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A Critique of *I AM WITH YOU*, Book # 4 of the *Good News* Series: Catholic Religious and Moral Instruction

Linda Griffin

A Thesis

in

The Department

of

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ABSTRACT

A Critique of *I AM WITH YOU*, Book # 4 of the *Good News* Series:
Catholic Religious and Moral Instruction

Linda Griffin

This thesis examines *I AM WITH YOU*, book #4 of the *Good News* series, which is designed for elementary school Catholic religious and moral instruction. It begins with an exploration of the vision of moral education held by the Catholic Committee of the Quebec Superior Council of Education, who see it as an integral part of religious instruction. This vision serves as a basis for discussion and is followed by the views of three Catholic theologians (Enda McDonagh, Bernard Lonergan, James O'Donohoe) who support the Catholic Committee's focus on personal responsibility as the primary aim of Christian moral education. The thesis then examines the moral concepts within *I AM WITH YOU* through a process of description and reflection in order to elucidate its intentions. This examination highlights the significance of fostering spiritual capacities in children, of encouraging prayer and scripture reading, and of helping them to become familiar with the person and message of Jesus of Nazareth. The pedagogy of *I AM WITH YOU* is then examined from two perspectives: a comparison with Thomas Groome's approach to moral and religious instruction, which is enriched by Stanley Hauerwas' discussion of the narrative, and an exploration of *I AM WITH YOU* as a prelude to adult moral development as it is understood by M. Scott Peck and Bernard Boelen. Finally, this thesis concludes that the interests of the developing person are best served when moral education is concerned with the personal, spiritual development of the whole person.

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To Tom Francoeur

Whose Gentle Guidance

I Cherish

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Chapter I

Introduction

Catholic moral theology, based as it is on Scripture, does not distinguish between religious and moral education. Yet, some proponents of contemporary moral education argue that religion has no place in moral education whose business it is to teach people to make autonomous moral decisions, a rational function independent of religious authority. This latter view is problematic, for the conception of good has its basis in something beyond observation and reasoning. Arguing in favor of educating religiously and morally in a multi-faith school, Weeran writes:

> All approaches to moral education are based in part on a conception, implicit or explicit, of the good. Values Clarification's conception might be described as the thinking, joyfully resolute person. Kohlberg's conception might be described as the just person who treats all other persons as his/her equals in human dignity. Conceptions of the good are ideals that beckon from beyond the theories and practices which constitute particular approaches to moral education. They can be contemplated and reflected on; they richly satisfy the mind; but they do not derive simply from observation and reasoning. They are part of the realm of transcendent value and meaning which may be termed religious. To say this is not to decry but simply to recognize the natural and proper state of moral education (Weeran, p. 19).

It is in the realm of "transcendent value and meaning" that we find the context for Christian moral education, because growing as a Christian demands openness to being personally transformed in Christ and by Christ. As James Hanigan writes in his analysis of the problems and challenges facing modern Christians as they attempt to live their faith: "the most significant aspect of our

moral existence is not the actions we perform but the persons we choose to become in and through our actions" (Hanigan, pp. 115-116).

The idea that we choose to become some kind of person implies that we need the freedom to choose. So one of the questions addressed in this thesis is whether *I AM WITH YOU* follows an educational approach to religious and moral instruction, which "rejects the concept of religious education as a process of indoctrination aiming to produce believers at any cost" (Catholic Committee, 1974, p. 55). If the answer is affirmative, another question emerges. Does *I AM WITH YOU* teach moral decision making without being relativistic?

In an attempt to explore these questions, this thesis offers a critique of *I AM WITH YOU* , book # 4 of the *Good News* series. Its function is to examine *I AM WITH YOU* by explicating the concepts underlying that curriculum and those found in the theory of moral education proposed in *Religion in Today's School* (1985) by the Catholic Committee of the Quebec Superior Council of Education and reflected in the views of three Catholic theologians. Gaining a sense of these concepts helps one to know the shape and substance of the curriculum, but more importantly, its **intentions**. As William Knitter observes, the concepts embedded in a curriculum require the reader "to see more and more of the connecting strands of the theoretical web" (Knitter, p. 484). This thesis explicates the underlying concepts in *I AM WITH YOU* in order to expose what Reid calls the *informing vision* that guides it, thereby revealing its intentions.

