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# AN EXAMINATION OF THE FORCES WHICH LED TO THE INTRODUCTION OF FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION PROGRAMS INTO THE ROMAN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OF NEWFOUNDLAND

by

© Selina Joan Tripp, B.Voc.Ed.

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## ABSTRACT

The primary purpose of this study was to examine the forces which led to the introduction of family life education programs into the Roman Catholic schools of Newfoundland.

Emerging from the information collected was the observation that while a number of forces seem to have influenced Roman Catholic educators in Newfoundland to develop a family life education program for their schools, the main impetus seems to have come from within the Catholic Church itself.

The dignity of marriage, the importance of a Christian relationship between conjugal love and responsible parenthood, and the sanctity of human life have always been an important part of the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. During the past two decades, the current widespread practice of divorce, premarital and extramarital sexual relations, artificial birth control methods, and abortion have posed new challenges to the teachings of the Catholic Church. Consequently, in recent years leaders of the Roman Catholic Church have begun to take a more vocal approach in reaffirming the

Church's doctrine with regard to all issues related to marriage and the family.

The Roman Catholic educators of Newfoundland, in responding to the mandates of their church, have worked diligently to develop and implement comprehensive programs of family life education for their schools. These programs represent a positive step by Catholic educators in this province to attempt to counteract the current negative social forces which create a challenge to the Catholic faith.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

During the last two decades much concern has been expressed about the changes that have occurred in family life, not only in Canada, but throughout the Christian world. Nowhere has this concern been greater than here in Newfoundland where family values and traditions have always been revered and preserved.

Perhaps one of the loudest voices to be heard during this period of change in family life has been that of the Roman Catholic Church, which down through the ages has steadfastly upheld the indissolubility of marriage and the Christian ideal of love and marriage. The Church has never fledged in its responsibility to help young couples build happy marriages and maintain stable families.

In an attempt to respond to the changes occurring in the family, the Catholic educators of Newfoundland, along with parents and other professionals, have worked diligently to develop a sound program of family life education for students in Catholic schools. This program has been designed in keeping with the Christian

concept of love and marriage and the fundamentals of Catholic educational philosophy.

The forces which led to the eventual introduction of family life education programs into the Catholic schools of Newfoundland go back over fifty years and have emanated from both inside and outside the Catholic community.

## I. Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the forces which led to the introduction of family life education programs into the Roman Catholic schools of Newfoundland.

## II. Review of Related Literature

A review of the literature revealed several research studies pertaining to the views of teachers, students, parents, or other members of the public, toward family life education or sex education programs: Seely (1969) conducted a survey of opinions on sex education in Alberta; Leslie (1973) measured students' expectations of, and reactions to, a family life education program, consisting of a one semester course dealing with human sexuality; Bowen (1974) studied the attitudes of junior high home economics teachers toward Modern Living, a new subject area introduced into the home economics curriculum; Wolsk (1976) studied the attitudes of

the public and teachers toward the Steps to Maturity, family life education program in a local school district; and Quinn (1977) surveyed parents' views regarding the philosophy of family life education.

Several studies attempted to evaluate family life education or sex education programs: McGuire (1972) investigated the relation between sex education and student attitudes; the Department of Research and Education of the Edmonton Public School Board (1973) examined the operation of the Perspectives for Living (family life education) program in ten of the Board's junior and senior high schools; Rashkovan (1974) studied knowledge gain and attitude change in a family life education program; Middleton (1975) evaluated a family life education course at a secondary school; Stennett (1975) conducted a preliminary evaluation of the family planning unit of a family living program; Hoehn (1975) examined the effectiveness of a sex education program 'About Your Sexuality' for adults by looking at the changes in knowledge, attitudes and communication in workshops on sexuality; and Burnham (1977) studied the effectiveness of sex education/family life education programs in the United States and Canada, 1968-1977.

Two studies looked at the need or readiness of students for family life or sex education: Guest (1971) studied the correlates of readiness for various aspects

of family life education among a group of secondary school students; and Cobham (1974) studied the sex knowledge of first year education students to see if there was a need and desire for sex education.

Four other studies looked at various aspects of family life education: Bunyan (1970) surveyed the elementary (Grades I-VI) curriculum in order to determine whether or not family life education required further curriculum development; Nearing (1970) surveyed a secondary school curriculum in order to ascertain the relevancy of that curriculum to family life education; Evenson (1973) assessed the adequacy of training received by family life education teachers; and Alcock (1974) explored the father-adolescent relationship and its implications for family life.

The review failed to reveal a single study which delved into the forces which might influence a group of educators to decide on the introduction of a specific program of family life education into a school system.

## III. Limitations of the Study

This study was limited to the introduction of family life education programs into the Roman Catholic schools of Newfoundland.

## IV. Procedure

This study attempted to trace the events leading to a national interest in family life studies in Canada,

as well as to examine the forces leading to the introduction of family life education programs into the Roman Catholic schools of Newfoundland.

The descriptive method of research was used, with the writer conducting documentary research and employing the interview technique. The facts from the research gave an account of the general events which led to a national interest in family life studies in Canada; the events which occurred within the Roman Catholic Church, both in Rome and in Canada; and the development of family life education programs by the Catholic Education Committee and the Roman Catholic school boards of Newfoundland.

Emphasis was placed upon the two encyclicals of Pope Pius XI, Divini Illius Magistri--"Christian Education of Youth" and Casti Connubii--"Christian Marriage" (Seven Great Encyclicals, 1963), the aims of public education for Newfoundland and Labrador as outlined by the Provincial Department of Education; the first Canadian Conference on the Family; the publication of the first Canadian textbook on the family, the establishment of The Vanier Institute of the Family; the Second Vatican Council with its documents Gravissimum educationis--"Declaration on Christian Education" and Gaudium et spes--"Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World" (Vatican Council II, the Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents, 1975); the Newfoundland Royal Commission on

Education and Youth; the Newfoundland Family Law Study; the Canadian Divorce Act; the National Consultation on Family Life Education; the encyclical of Pope Paul VI on Humanae Vitae (The Regulation of Birth, 1968); the endorsement of family life education programs contained in the "Statement of Canadian Bishops on the Encyclical Humanae Vitae" (Canadian Catholic Conference, Document No. 154, September 27, 1968); the setting up of the Special Family Committee of the Canadian Catholic Conference; the amendment to the Criminal Code of Canada permitting the sale of contraceptives and the legal dissemination of birth control information; the attempts to provide programs of sex information and sex education in Catholic schools in Newfoundland; the development of the family life education programs by the Roman Catholic School Boards of Humber-St. Barbe and St. John's; the appointment of a Family Life Consultant for the St. John's Board; the Provincial Family Planning and Sex Education Conference; the development of the Catholic Family Life Program of the Catholic Education Committee; the statement of the Canadian Bishops on the "Formation of Conscience" (Canadian Catholic Conference, Document No. 339, December 1, 1973); the organization of a Family Life Institute for teachers; and The Congress on The Christian Family--'Its Role and Potentials' conducted by the Newfoundland Catholic Church.

## V. Sources of Data

The sources of information were from primary sources, such as publications of the Roman Catholic Church, the Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents of the Second Vatican Council, Canadian and American publications concerning the family, and private individuals (Roman Catholic clergy and educators, members of the Catholic Education Committee, and members of Catholic Family Life Education Committees), Government of Newfoundland and Labrador publications, the Report of the Royal Commission on Education and Youth, the Reports of the Newfoundland Law Study, the Report of the Provincial Family Planning and Sex Education Conference, the Report of the National Consultation on Family Life Education, the Report of the Proceedings of Sessions of The Canadian Conference on the Family, and the family life education program booklets used in the Roman Catholic schools of Newfoundland.

## VI. Significance of the Study

The introduction of family life education programs into the Roman Catholic schools of Newfoundland warrants such a study since it marked the first time in Newfoundland history that a comprehensive family life education program was offered to youth in Newfoundland schools. This study represents the first

attempt to bring together the facts concerning the development of family life education programs in the Roman Catholic schools of Newfoundland.

It is also important that the study be undertaken at this time since there are many individuals still living in Newfoundland who were involved in the initial discussions concerning sex education programs, and the actual development of family life education programs, and they represent a primary source of valuable information.

## CHAPTER II

## FORCES WHICH EMERGED PRIOR TO THE SIXTIES

While many forces emerged during the sixties and seventies to influence the decision of Catholic educators in Newfoundland to introduce family life education into their schools, two very significant forces emerged from within the Catholic Church well before the sixties. The first of these was the encyclical of Pope Pius XI on "Christian Education of Youth" (Seven Great Encyclicals, 1963) and the second was the later encyclical of Pope Pius XI on "Christian Marriage" (Seven Great Encyclicals, 1963). The first part of this chapter examines these forces and their impact on the family life and education of Catholics in North America.

The second part of the chapter looks at the Aims of Public Education for Newfoundland and Labrador. The Aims, published by the Newfoundland Government in 1959, provided the field of education with a set of guidelines to be followed by the various curriculum committees in their deliberations.

## I. Pope Pius XI's Encyclical Divini Illius Magistri

In 1929 His Holiness Pope Pius XI, in his encyclical on "Christian Education of Youth," Divini Illius Magistri (Seven Great Encyclicals, 1963), broadly outlined the Catholic philosophy of education in the following statement:

> The proper and immediate end of Christian education is to cooperate with divine grace in forming the true and perfect Christian, that is, to form Christ Himself in those regenerated by baptism. (p. 64)

The limits within which Catholic educators may operate were defined by the Holy Father as follows:

> Christian education takes in the whole aggregate of human life, physical and spiritual, intellectual and moral, individual, domestic and social. (p. 65)

This encyclical also spelled out the type of Christian which Catholic educators are expected to produce:

> the supernatural man who thinks, judges and acts constantly and consistently in accordance with right reason illumined by the supernatural light of the example and teaching of Christ; in other words, to use the current term, the true and finished man of character. (p. 65)

Thus, Pope Pius XI's issuance of this encyclical provided Catholic educators with a basic philosophy of education to guide them in the development and implementation of educational programs in their schools. The encyclical emphasized the wholeness and entirety of man and the need for Catholic educators to be mindful

of this. Finally, the encyclical gave Catholic educators some vision of the kind of student they are expected to produce.

