing and conflicting values. The moral confusion that exists both within and outside the Church contributes to the complexity and ambiguity involved in determining an appropriate response.

There seems little doubt that the principals in the study were greatly influenced by the overarching values, doctrines and teachings of the Catholic Church itself. Importantly, this is not to imply that the principals automatically or consistently applied the 'official line' adopted by the Church. Rather, the principals appeared to share the opinion that the

Church was professing the ideal and that in many instances and situations this position was inappropriate. Certainly, they were conscious of the current confusion and inconsistency within the Church and the unenviable consequences suffered within the performance of their role as 'agents' of the Church.. As this is not a comparative study it is not possible to draw comparisons with non-Catholic principals. However, directly and indirectly the principals in the study were influenced by the overall perspective of the Catholic Church. For the most part, the respondents were well aware of whether their response to moral and ethical dilemmas complied with or contravened the official Church position. Nonetheless, four of the five principals would not act against their own values in order to comply with a perspective or position taken by the Church with which they disagreed.

In the Catholic school literature sparse attention has been given to the role of school leaders in the determination of which and whose values, beliefs, and understandings are to prevail. Reported findings in this study suggest that the principal's personal and professional values pervade the resolution of moral and ethical dilemmas between the principal and the school community. In the same way, but to a far lesser extent the values of principals were significant influences in the resolution of moral dilemmas that occurred between the principal and formal administrative authority. The inevitable question of what principals in Catholic school settings should do to resolve moral and ethical dilemmas is outside the focus of this study, but nonetheless informed by this investigation into what some principals in fact actually do. Perhaps a crucial element for subsequent investigation is the effect of principals' responses to moral and ethical dilemmas on the ongoing

formation of school culture. Much is expected but little is known about how the values of Catholic principals influence the negotiation of what is to count as culture in their schools.

The complex reality of the administrators' postmodern work-world includes moral and ethical dilemmas that are "inevitable, endemic and perpetual" (Handy, 1994: 48). The administrator's task of resolution is fraught with difficulties and challenges, the complexity of which escapes many of those outside the role. Increasingly, administrators are called to act morally as they respond to the turbulent demands of the growing numbers of those "yearning to reclaim the moral-ethical-spiritual domain of leadership" (Duignan, 1997: 3).

Part of the problem with a study of principals' responses to moral and ethical dilemmas is that the findings necessarily relate to that context. Hodgkinson (1991: 137) reminds us that "the administrator is not always in the field of battle and in the heat of combat." Sweeping generalizations about the leadership behavior of principals based on the findings of this study are simply not possible. Nonetheless, a focus on how principals respond to moral and ethical dilemmas reveals vital information about that behavior. This study has presented an interpretation of that behavior which challenges some prevailing notions of administrators and administrative practice. Moreover, the reported findings remind researchers and theorists alike of the tentative nature of the existing knowledge base in the values domain within educational administration. Thus, extravagant claims are not made for the importance of this study's findings or their implications. Perhaps the worth of this study may best be judged by the extent to which it inspires others to consider and re-consider the nature and influence of values, value orientations and value conflicts on administrative practice.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A**REQUEST FOR CONSENT**

**The Director
Catholic Education Office**

Dear

I wish to formally apply for permission to conduct my thesis research as part of the requirements of the doctoral program in education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education/University of Toronto, Canada. The study deals with the responses of Catholic Primary School Principals to moral and ethical dilemmas. I have included a précis of my proposal for your perusal.

The study involves conducting three interviews with five principals within the diocese. I hope to collect the data in the period from August to December, 1996.

I have included copies of a sample letter and an accompanying letter of consent that I intend to send to each of the five participants.

Should you have any further questions in relation to the study, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you for considering this request. I am quite excited about undertaking the study which I hope will contribute to our understanding of the complex role of the Catholic Primary School Principal.

Yours faithfully

Kevin Roche

APPENDIX B**LETTER OF CONSENT****DOCTORAL THESIS STUDY ON CATHOLIC PRINCIPALS' RESPONSES
TO MORAL AND ETHICAL DILEMMAS**

I am aware that Kevin Roche is conducting this study as part of the requirements of the doctoral program in education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education/University of Toronto, Canada.