In discussing Joseph Schwab's vision of curriculum planning, Reid argues that the *informing vision* goes beyond the explanations and examples specified in an author's single work to "the value commitments by which that mind is guided" (Reid, p. 109). One way to become increasingly aware of the ideals or commitments that underlie a curriculum, says Knitter, is to study how the concepts are connected to the principles that guide it. The more educators sense the

relationship between these concepts and these principles, the more they are prepared to grasp the informing vision which is not a single thing, but which can sharpen their understanding of what is to be done with a particular program. Therefore, in the curriculum under discussion, the five components of moral education (subsumed under the principle that moral education is a complex process) are analysed by simultaneously describing and reflecting on the concepts and by exploring their connection to each other and to their referent principles.

The *informing vision* is exemplified in the *thick concepts*[1] that emerge in a curriculum. Another question that this thesis asks, then, is whether the value commitments exemplified in *I AM WITH YOU* are true to the vision that unfolds in the two volumes of *Religion in Today's School* (1975 and 1985). The following discussion of Anne Morrow Lindbergh's *Gift from the Sea* (1955) is meant to serve both as an elaboration of the notion of *thick concepts* and as a preview of the structure of this thesis.

In sharing with her readers the meditations that surfaced during a two week retreat from daily obligations, Anne Morrow Lindbergh offers us glimpses of ourselves and our personal relationships mirrored in who she was as a person. Lindbergh examines and analyses seashells which she waited patiently to surface from the sea. With these seashells in hand Lindbergh explores particular aspects of life. As she describes and reflects on the seashells, the reader becomes increasingly aware that each shell represents a phase of life that a person enters into and leaves behind in the process of maturation. By describing and reflecting upon the shape, color, texture, and function of each seashell, she offers the reader a portrait of personal relationships that endure the test of time. She muses about the life that once inhabited the seashell and speculates on its journey. Similarly, as

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[1]The term *thick concepts* is borrowed from Bernard Williams' *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (1985)

the thick concepts underlying *I AM WITH YOU* are turned and examined, explored, and seen in the light of each other and in relation to the components of moral education, the informing vision unfolds.

What Lindbergh creates in her book is not a simple description of the seashells in her hand. It is, instead, a pondering of the broader and deeper aspects of relationship. In her effort to understand life and its relationships, she does not attempt to define the concepts that emerge from her reflections. What she does do, however, is offer these thick concepts to her readers just as the sea offers its gift of seashells. Similarly *I AM WITH YOU* holds within itself a set of thick concepts that explode with meaning upon reflecting on them.

Speaking in terms of moral education, thick moral concepts, like principles, guide action by providing reasons for action. But unlike universal principles, thick concepts are specific. They emerge out of specific content. These rich, complex, and specific concepts are such that they resist analysis that would separate what they are [fact] from what they do [value] (Williams, pp 128-130).

Lindbergh's notions about change in personal relationships emerge out of her lived experience as a woman involved in a web of relationships: wife, mother, sister, etc. Her observations and reflections reveal a pattern of living that she noticed in others as well. In reflecting on the seashells, this pattern of living unfolds as the thick concepts underlying personal relationships surface. Likewise, the vision of moral education embedded in *I AM WITH YOU* may be unearthed by explicating its thick moral concepts and revealing its intentions.

Thick concepts like wonder, commitment, being in community, God, person, etc. resist being defined. As Peck says in *The Different Drum* (1988), "We can define or adequately explain only those things that are smaller than we are" (Peck, 1988, p. 59). But there are other things like electricity, goodness, and

consciousness, he says, that cannot be defined satisfactorily. Such things are larger than we are. Peck continues:

> They are many faceted, and the best we can do is describe or define one facet at a time. Even so, we never seem quite able to plumb their depths fully. Sooner or later we inevitably run into a core of mystery (Peck, 1988, pp. 59-60).

Such are the moral concepts that permeate book # 4 of the *Good News* series. They are united by a common vision symbolically represented in the title, *I AM WITH YOU*, which points up the reality and/or belief that the Spirit of God is present in the person who extends a hand, who casts a forgiving look, who smiles at another.

It is the intention of this thesis to explore whether that vision is in harmony with the Catholic Committee's vision of moral education, which aims to foster in students the discovery of the dynamic link that exists between moral development and religious faith, and which seeks to promote attitudes that are in keeping with the Gospel of Jesus of Nazareth. The explication of the thick moral concepts underlying the Catholic Committee's vision of moral education is the task of chapter II of this thesis.

After reading *Gift from the Sea* (1955) it would be difficult to pick up a channeled whelk at the seashore and not think about the simplification of life that Anne Morrow Lindbergh claimed as one of the roads to achieving inner and outward harmony. Just as her seashells conjure up profound ideas about life, the concepts emerging in chapter III of this thesis give rise to intricate notions about learning to become strong moral persons. The explication of the thick concepts underlying the informing vision of *I AM WITH YOU* is the task of chapter III of this thesis.