In addition to all this, the encyclical pointed to some of the grave threats to Christian education at that time. One of these was "naturalism which nowadays invades the field of education in that most delicate matter of purity of morals" (p. 56). The following statement by the Holy Father indicates his concern that instruction related to human sexuality be delicately handled by those ordained by God to teach:

> Far too common is the error of those who with dangerous assurance and under an ugly term propagate a so-called sex-education, falsely imagining they can forearm youth against the dangers of sensuality by means purely natural, such as a foolhardy initiation and precautionary instruction for all indiscriminately, even in public; and, worse still, by exposing them at an early age to the occasions, in order to accustom them, so it is argued, and as it were to harden them against such dangers.
>
> Such persons grievously err in refusing to recognize the inborn weakness of human nature, and the law of which the Apostle speaks, fighting against the law of mind; and also in ignoring the experience of facts, from which it is clear that, particularly in young people, evil practices are the effect not so much of ignorance of intellect as of weakness of a will exposed to dangerous occasions, and unsupported by the means of grace.
>
> In this extremely delicate matter, if, all things considered, some private instruction is found necessary and opportune, from those who hold from God the commission to

> teach and who have the grace of state, every precaution must be taken. Such precautions are well known in traditional Christian education. (p. 56)

While at the time of this encyclical, sex education and/or family life education as formal school programs were nonexistent in Newfoundland, or indeed in Canada, various aspects of such education were dealt with informally in Catholic schools in religious education discussions. The care with which Catholic educators incorporated these issues into their discussions reflected the words of this encyclical. The same care is obvious in the development of the family life education programs in the Catholic schools of Newfoundland today, as will be seen in a later chapter.

## II. Pope Pius XI's Encyclical Casti Connubii

In 1930 another encyclical of His Holiness Pope Pius XI brought about a renewed interest in the family throughout the Christian world. This was his famous encyclical on "Christian Marriage," Casti Connubii (Seven Great Encyclicals, 1963). One of the most significant passages in this encyclical was the one on the role of love in marriage and family relationships:

> Matrimonial faith demands that husband and wife be joined in an especially holy and pure love . . . as Christ loved the Church. . . . The love . . . is not that based on the passing lust of the moment nor does it consist in

> pleasing words only, but in the deep attachment of the heart which is expressed in action, since love is proved by deeds. This outward expression of love in the home demands not only mutual help but must go further; must have as its primary purpose that man and wife help each other day by day in forming and perfecting themselves in the interior life, so that through their partnership in life they may advance ever more and more in virtue, and above all that they may grow in true love toward God and their neighbor. . . .
>
> This mutual inward moulding of husband and wife, this determined effort to perfect each other, can . . . be said to be the chief reason and purpose of matrimony, provided matrimony be looked at not in the restricted sense as instituted for the proper conception and education of the child, but more widely as the blending of life as a whole and the mutual interchange and sharing thereof. (pp. 83-84)

This passage provided the Catholics of the time with some guiding principles for marriage and family living at a time when factors in society appeared to be threatening the realization of the Catholic ideal of marriage. Thomas (1956) gives an account of some of these factors in the following statement on the plight of American Catholics of the time:

> The Catholic family must not only make the difficult adjustments involved in the transition from a rural to an industrialized urban environment, but it must achieve balance and stability in a culture which regards the pathological as normal. This normalcy of the pathological in the dominant society presents particularly acute problems to a minority seeking closer cultural integration. Differences in family standards and behavioral patterns become more sharply defined. Institutions related to family life lend little support to the minority's ideals for they are geared to other values. It

> follows that Catholics must rely heavily on their own resources in actualizing their family standards. (pp. 411-412)

Shortly after Pope Pius XI issued Casti Connubii, family movements began to emerge in North America to help Catholics conform to their family ideals in the complex, changing society of which they were a part. Two of these movements were the Cana Conference Movement and the Christian Family Movement.

The aim of the Cana Conference Movement was "to help married people and those preparing for marriage to realize in full the graces and the fruits of the graces which come to them in marriage" (Egan, 1950, p. vii).

During the Cana Conference, married couples were given instructions on how to make a successful marriage and family life. Consideration was given to

> the basic principles of family life, the sacramental nature of marriage, the statuses and roles of husband and wife, the physical, psychological, and spiritual aspects of marriage relationships, parent education, family economics, and other related subjects. (Thomas, p. 421)

Thus, the Cana Conference was seen as a movement to provide the inspiration, motivation, formation, and practical help needed in preparing for a full and happy Christian marriage. (Egan, p. 14)

The Christian Family Movement had as its purpose "to restore Christian ideals in family life by working

on the environment in which families live" (Thomas, p. 429). The Movement was made up of small groups of couples who met at regular intervals. The aim of these meetings was to

> provide a training school in which the members, through discussion and thought, clarify their understanding of basic Christian principles and focus attention on their immediate environment with the purpose of personally carrying out the practical application of these principles in their own neighborhoods. (Thomas, p. 430)

The Cana Conference Movement and the Christian Family Movement are both in existence today, and, while the scope of their work has changed somewhat, their aims are basically the same. These movements have done much to help Catholics in North America face the new challenges of contemporary society. From out of these movements have come the emphasis on family life education for both adults and youth, which is so evident in the Catholic schools of North America today.

## III. Aims of Public Education for Newfoundland and Labrador

Another force which was to leave its impact on the development of education in Newfoundland emerged on the eve of the sixties. This was the publication by the Department of Education of a bulletin entitled

Aims of Public Education for Newfoundland and Labrador (1959/1974). This bulletin contained fourteen general objectives for education in Newfoundland, and among these objectives were the following:

1. To help pupils understand the Christian principles and to guide them in the practice of these principles in their daily living.

2. To help pupils to develop moral values which will serve as a guide to living.

4. To help pupils to mature mentally.

5. To help pupils to mature emotionally.

10. To help pupils understand the human body and practice the principles of good health.

11. To help pupils appreciate their privileges and responsibilities as members of their families and the wider community and so live in harmony with others. (pp. 6-7)

So, as Newfoundland entered the sixties, educators had some clearly stated educational objectives to work toward. The objectives listed above have been very carefully incorporated in the family life education programs of the Catholic schools of Newfoundland, as will be seen in a later chapter.

## CHAPTER III

## FORCES WHICH EMERGED IN THE SIXTIES

During the early sixties we find an increasing concern about the role of the family in Canadian society. This concern is evidenced by the efforts to organize the first Canadian Conference on the Family, the publication of the first Canadian textbook on the family, and the setting up of The Vanier Institute of the Family. The first part of this chapter will examine these events.

The second part of the chapter will examine the impact on family life and education of the Second Vatican Council; the Royal Commission on Education and Youth; the Newfoundland Family Law Study; the proclamation of the Canadian Divorce Act; the encyclical of Pope Paul VI, "On Human Life," Humanae Vitae (The Regulation of Birth, 1970); the National Consultation on Family Life Education; and the amendment to the Criminal Code of Canada permitting the sale of contraceptives and the legal dissemination of birth control information.

### I. The First Canadian Conference on the Family

The first real effort to develop a national interest in the family began in 1962 when Canada's

Governor General Vanier and Madame Vanier initiated the idea of a Canadian Conference on the Family.

On May 29, 1962, the first meeting to initiate this conference got under way in the small community of Hazeldean near Ottawa, and from that meeting emerged a genuine public concern for the family in Canada:

> The meeting reflected the growing conviction of social scientists regarding the inescapable importance of family life and their growing awareness that very little family research had been undertaken in this country. It reflected concern for families rather than for problems as such, for its focus was on the ordinary Canadian family of today. (Thomson, 1964, pp. xi-xii)

A month after this meeting took place, a firm decision was made to hold a national conference. The Canadian Catholic Conference, along with groups from other major faiths, supplied financial assistance to this endeavor. (Thomson, p. xii)

On June 7, 1964, in an inaugural address to the Conference participants, Governor General Vanier made the following remarks:

> Throughout the world the little community that is known as the family is passing through a series of crises resulting from certain profound changes in modern man's way of life. (p. 4)

He went on to say that:

> Our transition to the age of technology has not been effected without a certain amount of confusion. The little community so essential to life and to society has suffered some rather trying shocks. The amazing development of economics and material civilization has

> brought a crisis upon the family. It is time for men with serious responsibilities in society to take stock together of the problems facing us. The future is in our hands. It is up to us to direct the course of our civilization that it may remain really and truly human, that is to say: favourable to all that is essentially human. (pp. 5-6)

While participants at the Conference recognized the fact that the Canadian family of the sixties was experiencing difficulties which families of earlier times did not have to face, a certain air of optimism prevailed throughout the Conference proceedings, and was clearly expressed by two Conference participants. Mr. Gérard Pelletier, then Editor-in-Chief of a Montreal newspaper, made the following comment: "From the very first, we stoutly refused to take refuge in pessimism" (p. 142). Another participant, The Reverend Gérard Dion, a member of the Catholic clergy of Quebec City, and a professor of social science at Laval University, made the following statement:

> If the family is in special difficulties today, there is no doubt whatsoever that there are also possibilities of fulfilment which are greater than there ever were in the past. We are realizing more and more that we must insist on the development of a sense of personal responsibility. We must insist on the duty of each individual to fulfill himself and to accept his social responsibilities as well. (p. 95)

According to Schlesinger (1972), this conference produced some very positive results:

> The first Canadian Conference on the Family brought into focus the importance of

> the family in the context of a changing Canadian society. What emerged was the urgent need for systematic cross-country family research as well as the need to strengthen families through the existing human welfare services on national, provincial, and local levels. Emphasis was also placed on spiritual and moral values, essential ingredients of family life. (p. 3)

Out of this worthwhile conference there also emerged the idea of setting up The Vanier Institute of the Family which was to

> seek to develop and maintain an overall view of the total situation affecting the family in Canada and remain available to intervene as issues are raised, studied and acted upon, while avoiding duplication. (Doyle, 1964, p. 158).

While much was left to be done with regard to the actual course which The Vanier Institute would follow, the Conference was successful in producing "momentum, inspiration and some basic materials in order to develop a program rooted in the realities and concerns of Canadian families" (Doyle, p. 158).

The Canadian Conference on the Family, by bringing together a group of Canadians from many different occupations and faiths, brought to the forefront the need for strengthening the family structure. This was to be done not only by providing adequate social services but also by promoting the spiritual and moral values of family life. The latter was later to become an important goal of the Catholic educators of Newfoundland as they

set about the task of developing family life education programs for their schools.