I understand that the purpose of the study is to show the nature and variety of responses of particular Catholic principals to moral and ethical dilemmas.

I understand that the information that I provide is confidential and anonymous, and that pseudonyms will replace the real names of individuals, schools, systems and dioceses in the written thesis. During the data gathering phase a system of codes will be used in place of names to protect confidentiality. Further, I am aware that at the completion of the thesis all taped-recorded interviews will be destroyed.

My participation in this study is purely voluntary and I am free to withdraw at any time.

Signature _____ Date _____

APPENDIX C

PRINCIPAL PRE-INTERVIEW SYNOPSIS

Interview: Date.....

Time.....

Location.....

Name of Respondent.....

Gender.....Age.....

Parish.....

Current Position.....

Number of Years in the Position.....

Type of School.....

School Population.....

Number of Teaching Staff.....

Number of Years as a Principal.....

Number of Years Worked in Education.....

Number of Schools Worked in.....

APPENDIX D**FIRST INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

- Q.1 As a school principal, what do you see as the main issues in this case?**
- Q.2 If you were the principal, what importance would you give to each of these issues?**
- Q.3 What options do you see the principal as having?**
- Q.4 What would you do next? Please explain your intentions.**
- Q.5 What existing policies or procedures at school or system level would influence your decision?**
- Q.6 On what basis did you discard the other options?**
- Q.7 What do you see as the likely consequences of your actions in relation to:**
- a) the individuals concerned**
 - b) the majority of the school community**
 - c) school policy**
 - d) yourself**

APPENDIX E**RETROSPECTIVE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

The principal will be asked to think about and describe a recent dilemma that they had experienced. Each principal will be asked to explain how he/she dealt with the dilemma. The focus of the interview will be on ‘why?’ - the reasons for the respondent’s actions in attempting to resolve the dilemma.

In this open interview, I will be aware of the following aspects of the resolution process, focusing on the reasons behind the principal’s actions:

- the courses of action considered;**
- input sought and/or received from others;**
- the existing rules, procedures or policies that influenced the decision;**
- his/her intentions in taking a particular course of action;**
- the support received from those the principal is formally responsible to;**
- the intended and unintended outcomes of the course of action taken;**
- in retrospect, whether the action was effective enough to be repeated in similar circumstances.**

APPENDIX E**THIRD INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

Q.1 In your experience what type(s) of moral and ethical dilemmas occur the most often?

Q.2 How frequently would such situations occur?

Q.3 Can you describe a particular method, principle or strategy that you employ in dealing with these situations?

Q.4 As a principal do you find that your own personal and/or professional values or beliefs sometimes conflict with the values promoted by the school and its community, the Catholic Education Office, the parish priest or others within the system? How frequently would such situations occur?

Q.5 As a principal, how do you usually respond to situations where your own personal and professional values conflict with others?