It has already been mentioned that gaining a sense of the concepts embedded in a curriculum helps one to see the principles more clearly so that as

more and more of its informing vision unfolds, its intentions become increasingly apparent. In explicating the thick moral concepts that lie at the heart of *I AM WITH YOU*, chapter III attempts to enable the surfacing of at least part of its vision. To complete the picture, chapter IV examines the pedagogy in *I AM WITH YOU.*

By focusing on pedagogy and its implications for lifelong learning, chapter IV aims to further elucidate the value commitments underlying *I AM WITH YOU* which espouses an approach to educating morally that encourages students to become aware of the process by which they grow as morally strong persons. It also attempts to throw light on the problem of teaching moral values without being relativistic when indoctrination is rejected as a method of educating morally.

The approach to teaching - learning in *I AM WITH YOU* and in Thomas Groome's *five movements of shared praxis* is explored in order to suggest that the teaching - learning transaction in the classroom has the potential to facilitate children's awareness of their capacities for spiritual transformation. An examination of the role of the narrative points up the importance of having content as a background against which to reflect the thoughts and feelings that we use as reasons for moral action and which form attitudes.

The ideas of M. Scott Peck and Bernard Boelen, two visions that link personal transformation and moral development are offered as a paradigm of the human being's lifelong journey, and sometimes struggle, to become whole, authentic, one with the universe; or for believers, one with God ... a process of being and learning to become.

The conclusion of this thesis reflects on the contention that a deepening or progressive awareness of the existence and ultimate source of the spiritual/religious capacities for wonder, commitment, and being in community is an essential component of educating morally. Viewed in this way, the elementary

years are stages in this journey where children begin to make some sense of life, and where moral and religious instruction can offer them an opportunity to reflect on their existence, their nature, and their relationships.

Moral and religious instruction in the curriculum, offered over 60 hours in a given year, seems like a drop in the ocean, but one lending an essential character to life's waters. It will be seen that the program under discussion, which is suggested as a method of opening minds and hearts to mystery, has the potential to help students shape their lives and set their sights on becoming authentic individuals and contributing members of their communities.

Problems and questions facing those responsible for the revision and development of the Catholic Religious and Moral Instruction program, and especially of book # 4, will be explored.

Chapter II

Moral Theory

The moral theory contained in *Religion in Today's School* (1985) and in the ponderings of McDonagh, Lonergan, and O'Donohoe whose views are discussed in this chapter, is replete with thick moral concepts that reflect their concerns. They are concerned that unless religious and moral instruction are considered interdependent, the needs of the whole child will not be respected. They are concerned about children's right to know that they are in part, and of necessity, spiritual beings. They are concerned that people learn ways to explore their spirituality and to understand how it influences moral action. They are concerned that children and adults become aware that they can participate in their own spiritual growth and in so doing improve themselves both as individuals and as members of their communities.

As the aims of the Catholic moral education unfold in this thesis, concepts such as human being, relationship, conversion, and personal responsibility surface. These concepts are part of a vision of moral education that would guide moral action by focusing on the person as a member of a community. It is hoped that this chapter will elucidate the connections between these concepts and the principles that guide the theory.

Moral Theory in *Religion in Today's School 1985*: A Basis for Discussion

The theory of moral education proposed in *Religion in Today's School* (1985), a document authored by the Catholic Committee of the Superior Council of Education, provides the two following major principles that guide Catholic moral instruction.

1. The concept of person is firmly grounded in the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures so that moral education becomes an integral part of Catholic religious instruction.
2. Since moral action is an outcome of the dynamic interplay in the processes of thinking, feeling, believing, and acting, the educational approach to moral instruction should reflect these processes. Let us turn to the first of these principles.

1. The Concept of the Christian Person

Christians conceptualize human beings as people who are in the process of learning to know and to love themselves and others as creatures in the world. In this view, people find meaning in life by becoming aware of, and attempting to live up to what God, the loving Source and Giver of life, has in mind for them. Educating morally in the Christian context, then, means offering students a vision of reality that gives meaning to life by "giving the assurance that Love holds the world together" (Catholic Committee, 1985, p. 49). Catholic moral education involves the development of one's faith. As the Catholic Committee argues:

> It is first of all faith in action . . . . Christianity is not a more refined brand of humanism . . . it is first and foremost faith and adherence to a Person: the crucified and risen Jesus (Catholic Committee, 1985, p. 46).