## II. The Publication of the First Canadian Textbook on the Family

In the early stages of the preparations for the first Canadian Conference on the Family, it was recognized that the most immediate need was "to assemble all of the present knowledge of Canadian families and at the same time to discover the points on which information was lacking" (Thomson, 1964, p. xiii). An associate professor of sociology at the University of Montreal, Dr. Frederick Elkin, was invited to do this research.

The findings of Dr. Elkin were published in 1964 in a book entitled The Family in Canada. Dr. Elkin's book provided a valuable source of reference on the family. This book also served to point out the uniqueness of the Canadian family:

> Canada also has its unique problems and characteristics. We have a lower proportion of wives working for pay and a lower divorce rate than most western industrialized countries. Our weather creates distinctive problems of seasonal employment and limits the areas of settlement for retired people. Our mosaic of ethnic groups has no direct counterpart anywhere in the world. Our history links us especially with the cultures of England and France and our geography to the culture of the United States. We have above all a French Canada with its unique historical development for 400 years. And all this has its effect on the institutions, value systems and sentimental identifications which have been incorporated into our way of thought and life. (p. 176)

In a statement on the changes in family roles and relationships, Dr. Elkin says:

> Our traditional image of family continuity, stability, and integration--which was, of course, never completely true--is a portrait of the past. The generations today--the grandparental, parental, and child or adolescent--are, in their activities and manner of thought, quite far apart. Not that they are necessarily in conflict, but understanding another generation is not as simple a phenomenon as it was once thought to be. The relationship between spouses, likewise, with the husband and wife frequently having different backgrounds and the wife possibly having a work milieu of her own, can involve a great disparity. (pp. 135-136)

He goes on to say that

> adolescents and children in school, who sometimes find that their parents are of limited help, more freely express their feelings towards them and, frequently, if they can manage, go their own way. The parents in turn behave more freely, and with fewer dutiful obligations, to their own relatives and aging parents. (p. 136)

In the concluding statement of his book, Dr. Elkin says:

> Recognizing the crucial role of the family for each of us in the society as a whole, we can safely predict that the interest in questions of the family will remain high. (p. 176)

Dr. Elkin's book was widely used and by 1971 had had its ninth printing. In less than ten years after the publication of this book, it was apparent that Dr. Elkin's prediction of continued public interest in

family issues had indeed come true. Schlesinger (1972) writes:

> Although there is a role for parents and the church in educating the young for family living, we suggest that the need for appreciation of home life is so pressing in our society that courses in family life education should be an important part of every child's learning. To insure that the vast majority of young people are reached by such a program it must be carried out by the organization best suited to do this. The organization in our society which reaches the largest number of children and their parents is the public school system. It is, therefore, suggested that such courses be part of our public school curriculum. In this way the largest number of young people will be reached. (p. 142)

While Schlesinger makes a plea for family life education programs in the school, he also points out that such programs have already been endorsed by many public authorities:

> It is apparent that our society has much to gain from the development of educational programs that will contribute positively to the task of preparing the nation's young people to become socially responsible--and responsive--participants in the interpersonal relationships of adulthood and family life. Recognizing this, many educational and medical groups, including some of the most prestigious professional organizations, have endorsed the concept of professionally prepared and implemented family life and sex education curriculums. Support also comes from religious groups, fraternal organizations, governmental agencies, and parent-teacher associations. (p. 142)

Dr. Elkin's book was just the beginning of a series of publications and positive action in the field of

family studies and family life education. Déiseach (1977) in a 1975-76 survey of family life education in Canada found that family life education

> has been widely adopted by school districts: at least one-fifth of all operating districts in Canada profess to have some kind of FLE program. . . . that students appreciate the course, and that parents are generally supportive of the program. (p. 32)

The Catholic educators of Newfoundland were among those who responded to the need for positive action in the field of family life education.

## III. The Establishment of The Vanier Institute of the Family

In 1965 The Vanier Institute of the Family was established with one essential purpose in mind: "to strengthen family life in Canada and to help families adapt to our rapidly changing society" (Schlesinger, 1972, p. 11). The Institute considers the family to be "a dynamic and changing institution and recognizes the interdependence of the individual, the family and society" (Schlesinger, p. 11). The Vanier Institute carries out its work by

> gathering information about the family, by stimulating research into aspects of the family of which little is known, and by informing Canadians of those things that tend to strengthen the family and improve the quality of family life. (Schlesinger, p. 11)

Only two years after its establishment, the Institute initiated a family life education survey to classify

family life education programs offered by educational institutions, voluntary organizations and the mass media (Schlesinger, p. 11). A few years after this survey, the Institute organized a national consultation on family life education. This consultation will be reported later in the chapter. There is no doubt that the setting up of The Vanier Institute of the Family paved the way for serious consideration of family life education in Canadian schools.

## IV. The Second Vatican Council

While The Vanier Institute of the Family was being established in Canada, an even more significant event was taking place in Rome, the effects of which were to be felt around the Christian world for many years to follow. By 1965 the Second Vatican Council, opened by Pope John XXIII on October 11, 1962, was in full swing and people throughout the Christian world were earnestly following its proceedings.

Vatican II, as the Council came to be known, marked the beginning of a new positive period in the history of Catholicism. The Council opened the doors to future planning in various fields including education. Two documents issued by Vatican II which were to leave their impact on Catholic education were the "Declaration on Christian Education," Gravissimum educationis, dated

October 28, 1965, and the "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World," Gaudium et spes, dated December 7, 1965. (Vatican Council II, The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents, 1975)

In the "Declaration on Christian Education," the Council fathers wrote:

> True education is directed towards the formation of the human person in view of his final end and the good of that society to which he belongs and in the duties of which he will, as an adult, have a share.
>
> Due weight being given to the advances in psychological, pedagogical and intellectual sciences, children and young people should be helped to develop harmoniously their physical, moral and intellectual qualities. They should be trained to acquire gradually a more perfect sense of responsibility in the proper development of their own lives by constant effort and in the pursuit of liberty, overcoming obstacles with unwavering courage and perseverance. As they grow older they should receive a positive and prudent education in matters relating to sex. (p. 727)

The Declaration gave to Catholic educators the Church's approval of sex education in the schools. This led not only to a more active interest in sex education, but also to the whole area of family life education. The goals of Christian education as spelled out in the Declaration were soon to become embodied in the programs of family life education in Catholic schools.

The "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World" devotes an entire chapter to "The Dignity of Marriage and the Family." In the section on

"Marriage and the Family in the Modern World," the Council fathers wrote:

> The well-being of the individual person and of both human and Christian society is closely bound up with the healthy state of conjugal and family life. (p. 949)

In the section on "Fostering Marriage and the Family: A Duty for All," there is further emphasis on the importance of the family:

> The family is the place where different generations come together and help one another to grow wiser and harmonize the rights of individuals with other demands of social life; as such it constitutes the basis of society. Everyone, therefore, who exercises an influence in the community and in social groups should devote himself effectively to the welfare of marriage and the family. (p. 956)

This document points up the need for those who exercise an influence in society, and this, of course, includes educators, to work toward the well-being of the family. The programs in family life education indicate a positive response to this directive.

## V. The Royal Commission on Education and Youth

On December 11, 1964, by a special Order-in-Council, the Newfoundland Government appointed the Royal Commission on Education and Youth to examine all aspects of education in Newfoundland. Among the aspects of education to come under the Commission's study was sex education. The first

volume of the Commission's report, issued in 1967, contains their findings with regard to sex education in Newfoundland schools. The Commission outlines a twofold purpose of sex education and also the manner in which it should be presented:

> The purpose of sex education is twofold: first, to provide biological information; and second, to develop appropriate social attitudes and ideals of human relationships and family life. The knowledge that is imparted should be presented in a manner that would help both in the moulding of these ideals and in the building of character. (Vol. One, p. 172)

In a Supplementary Brief presented to the Commission by the Roman Catholic Hierarchy of Newfoundland and Labrador, the Bishops gave their support for sex education in the schools and clearly pointed out the context in which they wished to see it taught. Following are some of the Bishops' comments:

> The main responsibility for sex education lies with the family. It is the Christian home that provides the perfect setting for imparting sex instruction. For it is here, under the patient, intelligent, and sympathetic teaching of parents, that children may develop that wholesome reverence and respect for their bodies as gifts of God's creative power. It is in the home, too, that the young can best be instructed in those moral attitudes and principles which are indispensable for ordered growth in sexual maturity. Finally, it is in the home that sex education can best be integrated into a unified pattern of Christian education and not treated as a particular branch of knowledge, as one fibre in the fabric of life.

> Because parents are sometimes regrettably ill-equipped in knowledge and/or derelict in their responsibility to impart adequate sex education to their children, the school must meet the deficiency. . . . it is imperative that it be given in a moral milieu, taught by qualified teachers who appreciate the sacredness and dignity of sex in its relation to either the married or single state. . . . it is of paramount importance that the necessary instruction be given in the general context of Christian formation, preferably as part of the school's religious education programme. (p. 13)

After hearing the briefs presented on sex education, the Commission concluded that "the schools must accept some responsibility for this important aspect of education" (Commission Report, Vol. One, p. 173). The Report states that, in the opinion of the Commission,

> the school can provide the necessary biological knowledge. It can also help in promoting ideals through a variety of courses and experiences--religious education, individual guidance and counselling, physical and health education, and social studies. (Vol. One, p. 173)

The Report further outlines the steps to be taken in introducing sex education into the schools:

> The first step in the introduction of sex education should be the appointment of a committee by the Department of Education to discuss the objectives of the programme and the content to be included. The committee should be representative of the Departments of Education and Health, the teaching profession, the medical profession, the nursing profession, and the churches. After guidelines have been developed, the committee should select a small number of schools for experimentation. Qualified teachers should be provided and local committees appointed. Teachers and the local committees, which would include medical

> personnel, should involve parents in the detailed planning of the course and fully inform them of the content to be included. (Vol. One, p. 173)

The recommendations of the Commission and the endorsement of sex education for schools by the Catholic Bishops of Newfoundland and Labrador provided Catholic educators with added impetus to develop in their schools a family life education program--a broad program which presents Christian sexuality as one dimension of family life.