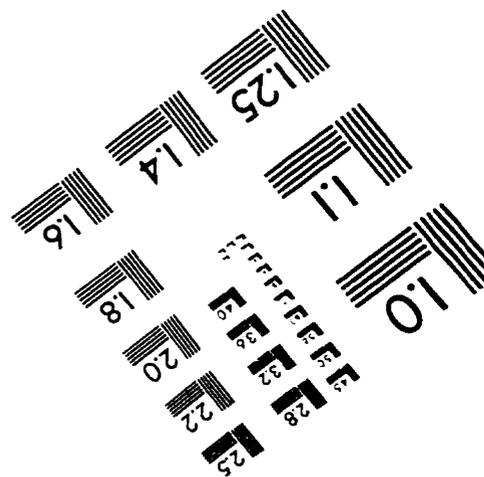
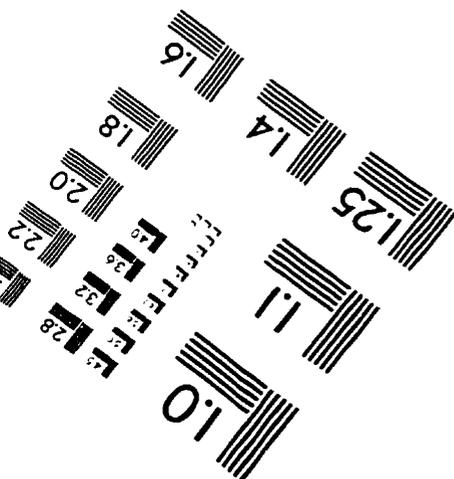
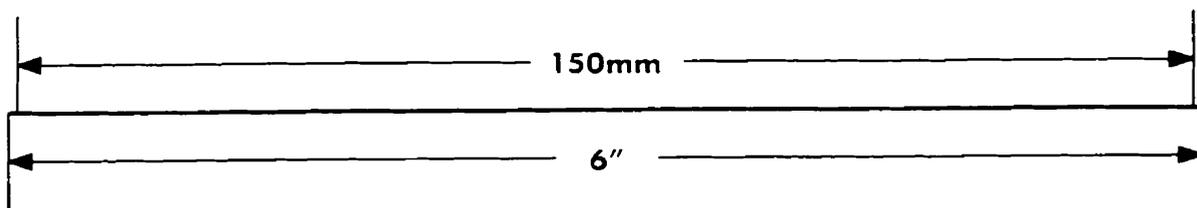
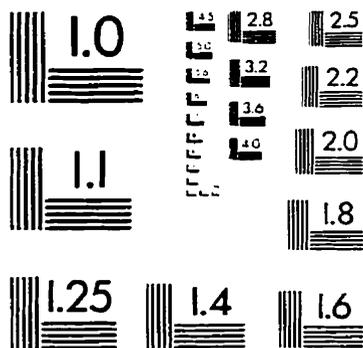
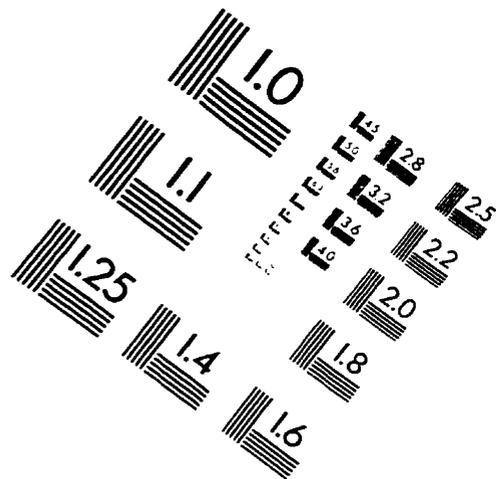
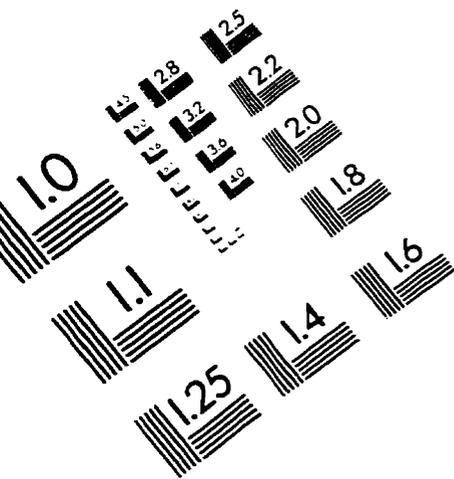
Q.6 In dealing with these dilemmas, who do you recognise as the final or ultimate authority?

Q.7 Have you experienced dilemmas that arise because your own personal or professional values conflict with this authority? What did you do? Why?

APPENDIX G**A PROFILE OF THE PRINCIPALS**

Name Principal	Yrs. In Educ.	Yrs. Principal/Pr. Sch.	Yrs.
Elizabeth Wright	13	8	8
James Hegarty	36	29	11
Maria Antonez	25	4	2
Malcom Burnes	16	4	4
Brian Davis	32	25	4

IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)



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