Christians allow their faith in the risen Jesus to guide their actions. They interpret the contemporary secular vision of the responsible human being in the light of the Gospel (Catholic Committee, 1985, pp. 47-48).

The authors of *Religion in Today's School (1985)* state with conviction, that the program of moral instruction ought to center on the Christian vision of the human being. Readers of this document are reminded that this vision continues to

change as Christians gain new insights into their relationships with others in the world.

The theory of moral education described in *Religion in Today's School (1985)* espouses a model of the human being as a responsible person. It proposes four basic characteristics of the human being that are meant to serve as a center around which a model of the responsible person can be built: a being-on-the-way, a being-in-the-world, a being-with-others, a free and creative being.

1.1. A being-on-the-way

This expression refers to the person's evolution both as an individual and as a member of the human community. It also refers to a person's capacity for transformation. It precludes the view of the person as biologically determined. It points out the mystery in humanity and suggests that there is order and direction at its heart. For Christians, biblical faith "confirms, enlightens and broadens this insight [and] reveals to believers what constant and inexpressible excellence they are called to [respond to]" (Catholic Committee, 1985, p. 47).

1.2. A being-in-the-world

This expression characterizes the way people "absorb the world. In a way, they are at one with the world" (Catholic Committee, 1985, p. 42). Yet, while they are totally immersed in the world, they are capable of transcending it. Christian Scripture reveals that God became man in Jesus. For Christians, this incarnation affirms that God exists within the hearts of human beings and makes transcendence possible.

1.3. A being-with-others

This expression suggests that people are relational in their essence. "Human beings are made-by-others and made-for-others. Their sexuality is a sign of this, written in their flesh" (Catholic Committee, 1985, p. 43). It bespeaks a balance between the individual and social aspects of human nature, and "implies a dual responsibility: respecting the dignity of the human person and working toward more just social structures" (Catholic Committee, 1985, p. 43). For Christians, this sense of responsibility stems from an understanding of God as the Father who loves all people equally and who longs for his children to love one another.

1.4. A free and creative being

This expression underlines the notion that people express who they are in what they do, in what they think, and in what they believe. In the Christian view, people are free to respond in thought and in action to God's invitation to live together, lovingly, with others in the world (Catholic Committee, 1985, p. 48).

The concept of the responsible person as described in this theory of moral education arises out of these four basic characteristics. It requires the person gradually to take charge of his/her life and to respond to his/her conscience, that is, to his or her feeling and knowledge of God's call. The Christian concept of the human being demands that educating morally be an integral part of religious instruction.

2. The Approach to Moral Instruction Proposed in *Religion in Today's School (1985)*

Thus far, it has been noted that the theory of moral education proposed in *Religion in Today's School (1985),* partly emerges out of the perception that morality affects every fiber of a person's being. Moral education, in this view, is

part of the total development of the person. It is, of necessity, an integral part of religious education.

Another observation serves as a second principle in this theory of moral education; namely, that educating morally is a complex learning process incorporating thinking, feeling, believing, and acting. For the authors of *Religion in Today's School (1985)* it consists of five essential components "which seem to constitute the very core of moral education"(Catholic Committee, 1985, p. 17). The components are categorized under five headings: moral judgments; norms, principles, and values; autonomous decision making; drives and desires; and the moral act itself. The theory suggests that these components could be woven into the fabric of a meaningful approach to moral education if the stages of a true learning process are followed.

> It is generally accepted that the learning process has three steps . . .
> [1] the time to look to observe, to research, to inquire, to inform . . .
> [2] the time to judge, to interpret, to criticize, to go deeper into . . .
> [3] the time to act, to take charge of oneself, to commit oneself (Catholic Committee, p. 51, 1985).

As the Committee sees it, none of these five components "can be left aside without creating serious distortions in the moral learning process" (Catholic Committee, 1985, p. 18). Working from within the framework of these five components, then, educators should be able to facilitate the development of basic abilities, which form the moral aspects of the personality. In the discussion that follows, the educational implication of each of the five components is presented.

2.1. The Ability to Learn Moral Judgment

The members of the Catholic Committee acknowledge the contribution of Jean Piaget and Lawrence Kohlberg to the field of developmental psychology.