## VI. The Newfoundland Family Law Study

On September 19, 1967, the Newfoundland Minister of Justice, by the authority of an Order-in-Council, appointed a Family Law Study to research and propose reforms of family law in Newfoundland. One of the projects of this study was entitled Education for Family Living, Marriage and Family Counselling and Marriage Reconciliation. The aim of this project was to determine:

> (1) whether there was a need of education for family living. . . . If so,
>
> (2) the type of organization and program that might most effectively fulfill that need. (Gushue and Day, July 1968, p. 2)

It was the recommendation of the Study that education for family living be a function of a province-wide organization known as the Newfoundland Family Guidance Association, supported by the public and staffed by

professional personnel. The scope of the activity would be planned by a committee similar to the one proposed by the Royal Commission on Education and Youth. This program would come under the administration of the Department of Education, aided and advised by the Association. Also, the program would be made available through schools, colleges and selected media. (Gushue, Day and Committee of Faculty, Dalhousie Law School, 1973, pp. 454-457)

According to the Study, education for family living was to be

> A largely but not exclusively premarital activity, organized by the Association and carried on in and by schools, universities, churches, young people's groups, etc. This would not be restricted to sex education.
>
> The primary responsibility for sex education should rest upon parents. Where schools must necessarily substitute for the parents in teaching sex education, it should not be taught only from a purely biological viewpoint, but also within the atmosphere of the moral customs and beliefs of the Judaeo-Christian culture, which seem to meet best the personal and social needs involved.
>
> Teachers should be properly qualified and text books carefully selected. The presence of nominees of the main religious bodies on advisory boards . . . could ensure that text books meet with the general approval of the churches. (Gushue et al, 1973, p. 454)

A further recommendation of the Study was that Memorial University should consider the increase in demands for "instructors to teach Education for Family Living programs" (Gushue et al, 1973, p. 457).

This study represents the attempt of another authoritative body in Newfoundland to impress upon educators the need for some form of family life education in the schools of the province.

## VII. The Proclamation of the Canadian Divorce Act

On July 2, 1968, the Canadian Divorce Act was proclaimed, broadening considerably the grounds for divorce in Canada. Jurisdiction in divorce proceedings initiated in Newfoundland was transferred from a Committee of the Canadian Senate to the Supreme Court of Newfoundland. In November 1968 the Supreme Court of Newfoundland heard its first divorce suits. (Gushue et al, 1973, p. 459)

This new act was to have an impact on many Newfoundland youth as their parents now found it easier to dissolve their marriages or make fundamental changes in the structure of their marriages. The old image of father, mother, sister, and brother all within the same household began to take on new variations. Along with these variations came new stresses. Mothers were being forced out into the work force, leaving children in the care of relatives or strangers; fathers, left without the services of a wife, found themselves playing a dual role of father/mother; and children found themselves having to relate to two sets of parents--father

and stepmother and mother and stepfather. The above were only a few of the many new situations which vast numbers of Newfoundland families began to experience as a result of the more liberal provisions of the Canadian Divorce Act.

For the Catholic family, this new act posed the beginning of a very great challenge in their lives--that of trying to maintain the Christian ideal of love and marriage in the midst of a rapidly changing social order. As a result, the Catholic family turned to their church and school for help. Family life education seemed to be a possible answer.

## VIII. Pope Paul VI's Encyclical Humanae Vitae

On July 25, 1968, His Holiness Pope Paul VI issued an encyclical "On Human Life," Humanae Vitae (The Regulation of Birth, 1970), which emphasizes the dignity of marriage and the importance of a Christian relationship between married love and responsible parenthood.

In this encyclical His Holiness appeals to educators to "create an atmosphere favourable to the growth of chastity in such a way that true liberty may prevail over licence and the norms of the moral law be fully safeguarded" (p. 22).

The Holy Father also makes an appeal to his bishops to devote themselves "to safeguarding the holiness of

marriage, the better to guide married life to its full human and Christian perfection" (p. 28), explaining that this mission "calls for concerted pastoral action in all the fields of human activity, economic, cultural and social" (p. 28). He further states that

> if simultaneous progress is made in all these fields, then the intimate life of parents and children in the family will be rendered not only more tolerable, but easier and more joyful. And life together in human society will be enriched with fraternal charity and made more stable with true peace when God's design which he conceived for the world is faithfully followed. (p. 28)

In response to the Pope's encyclical, the Canadian Catholic Conference issued a "Statement of Canadian Bishops on the Encyclical Humanae Vitae," September 27, 1968. In this statement, the Bishops make the following comments:

> The whole world is conscious of the growing preoccupation with the social impact of all men's thoughts, words and actions. Sexuality in all its aspects is obviously an area of the greatest human and social impact. The norms and values which govern this so vital human concern merit the attention and cooperation of all. . . .
>
> Educators, too, are to be commended for their growing attention to the question. Everywhere the problem of sex education and family life is being studied. And this education is happily being deepened by scientific research and diffused through the creative use of mass media. Nothing less than this mobilization of all human forces will suffice to meet the challenge of divisive and destructive forces which begin deep in the willful selfishness of man and inhibit the true expression of his love. We pledge ourselves to the pastoral priority of encouraging and promoting these programs whenever and wherever possible. (pp. 7-8)

Shortly after this statement, the Bishops "entrusted their theology commission to prepare studies on family life in Canada" (The Monitor, September 1969, p. 3). A Special Family Committee was set up to conduct study sessions. As a result of these sessions, position papers were issued. One of the messages contained in these position papers is that "the Committee supports sex and family life education in the schools. It stresses certain conditions; foremost among the conditions is the preparation of teachers" (The Monitor, September 1969, p. 3).

The Special Family Committee recommended that

> every diocese in the country busy itself with the promotion of family life and the search for practical solutions to such critical family and social problems as sex education, preparation for marriage courses, teacher training, involvement of young couples in community life, housing, salaries, and birth regulation. (The Monitor, September 1969, p. 3)

The encyclical Humanae Vitae, the Statement from the Canadian Bishops, and the establishment of the Special Family Committee of the Canadian Catholic Conference, pointed up the needs to which family life educators were expected to address themselves. The Special Family Committee also provided encouragement and support to the efforts of educators in developing family life programs.

## IX. The National Consultation on Family Life Education

Toward the end of the sixties, family life education became the focus of national attention. On

September 7-10, 1969, the National Consultation on Family Life Education, organized by The Vanier Institute of the Family, was held at Banff, Alberta. Attending this consultation were "family life educators, practitioners, administrators, policy makers, sociologists, social workers, psychologists, home economists, theologians and representatives of the media" (A Kaleidoscope Report of a National Consultation on Family Life Education, June 1970, p. i).

As is pointed out in the report of the proceedings, the Consultation had

> no object as such, other than the hope that there might be created sufficient consensus for action in certain areas, and sufficient lack of consensus to inspire continued searching and exploring in the embryonic field of family life education. (p. i)

However, the "immediate expectancy was to examine and clarify basic definitions of Family Life Education - what is it? where is it needed, why is it needed? for whom, by whom? how should it be done?" (p. i).

A follow-up questionnaire which was sent to participants at the Banff Consultation revealed the following points of agreement:

(a) need for family life education perceived as an on-going process from birth to death as each phase of life presents its own specificity;

(b) need for a fluid definition of family life education based on universal needs for the establishment and maintenance of sound human relationships;

(c) in the school system, need for an inclusive approach in the general curriculum instead of a specialized approach with specific curriculum;

(d) need for the definition of values on family life education programs, without imposition of one's own;

(e) need to give more thought to the role of the "specialist" in family life education and to the classroom teacher;

(f) need to involve parents in the design and implementation of school programs. (A Kaleidoscope Report of a National Consultation on Family Life Education, pp. 38-39)

Thus, the Consultation brought to light many new needs in family life education and broadened the scope of the field considerably.

## X. Amendment to the Criminal Code of Canada Permitting the Sale of Contraceptives and the Legal Dissemination of Birth Control Information

Finally, in 1969 another significant force emerged in Canada in the form of an amendment to the Criminal Code permitting the sale of contraceptives and the legal dissemination of birth control information. This amendment also permitted the Federal Government to become involved in the field of family planning. Shortly thereafter, in 1970, the Government announced a federal program of public information, training, and research in family planning. In January 1972 the Department of National Health and Welfare created a Family Planning Division to be responsible for the federal program. The

aim of the program is "to enable those Canadians who wish to do so to regulate their fertility in accordance with their own individual choices in the matter" (Report of Provincial Family Planning and Sex Education Conference, May 11-12, 1973, p. 8).

While such a move by the Canadian Government may have been lauded by some groups, it presented a new challenge for Catholic clergy and educators who now felt a need to carefully rethink and restate the meaning of life in terms of Catholic values and contemporary social conditions. They realized that for Catholic youth to appreciate the Church's stand on contraceptives, there is a need to do more than insist on the moral evils of the practices. As Thomas (1956) points out, "they must not only make clear the premises upon which their teaching is based, but they must make explicit the implicit premises from which are derived the objectionable practices" (p. 340).

While clergy and educators wrestled with ways of solving the new problems, Catholic youth, provided with easy access to contraceptives and birth control information, found themselves confronted for the first time with a societal goal which they had not been taught to accept. For that reason the need for a positive family life program which would realistically clarify Catholic family goals became most apparent.

## CHAPTER IV

## FORCES WHICH EMERGED IN THE SEVENTIES

The seventies was a time of positive action in the development of family life education in Newfoundland's Catholic schools. It was also a time of continued efforts by the Catholic church and other organizations to stress upon educators the importance of family life education in the school.

The beginning part of this chapter will examine the development of sex information programs in individual Catholic schools in Newfoundland, the attempt by a Catholic school in Corner Brook to develop a formal sex-education program for elementary students, how this enthusiastic group of educators sparked the local school board's interest in a family life education program, and how all this eventually stirred the interest of the Catholic Education Committee for Newfoundland. This part of the chapter will also examine the report of the 1973 Provincial Family Planning and Sex Education Conference.

The second part of the chapter will examine the statement of the Canadian Catholic Conference on the "Formation of Conscience," the setting up of the Provincial Catholic

Family Life Committee, the efforts of Catholic school boards to develop family life education programs for their schools, the setting up of a Family Life Institute for Newfoundland teachers, and The Congress on The Christian Family--'Its Role and Potentials,' held in St. John's, Newfoundland, in 1979.

## I. Provision of Sex Information in Catholic Schools

For many years sex information was provided to students in Catholic schools in Newfoundland through the religious education program of the schools. The information was imparted very informally, usually at the initiation of the students during a discussion period. In the late sixties and early seventies, however, as the need for sex education of a more formal type was expressed by many segments of society, Catholic educators began to take a more positive approach to this aspect of education.

During this period, several Catholic schools in the province began to develop more formalized programs of a sex information nature than had been the case previously. Two such programs were developed in St. John's. One of these programs was developed at St. Pius X Boys School, for Grades VII and VIII students, and was under the direction of Brother Gordon Buckingham. The other such program was developed at St. Bonaventure's School, for Grade VI boys, and was under the direction of Mr. James McGettigan.

Both the St. Pius X and the St. Bonaventure programs received the approval of parents, and in the case of the St. Bonaventure program, parent couples were invited to the school to participate in the presentations. Along with the imparting of sex information, emphasis was also placed on Christian values such as charity and chastity. These programs then provided sex information but within a Christian context (Interview with Mr. James McGettigan, May 16, 1980). The success of these programs encouraged Catholic educators to consider developing a broader program in line with the current family life education programs.

## II. Pilot Program in Sex Education St. Gerard's Elementary School Corner Brook, Newfoundland

While sex information programs existed in Newfoundland schools, perhaps the first most formalized attempt to develop a sex education program in Catholic schools can be attributed to a small group of educators in Corner Brook, Newfoundland.

During the school year 1970-1971, the Diocesan Director of Catechetics for the Catholic Diocese of St. George's, Reverend Joseph A. Gash, together with a small committee of religious education teachers and school principals, developed and implemented a pilot program in sex education at the St. Gerard's Elementary School in Corner Brook.

This committee was composed of the following people:

Sister M. Eugenio Carroll, Sisters of Mercy
Sister Ruth O'Reilly, Presentation Sisters
Brother F. F. Brennan, Principal of Regina High
Mr. James Moore, Principal of Regina Junior High

The first task of the committee was to put together a series of films and materials which they deemed suitable for Grade VI students. They then prepared a carefully sequenced program of instruction. Two teachers volunteered to teach the program. One was a classroom teacher at St. Gerard's Elementary, Ms. Linda Schmidt, and the other was a member of the committee, Mr. James Moore.

As soon as the organizational details were finalized, the committee invited Grade VI students and their parents to attend the program which was conducted through evening sessions. The committee felt it important to seek the approval and involvement of parents so that open communication could be developed between parents and child. The program met with the enthusiastic support of parents right from the start.

Having received the approval of the parents, the next step for the committee was to develop a form of in-service training for other teachers within the diocese. This was done by inviting elementary teachers to visit St. Gerard's Elementary to observe and criticize the presentations. In this way, teachers were initiated into the program and at the same time encouraged to become critics as well. (Interview with Reverend Joseph A. Gash, May 5, 1980)

Because the sex education program had been so successful, a small group of parents approached the Superintendent of the Roman Catholic School Board for Humber-St. Barbe, Brother A. F. Brennan, and requested a continuation of the program. However, because of a lack of personnel to monitor the program, the Board was unable to respond positively to the parents' request (Interview with Brother A. F. Brennan, May 1, 1980). The Board, however, did not disregard the wishes of the parents and shortly thereafter decided to develop a broad family life education program, taking into account the aspects of sex education.

## III. Family Life Education Program of the Roman Catholic School Board for Humber-St. Barbe

In the fall of 1972, the Superintendent of the Roman Catholic School Board for Humber-St. Barbe, Brother A. F. Brennan, invited two consultants from the Toronto Separate School Board to visit Corner Brook for the purpose of conducting study days for teachers. The purpose of the study days was to familiarize teachers with the family life program existing in the Toronto schools, the importance of family life education, and how such a program could be implemented in Newfoundland.

The two consultants, Messrs. Bob O'Neil and Ron Delesky, conducted study days at Corner Brook, Port aux Choix, and St. Alban's. All primary and elementary

teachers of religious education from schools in the surrounding areas attended these study sessions. The teachers were shown guidelines, mimeographed auxiliary materials, and films used by the Toronto Board.

After the visit of the two consultants, Brother Brennan requested the Board's religious education consultant, Sister Elizabeth Foley, to set up a family life education program for Grades I-VI, as part of the Board's religious education program.

During the school year, Sister Foley held meetings with parents and conducted workshops with teachers, first at Corner Brook schools then at schools outside Corner Brook. Emphasis was placed on developing positive attitudes of parents and teachers toward family life education. Also, the teachers were shown various family life education programs, including one entitled Becoming a Person, which was later used by Catholic schools in the province. The teachers, however, eventually opted to use the program of the Toronto Separate School Board.

Also, during the year Sister Foley prepared what was considered as a "first draft" of the family life program booklets, adapting the materials of the Toronto Separate School Board. So by the end of the year the Humber-St. Barbe School Board had laid the groundwork for a family life education program for primary and elementary students.

## IV. Provincial Family Planning and Sex Education Conference

On May 11-12, 1973, the Family Planning Association of Newfoundland and Labrador organized a Provincial Family Planning and Sex Education Conference. One of the purposes of the Conference was "to open discussion of local problems, methods of reaching those who are in need, communication, education of public opinion, introduction of family life education into the schools, teacher training, etc." (Report, p. 1).

Among the recommendations coming out of the Conference were the following:

1. Family life education should be made available to all people.

2. Family life education, including the emotional aspects of sexuality as well as the physical effects, should be integrated into the curriculum at all levels of schooling. Sex education should be considered part of a broader program dealing with many sides of family life, with special emphasis on human relationships.

3. The Department of Education should move rapidly to construct a flexible family life education program which would start at Kindergarten and continue through to Grade XI.

4. Such a program should be co-educational.

5. Planning and implementation of family life education at the local level should be done in full consultation with both parents and students.

6. All birth control information should be made available to students as part of the family life program.

7. Sex education should not be divorced from a profound examination of sex role stereotypes.

8. Regional family life counselling services should be established. They would include trained resource people in several disciplines, e.g. doctors, nurses, social workers, parents, clergy and law enforcement personnel. The teacher in the local areas would act as co-ordinator of this team in providing family life education programs to the schools.

9. A program in family life and sex education should be implemented at Memorial University and credits should be given for such a course. Family planning courses should be a compulsory part of teacher training, para-medical and medical training, social service and social welfare training.

10. Family life education should be brought to the community through workshops and seminars where educators and parents can discuss human sexuality.

13. The Family Planning Association should encourage co-operation among various service organizations involved in family life education throughout the Province.

14. At the community level it is desirous to invite the local clergy, teachers and other community leaders to co-operate in providing family life education and family planning services.

16. The Family Planning Association should seek out the "Family Law Study Report for Newfoundland (1969-70)" and study its recommendations regarding family life education.

17. The television and radio media should be used to bring family life and sex education to the home.

32. The Provincial and Federal Governments should be asked to help fund regional family life conferences. (Report, pp. 92-95)

These recommendations not only stressed the need for family life education through a variety of means, including the school, but also, as indicated in Recommendation 3, stressed the urgency of providing such education at all levels in the school.

## V. The Setting up of a Family Life Education Committee for the Roman Catholic School Board for St. John's

In the spring of 1973 Archbishop P. J. Skinner of St. John's requested the Roman Catholic School Board for St. John's to set up a family life education program for schools under its jurisdiction.

During the summer the Board's religious education consultant, Sister Brigid Molloy, was asked to visit St. John's College, Collegeville, Minnesota, in connection with the setting up of a family life education program for schools under the St. John's Board. On her return to St. John's, Sister Brigid suggested the setting up of a committee to look at existing family life education programs. In the guidelines she prepared for the setting up of this committee, Sister Brigid made the

suggestion that the committee should consist of:

> Parents, Teachers, High School Students, as well as representatives of the following disciplines: Theology, Psychology, Medicine, Education, Nursing, and Sociology. (Files of the Roman Catholic School Board for St. John's)

According to Sister Brigid, the duties of the committee were to be as follows:

a) give advice to the Consultants regarding the program,

b) to present the program to parents, teachers and the local community in a positive and accurate way. (Files of the Roman Catholic School Board for St. John's)

Committee members would conduct a series of evening meetings with the pastor and parents of each parish. In addition, an in-servicing of teachers was also to be given. This was to consist of a multi-unit course given to small groups of teachers twice a week, after school hours.

Two schools were to be selected for this pilot project--St. Joseph's Elementary, an urban school, and St. Francis of Assisi in Outer Cove, a rural school. The teachers in these two schools would then be expected to assist in the in-servicing of the Board's teachers. (Files of the Roman Catholic School Board for St. John's)

The family life education program was to have three main purposes:

1) to develop emotionally stable children and adolescents who feel sufficiently

secure and adequate to make decisions as to their conduct without being carried away by their emotions.

2) to provide sound knowledge not only of the physical aspects of sex behaviour, but also its psychological and sociological aspects, so that sexual experience will be viewed as a part of the total personality of the individual; and

3) to develop attitudes and standards which will ensure that young people and adults will determine their sexual and other conduct by considering its long-range effects on their own personal development, the highest good of other individuals and the welfare of society as a whole. (Files of the Roman Catholic School Board for St. John's)

The next step was the forming of a committee. This committee became known as the Family Life Instructional Committee and consisted of the following members:

Rev. James Hickey
Communications Director
Archdiocese of St. John's

Rev. Gerald Whitty
St. Joseph's Parish
St. John's

Dr. Pauline Scevior
Department of Health
St. John's

Dr. R. Walley
St. Clare's Mercy Hospital
St. John's

Dr. Leroy Klas
Educational Psychology Department
Memorial University of Newfoundland
St. John's

Mrs. Cecilia Tracey (Parent)
Basilica Parish
St. John's

Mrs. Betty McNiven (Parent)
Holy Rosary Parish
Portugal Cove

Mrs. Doris Jamieson (Parent)
St. Joseph's Parish
St. John's

Mrs. Alice Caddigan (Parent)
St. Francis of Assisi Parish
Outer Cove

Mrs. Hazel Power (Parent)
St. Francis of Assisi Parish
Outer Cove

Sister Margaret McCarthy
Home Economics Division
Holy Heart of Mary Regional High School
St. John's

Mrs. Geraldine Roe
Director of Curriculum
Roman Catholic School Board for St. John's

Mrs. Alice Connolly
Special Education Consultant
Roman Catholic School Board for St. John's

Sister Brigid Molloy
Religious Education Consultant
Roman Catholic School Board for St. John's

Brother F. G. Hepditch
Principal
Holy Cross Elementary School
St. John's

Sister Regina Vickers
Principal
Presentation Elementary School
St. John's

Sister Helen Harding
Principal
St. Joseph's Elementary School
St. Joseph's

Mr. Michael Ryan
Principal
St. Francis of Assisi School
Outer Cove

Mr. John Dawson
Assistant Principal
St. Pius X Boys' School
St. John's

Mr. James McGettigan
Assistant Principal
St. John Bosco School
St. John's
(Files of Roman Catholic School Board for St. John's)

This committee was made up of people from various fields of interest, and represented both male and female, urban and rural, professional and non-professional, and religious and lay points of view.

In the fall of 1973 the Committee began the task of looking at existing family life programs, reviewing them carefully from theological, moral, and pedagogical points of view, to determine how they might meet the needs of the schools within the St. John's Archdiocese. They eventually made the decision to adopt the Becoming a Person program, published by the Benziger Division of the Glencoe Publishing Company, Incorporated, of Encino, California. The Committee felt that this program would be preferable to a program integrated with the Canadian Catechism such as the one prepared by the Humber-St. Barbe Board. (Interview with Mr. James McGettigan, April 10, 1980)

The Becoming a Person program consisted of a parent handbook, a teacher's manual and text, and a student text. The series was built around five themes: The Family, Understanding Yourself, Maturity, Relating to Others, and

Values. The author of the program was Father Walter Imbiorski, Director of the Cana Conference of the Archdiocese of Chicago. Father Imbiorski had been in the forefront of the Cana, Christian Family and Christian Guidance Movements for many years, and was also a well-known lecturer on family life. He was on the advisory board of the Family Life Department of the U.S. Catholic Conference, and had helped to set up Family Life Departments and Christian Family Movement groups in over forty dioceses in the United States. (Files of the Roman Catholic School Board for St. John's)

The Family Life Instructional Committee did an in-depth study of the Becoming a Person program and invited professionals such as theologians, child psychologists, and medical doctors, to assist them in their own in-service training. This in-servicing was conducted during weekends at St. Bride's College, Littledale, and consisted of lectures and discussions presided over by the invited guests. (Interview with Mr. James McGettigan, April 10, 1980)

Thus by the end of 1973 the Roman Catholic School Board for St. John's had established a Family Life Instructional Committee, decided on a family life education program, and completed the in-servicing of the Committee members. These activities laid the groundwork for family life education in schools under the St. John's Board.

## VI. Development of the Catholic Family Life Program of the Catholic Education Committee

While the members of the St. John's Committee were preparing their program, another development in family life education was taking place on the west coast of the province, at the request of the Catholic Education Committee.

In the fall of 1973 the Catholic Education Committee requested Sister Elizabeth Foley of the Roman Catholic School Board for Humber-St. Barbe, to establish a committee for a family life program to assess the feasibility of the proposal put forth in the Supplementary Brief to the Royal Commission on Education and Youth, that

> it is of paramount importance that the necessary instruction be given in the general context of Christian formation, preferably as part of the school's religious education programme. (p. 13)

The committee was also to

> study existing Family Life Programmes developed by Catholic School Boards across the country, and to produce a programme at the Primary, Elementary and Junior High levels that will prove useful and practical to the Catholic Boards of the Province. (Letter to Parents, Parent Booklet, Catholic Education Committee Family Life Programme)

The first task of the committee was to prepare instructional materials. A teacher resource booklet and a parent booklet for Grades I, II, and III were prepared. The teacher was to use the resource booklet in

conjunction with the Canadian Catechism, since, as the committee pointed out, "many of the concepts included in the programme are already found in the Canadian Catechism" (Parent Booklet, Catholic Education Committee Family Life Programme, p. 4). They further pointed out that "the Family Life Programme places these concepts in a developmental sequence, expanding where necessary and integrating additional family life concepts where gaps exist" (Parent Booklet, Catholic Education Committee Family Life Programme, p. 4).

The committee wished to make it clear that their family life program was not merely a sex education program but a comprehensive program which would include aspects of sex education. Thus, in a statement on the Family Life Curriculum, contained in the Grades I, II, and III booklets, the committee makes the following comments:

> The term "Family Life Education" implies a much broader scope than "Sex Education." To teach "Sex Education" and have it understood and accepted in its proper perspective, it must be viewed in the total context of Family Life Education. (p. 2)

The committee's main concern was with the "development of attitudes which are healthy, open and Christian. Factual information is important in this process but only as a part of it and not as the focus of the programme" (Grade I Booklet, Catholic Education Committee Family Life Programme, p. 2). The program is

"geared to the developing child, suited to his level of physical, psychological, social and spiritual maturity" (Grade I Booklet, p. 2).

The primary programme (Grades I-III) concentrates on the areas of Family, Growth and Relationships. The aims of this programme are as follows:

a. To give the child an understanding of the nature and purpose of the family and of his place in the family, and an understanding of how we grow.

b. To view human reproduction in the context of the family and to recognize his own self-worth and that of other persons.

c. To foster mutual love and consideration within the family and to assist the child in developing good relationships with other persons. (Grade I Booklet, p. 2)

One very important feature of this family life program is that of parent involvement. The committee stressed the fact that "parents are the prime educators of their children" (Grade I Booklet, p. 4). The program is set up in such a way that the classroom teacher "acts as an aide to the child's family . . . entrusted with the responsibility of supplementing the teachings of the parents and enriching the pupil's social life" (Grade I Booklet, p. 4).

To ensure the most effective and harmonious home and school education, the committee suggested a number of parent-teacher meetings. These meetings would be

held at different times during the year with parents of children at different levels--primary or elementary. The objectives of the meetings would be:

1. To provide parents with accurate and up-to-date information concerning the programme.

2. To help parents increase their facility and ease in speaking about human sexuality to their children.

3. To acquaint parents with the aims and objectives of the programme and to enlist the cooperation of the home and school. (Grade I Booklet, p. 4)

By the end of the school year booklets had been prepared for Grades I to VI (Interview with Sister Elizabeth Foley, April 14, 1980). Thus, with the program booklets prepared, the major part of the work involved in developing the family life program for the primary and elementary grades was now completed.

## VII. Statement on the Formation of Conscience Issued by the Canadian Catholic Conference

While Catholic school boards in Newfoundland were busy developing family life education programs for their schools, they were to receive further impetus for their efforts in a statement issued by the Catholic Bishops of Canada, as a follow-up in their interpretation of Humanae Vitae.

On December 1, 1973, the Canadian Catholic Conference issued a "Statement on the Formation of Conscience,"

which provides certain pastoral guidelines meant primarily for Catholics. However, the Bishops also invite the attention of "all people of good will interested in preserving the best elements of our civilization and culture" (p. 2). In the section on "Problems of our Times," the Bishops discuss the confusion in the world, and make the following comments:

> It is rare that changes take place in the world without influencing the Church or that changes take place in the Church without influencing the world. During this period of confusion, popular morality has been shaken to the ground roots. There is a general attitude that "I can do pretty much anything which doesn't hurt somebody else". A permissiveness sweeps our society. Practices which would previously have been repudiated as absolutely unacceptable are becoming the general rule of conduct. . . .
>
> Another factor is the widespread propaganda which makes all aspects of family planning and sexual permissiveness a matter of private concern and individualistic ethics. . . . The idea has been abroad that "everybody is doing it" and that if everybody is doing it, it must be acceptable. Finally, the economic and political conditions of our society are tending to bring down our moral sense. . . . All of these and other factors have tended to bring about a reversal of traditional morality or, at the least, a great questioning of moral values. (pp. 5-6)

These comments point up the concern of the Catholic Bishops of Canada about the permissive attitude prevailing in our society. The Statement also provides "Guides for Christian Conscience," as follows:

> an act of conscience is an individual thing but must be based upon certain accepted principles and positions. It becomes, therefore,

> the duty of the individual to acquire the necessary information and attitude in order to make the right decision.
>
> Certain human conditions undoubtedly aid in the balanced performance which one requires from a Christian. Sound emotional stability, a cultivation of self-knowledge and clear objective judgement, even education itself. . . . The assistance of sound communal attitudes and of cultural and social influences . . . are sound human contributions to the acquisition of knowledge and, above all, of proper attitude. (pp. 9-10)

The Bishops further state that the above conditions for the formation of conscience and their application to everyday living are only a small part of what is needed. They point out that

> for the man who has made his act of faith, the prime factor in the formation of his conscience and in his moral judgement is to be found in the existence and the role of Christ in his life. . . . the presence of Christ in his life is all-pervasive and all-embracing. All the other aspects of conscience formation are based on this one and stem from it. . . .
>
> With this in mind, the man of faith draws his inspiration from the Scripture . . . in which he finds revealed not only the designs of the Father . . . but a refined series of ideals, precepts and examples given to us by the same Lord Jesus. (p. 10)

The Bishops explain that the ideals, precepts, and examples of Jesus are communicated to men not only through the Scripture but also in the Spirit of Jesus which is revealed to the people through the priests who compose the Church's magisterium, or teaching body (pp. 10-11). This statement by the Canadian Bishops

gave to Catholic educators certain guidelines to follow in preparing their family life education programs.

## VIII. The Orientation of Parents in Family Life Education at Schools Under the St. John's Board

In the spring of 1974 the Family Life Instructional Committee of the Roman Catholic School Board for St. John's started a program of orientation in family life at two schools selected for the pilot project--St. Joseph's and St. Francis of Assisi. The orientation was conducted during evening sessions.

Committee members visited each school and explained to parents the concept of family life. Speakers from the Committee addressed the parents and following the addresses, small groups of parents were formed. A committee member was assigned to each group to discuss with parents the contents of the family life texts.

Parents inquired about such things as competency of teachers to teach family life education, whether classroom teachers or specialists would do the instructing, or whether there was too much information on reproduction. Once all their questions were answered, and parents realized that the program had been sanctioned by the Church, they tended to react favourably toward the program.

At the end of the evening, the groups were brought together for a combined group meeting. The final questions of the evening were: "What do you think of family life

education? Do you wish to see this program in the schools?" The response to these questions was in all cases unanimously positive. (Interview with Mr. James McGettigan, April 10, 1980)

One of the ground rules for educators in developing family life education programs in Catholic schools was that they first seek parental acceptance for such programs. Consequently, this initial favourable response of parents at St. Joseph's and St. Francis of Assisi was most encouraging to committee members and board members as well. It gave them the approval they required to proceed with the family life education program.

## IX. Appointment by the Catholic Education Committee of a Provincial Catholic Family Life Committee

In the fall of 1974 the Catholic Education Committee appointed a family life committee for the province. This committee was known as the Provincial Catholic Family Life Committee and was chaired by Sister Elizabeth Foley. Other members were as follows:

Sister Madeleine LeClerc
Religious Education Consultant
Roman Catholic School Board for Humber-St. Barbe

Ms. Joanne Chafe
Religious Education Consultant
Roman Catholic School Board for St. John's

Mr. Leo Lewis
Religious Education Consultant
Roman Catholic School Board for Exploits-White Bay

Sister Tarcisius Power
Religious Education Consultant
Roman Catholic School Board for Bay St. George

Father J. Kevin McKenna, Communications Officer for the Catholic Education Committee, acted as resource person for the Committee.

During the year this committee revised the booklets prepared by the Humber-St. Barbe Family Life Education Committee, incorporating content from the booklets of the Toronto Separate School Board Family Life Program and the Waterloo Family Life Program. By the end of the year the Committee had completed the primary program (Grades I-III) booklets for piloting in the schools in September 1975. (Interview with Sister Elizabeth Foley, April 14, 1980)

In May 1975 the Catholic Education Committee advised all Catholic school boards that the program for Grades I-III had been prepared and that work was continuing on the program for Grades IV-VI. Each board was invited to pilot the program in one or two schools in September 1975. They were also advised that at the end of the school year the piloting-teachers would be invited to advise the Catholic Education Committee of any needed revisions of the program. It was pointed out that only after revisions would the program be made available to school boards on a wider basis. School boards were informed that the religious education consultants/supervisors were to be given responsibility for selecting the piloting schools, after consultation with the superintendent and participating principals and teachers. They were also informed that a meeting with parents was to precede the introduction of the course.

At the same time the Catholic Education Committee invited school boards to consider assisting one or more teachers to attend family life courses on the Mainland prior to 1976-77. These teachers would then be expected to serve as special advisers to other teachers and to help the religious education consultants/supervisors in providing in-service workshops for teachers who were to become involved in the family life program.

Together with the above instructions, the Catholic Education Committee also provided each board with a "Minimum Materials List"--a list of books and films recommended for family life education. Each board was to ensure that these materials were available before beginning the program. (Files of the Catholic Education Committee)

Thus, through the efforts of the Provincial Catholic Family Life Committee, by the spring of 1975 all Catholic school boards in Newfoundland were in a position to pilot family life education programs in their schools in the following school year.

## X. Activities of the Roman Catholic School Board for St. John's Since May 1975

In May 1975 the Roman Catholic School Board for St. John's advertised for a family life consultant. Mr. James McGettigan, a member of their original committee on family life, was appointed to the position.

Shortly after his appointment to the position, Mr. McGettigan went to St. John's College, Collegeville, Minnesota, for training in family life education.

In September 1975 the St. John's Board was ready to make some long-range plans with regard to family life education for its schools. The Board now had an effective Family Life Instructional Committee and the services of a competent family life consultant.

Mr. McGettigan's first task was to select a number of schools in which to pilot the family life program. During the fall he selected St. Joseph's and St. Francis of Assisi, where parent in-servicing had already been done, and one other school, Presentation Elementary. St. Joseph's and St. Francis of Assisi were ready for teacher in-servicing and Presentation Elementary was ready to start parent in-servicing, following the same procedure as had been set up for the other two schools.

Teacher in-servicing was done by the family life consultant and one or two members of the Committee. It consisted of full-day sessions plus follow-up sessions at each school. Since that time approximately seven or eight schools each year have been selected to pilot the family life program. At present all primary and elementary schools under the St. John's Board have a family life program.

In 1977 the publishers decided to revise the Becoming a Person program. On October 24 of that year, Mr. McGettigan

was appointed as the Canadian representative on a special board of consultants representing Catholic dioceses in Canada, Australia, and the United States. This board of consultants directed the development of the new program, which came to be known as the Benziger Family Life Program. (Interview with Mr. James McGettigan, May 22, 1980)

Shortly after his appointment to the special board of consultants, Mr. McGettigan set up a system whereby teachers at each grade level could submit to him any changes they wished to have made to the program and their reasons for the changes. A smaller group was later set up to put all the proposed changes together and submit them to the publishers. (Interview with Sister Regina Vickers, March 27, 1980)

The Benziger Family Life Program is designed to meet the following needs of youth:

1. Young people need skills and knowledge for family living, both now and for when they become parents.
2. Young people need to understand not only their own physical, emotional and spiritual development, but also the development of people around them.
3. Young people need to cultivate a respect for all life, especially human life.
4. Young people need to develop a Christian understanding and reverence for sexuality.
5. Young people need to relate with others outside the family and thereby take their responsible place in society. (Benziger Family Life Program Brochure, p. 1)

The above needs are met through five basic themes at each grade level: Family Living, Personal Growth and Self-understanding, Respect for Life, Christian Sexuality, and Christian Social Living. As each theme is presented, students are helped to form specific Christian values. (Program Brochure, p. 2)

The new program has three basic components at each grade level - a student text, a teacher's manual, and a family handbook. As the program brochure points out, "all these components work together to create a special experience of Christian family living and to foster positive Christian attitudes" (p. 7). The program also "reflects national Catholic guidelines for family life education, respect for life education, and education in Christian sexuality, as outlined in Church teaching and by episcopal committees" (Program Brochure, p. 3).

In September 1978 the Benziger Family Life Program was introduced into the Grades I-VIII curriculum of the following schools under the St. John's Board: St. Paul's, East Meadows, St. John's; St. Peter's, Newtown, Mount Pearl; St. Agnes', Pouch Cove; Mary Queen of Peace, St. John's; Mary Queen of the World, St. John's; St. Edward's, Petty Harbour; and Roncalli, St. John's. All of these are co-educational schools. (Interview with Mr. James McGettigan, May 22, 1980)

Since that time, the revised program has been introduced into a number of schools each year. It is expected

that eventually all primary and elementary schools will be using the revised program, as teachers and parents appear to be quite satisfied with the results. (Interview with Sister Regina Vickers, March 27, 1980)

## XI. Activities of the Provincial Catholic Family Life Committee Since September 1975

In September 1975 the Provincial Catholic Family Life Committee started work on their elementary program (Grades I-VI). The booklets were ready for piloting in the schools in September 1976. Once the elementary program booklets were completed, the Committee started work on a junior high program (Grades VII-VIII). These booklets were ready for piloting in the schools in September 1978. While the booklets were being prepared, meetings with parents and teacher workshops continued so that by the time the program was ready to be implemented, all schools had received the necessary orientation. (Interview with Sister Elizabeth Foley, April 14, 1980)

The Catholic Education Committee program, known as the Catholic Family Life Program, is still in use by some school boards in Newfoundland. However, because of pressure from teachers for a student text, a teacher's manual, and a parent's manual, most boards have now adopted the new Benziger Family Life Program for Grades IV-VI. The Catholic Education Committee expects to extend the new program to Grade VII within the near future. (Interview with Mr. Frank Kearsey, March 24, 1980)

Through the efforts of the Provincial Catholic Family Life Committee, all Catholic primary and elementary schools in Newfoundland are now in a position to provide a program in family life education for their students.

## XII. The Organization of a Family Life Institute for Teachers

In the late seventies, both the Catholic Education Committee and the Catholic school boards of Newfoundland became concerned about the need for a training program for teachers of family life education programs. Consequently, in the fall of 1976 Mr. James McGettigan, acting on behalf of the St. John's Roman Catholic Board and the Catholic Education Committee, requested Memorial University of Newfoundland to set up a Family Life Institute for teachers. The response to Mr. McGettigan's request indicated that the University would require a brief emphasizing the need for a Family Life Institute.

The brief was prepared jointly by members of the Family Life Instructional Committee of the St. John's Roman Catholic School Board and representatives of the Catholic Education Committee and the Integrated Education Committee who, at this stage, had also decided to involve their boards in teacher training for family life education. Those involved in preparing the brief were: Dr. Leroy Klas, Dr. Robert Walley, Dr. Kevin Tracey, Rev. A. L. LeGrow, and Mr. James McGettigan. The brief

was presented to Memorial University in December 1976. In April 1977 a reply was received from the University indicating that it would not be possible to organize an institute for the following summer due to insufficient time for the necessary preparation.

With Memorial University unable to organize the Institute, the Board decided to take its request to St. Francis Xavier University in Antigonish, Nova Scotia. This university agreed to conduct the Institute provided it not be deemed competitive with anything Memorial University might be doing. On May 9 Mr. McGettigan presented St. Francis Xavier University with the reply from Memorial University and received their approval to set up an institute.

Having obtained agreement from St. Francis Xavier University to organize the Institute, Mr. McGettigan then invited several prominent North American speakers to lecture at the Institute. Among those invited were Reverend John McGoey, an author and family life specialist, and Dr. Benjamin Schlesinger, an author and teacher of family life courses at the School of Social Work of the University of Toronto.

On May 14 Mr. McGettigan, through the auspices of the Catholic Education Committee and the Integrated Education Committee, began to prepare letters to be sent to every school board in the province asking for names of

teachers who were interested in attending the Family Life Institute. There were 310 applications received. Because of the overwhelming response, a second letter was sent out to the boards advising them that the Institute could only accommodate teachers who were already teaching family life and teachers who would be teaching family life the following year.

A six-week institute was organized, consisting of a four-semester credit course in family life education, which represented Level I of the St. Francis Xavier Family Life Course. The Institute was conducted at Holy Heart of Mary Regional High School in St. John's, with 176 teachers attending.

During the summer of 1978 Mr. McGettigan, on behalf of the Catholic Education Committee and the Integrated Education Committee, obtained permission from St. Francis Xavier University to again organize a Family Life Institute to be held at Holy Heart of Mary Regional High School. That summer a Level II institute was set up with 90 applicants and 75 students actually attending.

In the meantime, in the spring of 1978, Memorial University organized a Level I Family Life Institute which was taught at Holy Heart of Mary Regional High School, operating simultaneously with the St. Francis Xavier Institute (Interview with Mr. James McGettigan,

May 13, 1980). A total of 38 students attended Memorial's Institute. (Files of Division of Part-time Credit Studies, Memorial University)

In 1979 Memorial University decided to conduct a Family Life Institute, Levels I and II, on the campus of the University. A total of 24 students attended Level I, while 11 students attended Level II. (Files of Division of Part-time Credit Studies, Memorial University)

The Family Life Institute, by providing teachers with training in family life, is a response to the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Education and Youth, the Newfoundland Family Law Study, the Special Family Committee of the Canadian Catholic Conference, and the 1973 Provincial Family Planning and Sex Education Conference.

## XIII. The Congress on The Christian Family--'Its Role and Potentials' Held at St. John's, October 1979

While family life education courses are now a part of the Catholic school curriculum in Newfoundland, and Family Life Institutes for teachers are part of the education program at Memorial University, the Church still continues in its efforts to emphasize the importance of strengthening the Christian family. One such effort was The Congress on The Christian

Family--'Its Role and Potentials,' held in St. John's on October 26-28, 1979.

This congress was sponsored by a special committee of the Catholic Archdiocesan Publicity Committee and the Catholic Family Life Bureau of St. John's. In his opening remarks to the Congress participants, the chairman, Brother A. F. Brennan, pointed out that members of the organizing committee were prompted initially "by the crisis that is facing the christian family in today's society" (The Monitor, January 1980, p. ii). Brother Brennan further stated that congress participants "could do nothing better for the children of our society than to contribute even in a small way to the strengthening of the Christian family" (The Monitor, January 1980, p. ii).

The Congress participants, among whom were people of all faiths, expressed certain desires with regard to educational programs. In the "Summary of Workshops" conducted during the Congress, they made the following recommendations:

> People should be prepared for marriage at home, in school, and in the parish. A more gradual preparation starting in the home, with much more done at the high school level. Marriage preparation should be much more extensive, commencing at the pre-teens, adolescence, engagement and early years of marriage. There should be more Family Life programs to provide spiritual, psychological and emotional preparation. The parents,

> teachers and religious should participate in the preparation and look at why some marriages fail while others succeed. (The Monitor, January 1980, p. viii)

In addition to the above recommendations, congress participants also expressed other marriage and family needs which cover a much broader scope:

> There is a need for Christians to work more closely on matters concerning marriage and family. There is not enough open communication between the various faiths concerning the problems in family life today. We could work together on problems such as violence, sex in the media. Certain aspects of marriage preparation courses could be shared. Difficulties in dealing with children are usually common and we could help deal with these difficulties in a united effort. (The Monitor, January 1980, p. viii)

The views of the approximately 275 congress participants seem to indicate a growing interest in family life education in this province among parents, clergy, and teachers not only of the Catholic faith but of all faiths. The Conference also pointed up the need of broadening the scope of family life education so that those entrusted with this responsibility may see it not merely as a program of study for youth, but as an ongoing educational process from childhood to old age.

# CHAPTER V

## SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### I. Summary

The family life education programs of the Catholic schools of Newfoundland were developed as a result of the influence of forces from both inside and outside the Catholic community over the past fifty years.

The Catholic philosophy of education was outlined by Pope Pius XI, 1929, as being the formation of "the true and perfect Christian" (Seven Great Encyclicals, 1963, p. 64) taking into account the whole of human life, including the domestic life. His emphasis on the importance of Christian love in conjugal relationships, contained in his 1930 encyclical, stirred Catholics to form family movements from which emerged the idea of family life education.

Approximately 30 years later the Newfoundland Government outlined aims of education for the province's denominational education system which took into account the principles of Christian education.

The sixties added momentum to the changes in family life and also saw a new interest emerging in the institution of the family in Canada. The Canadian Conference

on the Family brought Canadians of all faiths together in search of a better understanding of the needs of the Canadian family. Out of this conference came the first Canadian textbook on the family and the creation of The Vanier Institute of the Family.

Perhaps the greatest single force of the sixties was the Second Vatican Council with its "Declaration on Christian Education," Gravissimum educationis, and its "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World," Gaudium et spes. The Declaration further elaborated on the encyclical of Pope Pius XI, "Christian Education of Youth," Divini Illius Magistri, by taking into account the advances in the psychological, pedagogical and intellectual sciences and giving to its educators the Church's blessing to sex education in the schools. The "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World," Gaudium et spes, further reinforced Pope Pius XI's encyclical on "Christian Marriage," Casti Connubii, stressing the importance of the family as the mainspring of well-being of both the individual and society.

While the influence of the Vatican Council was being felt throughout the Christian world, two local forces emerged to voice their support for family life education. One of these forces was the Newfoundland Royal Commission on Education and Youth and the other was the Newfoundland Family Law Study. The Royal Commission on Education and

Youth stressed the need for sex education to develop human relationships and family life ideals and the importance of qualified teachers to teach such a program. This was followed by the Newfoundland Family Law Study which further endorsed the need for education for family living, including sex education, taught within a Christian context. The Study also recommended that Memorial University consider the demands for qualified instructors for such programs.

Two forces emerged in the late sixties which posed a challenge to Catholic educators across the country. One was the proclamation of the Canadian Divorce Act and the other was the amendment to the Criminal Code of Canada permitting the sale of contraceptives and the legal dissemination of birth control information. These two forces were in conflict with the Catholic ideal of love and marriage and the Catholic belief in the sanctity of human life. However, while these negatives forces were at work, another more positive force emerged from within the Church itself! This force was Pope Paul VI's encyclical Humanae Vitae.

Humanae Vitae emphasized the dignity of marriage and the importance of a Christian relationship between conjugal love and responsible parenthood. This encyclical became a guiding light to Catholics at a time when social forces seemed to be overruling Christian teaching.

As a response to this encyclical, the Catholic Bishops of Canada issued a statement on the encyclical in which they pledged their support of family life education programs. The Bishops also established a Special Family Committee to study Canadian family life. This committee recommended family life education in the schools and stressed the importance of preparing teachers to take on this responsibility.

Finally, the sixties brought together Canadians from many faiths and backgrounds to a Consultation on Family Life Education. This consultation brought to light many needs in the area of family life education and also emphasized the importance of an ongoing family life education throughout the whole life cycle.

By the seventies Catholic educators in Newfoundland had begun to take positive action in implementing sex information, sex education, and later comprehensive family life education programs in their schools. The Catholic Education Committee and the Catholic school boards both worked diligently to provide the youth of their schools with a carefully developed family life program, designed with the help of Catholic parents, clergy, and other professionals.

While Catholic educators were busy preparing sex information, sex education, and family life programs for their schools, another force emerged to promote such efforts. This was the Provincial Family Planning and Sex

Education Conference which recommended that family life education be made available to all people, that it be a part of the Kindergarten to Grade XI curriculum, that parents be involved, and that Memorial University provide the necessary teacher training.

As family life education programs were being developed in Catholic schools, a force emerged from within the Church to provide Catholic educators with certain guidelines to follow in developing family life education programs. This was the statement of the Canadian Bishops issued as a follow-up in their interpretation of Humanae Vitae. This statement, "Formation of Conscience," expressed the Church's concern for the permissive attitude prevailing in society and provided guides to the Catholic in forming his conscience and in making moral judgements. The seventies saw the beginning, not only of family life education programs in the schools, but also the beginning of formal training for teachers of family life.

The decade ended with a Church-sponsored Congress on the Christian Family, which brought together Newfoundlanders of all faiths in an effort to strengthen the Christian family. The Congress participants recommended family life programs for the schools and encouraged the participation of parents in such programs. The Congress also stressed the need for open communication between the various faiths and the need for a united effort in dealing with the problems which face the present day family.

Thus, by the end of the seventies, family life education programs were available to all Catholic primary and elementary schools in Newfoundland, teacher training programs were instituted, and the Church was valiantly continuing to promote the dignity of marriage, the sanctity of human life, and the need for adequate formal preparation for marriage and family life.

## II. Conclusions

While a number of forces seem to have influenced Catholic educators in Newfoundland to develop a family life education program for their schools, the main impetus seems to have come from within the Catholic Church itself.

The dignity of marriage, the importance of a Christian relationship between conjugal love and responsible parenthood, and the sanctity of human life have always been a part of the Church's teachings. Thus, the widespread practice of divorce, premarital and extramarital sexual relations, artificial birth control, and abortion have posed new challenges to the Church's teachings. Consequently, Church leaders have taken a more vocal approach in reaffirming the Catholic stand on all issues related to marriage and the family. Catholic educators, in responding to the mandates of their Church, have implemented comprehensive programs of family life education

in their schools, as one step in counteracting the forces which challenge the Catholic faith.

## III. Recommendations

As a result of the information gathered in carrying out this study, the writer would like to offer the following recommendations with regard to family life education in Catholic schools:

1. That the family life education program be extended to Grades IX, X, and XI with emphasis on interpersonal relationships, respect for life, social justice, and understanding of sexuality.
2. That all classroom teachers hold a meeting at the beginning of every school year to introduce parents to the content of the program for the coming year, explain the goals of the program, and discuss with parents the possible questions which their developing child could pose during the coming year and the kinds of responses parents may give. The meeting would also permit parents to ask any questions they might have about the program

and at the same time provide the teacher with feedback about the previous year's work.

3. That family life educators be kept abreast of encyclicals, statements of Canadian Bishops, and other Church releases which relate to marriage and the family and that seminars be conducted so that they may be able to study and discuss such documents and their effects on family life programs.
4. That an ongoing evaluation process be part of the family life program so that the strengths and weaknesses of the program may be readily discernible and to ensure that the program is meeting the current needs of the youth and the community that it serves.
5. That family life education courses should become a required part of the curriculum for primary and elementary teachers in the Faculty of Education program taught at Memorial University.
6. That family life education courses should be available for graduate students at Memorial University.

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