They also note the implications of their work for education in general and for moral education in particular. "One must know the stages of evolution of the child and the teenager as well as the moment they are ready to take another step in the moral learning process" (Catholic Committee, 1985, p. 19). Piaget and Kohlberg have underlined the notion that telling children what to do is no guarantee that they will do it precisely because there are certain things at specific ages that they "cannot yet understand or cannot yet do" (Catholic Committee, 1985, p. 19). Therefore, educators are cautioned to be gentle with children in their expectations of children's ability to demonstrate moral judgment, "which is an important but not exclusive part of moral learning" (Catholic Committee, 1985, p. 22).

2.2. The Ability to Refer to Norms, Principles, and Values

The Catholic Committee has devoted considerable attention to the fact that people need an awareness of basic rights and duties in order to live together. Moreover, there is much ado in *Religion in Today's School (1985)* about children learning moral principles and discerning values by interacting in communities. They develop their consciences by becoming aware of other people who "challenge them, guide them, propose choices and values" (Catholic Committee, 1985, p. 23). They become more "conscious." This second component of moral education incorporates the task of helping children "to become aware of the moral evolution that brought people to formulate a certain code of rules and laws" (Catholic Committee, 1985, p. 23). Students should be given the opportunity to see that individual and social rights, preserved in the declarations of human rights, are balanced, in the human story, with duties that promote human dignity. They should become aware that these rights and duties are *not static but ever pushing forward*, and, sometimes breaking new ground. Current examples of this new

ground can be seen in the need to be concerned for the environment and the desire to regard men and women as interdependent and equal in dignity.

Another educational task which springs from this second component is the enabling of students to be morally creative, that is, to become progressively responsible and capable of establishing new norms. As the Catholic Committee states: "It is a sign of growth to appreciate [the value of norms]; it is also a sign of growth to test them, to perfect them, and if need be to transcend them" (Catholic Committee, 1985, p. 27).

2.3. The Ability to Learn How to Make Moral Decisions and Set Goals

While most of the discussion of this third component centers on adolescents, there are some strong implications in this theory for the education of younger children. The task in this instance is to help youngsters to make rational and responsible decisions: in a word, to choose. Making choices requires a person not only to eliminate possibilities, it also demands readiness to take a step forward, and that is risky. Thus making choices requires a person to be prepared for some failures. For educators, the task here is to help students to learn how to integrate these failures into their learning processes, or to discern future action. They do this by gathering information, seeking advice, and generally trying to see issues from broader and different perspectives; for options are not always perfectly obvious. "Nobody has all the facts, no one is aware of all the angles; and yet choices must be made" (Catholic Committee, 1985, p. 30).

This theory holds that the kinds of choices that people make determine the direction that influences future action. Contemporary moral theologians have called this direction a fundamental option which is "the orientation of the self to or away from God that may be present within every moral choice" (Hanigan, p. 114). The "fundamental option . . . matures gradually in the depths of one's being and

progressively shapes the external aspect of one's morality" (Catholic Committee, 1985, p. 30). Whereas it is in adolescence that educators need to attend to their students' *fundamental option* , the seeds for making that option must be planted in childhood. The elementary years provide fertile ground for the germination of the seeds that will help them to set goals which give meaning to their lives.

2.4. The Ability to Integrate and to Channel the Affective Domain

The members of the Catholic Committee challenge the primarily cognitive approach to moral education with the inclusion of this fourth component. They note that moral decisions are not only made with the mind, (conscious, rational dimension), but also with the heart (the unconscious seat of desires and drives). They assert that "a great part of the moral learning process is to harmonize the conscious and the unconscious, to establish a practical balance . . . between reason and passion" (Catholic Committee, 1985, p. 32). With this in mind, desire which is a vital force, is not to be denied, but channeled. The committee is aware that some educators might be reluctant to tackle the affective domain because "the workings and mechanisms of affectivity are less familiar and more obscure" (Catholic Committee, 1985, p. 32). But they urge those responsible for the education of young people to understand that those in their charge must learn to express their desires constructively if they are to develop morally; for passions and desires are integral parts of being human. Moreover, if properly channeled through self-discipline, they can provide some of the momentum to help young people to be true to their human nature which, in the Christian vision, is created by God.

2.5. The Ability to Live Up to One's Intentions and Actions

The fifth component of educating morally speaks to the students' ability to follow through on their choices. It suggests that the students be given opportunities to execute some of their choices. Thus this component incorporates four major tasks:

a. to train students to act responsibly in unpredictable circumstances;

b. to prepare students to evaluate their own behavior and to accept the consequences of it;

c. to enable students to see their own capacity for renewal; that is, their sins are forgiven and they need only ask God to be healed for it to be so;

d. to give students the techniques to pursue more self-knowledge as they move through time.

Each of the five components discussed thus far has its particular role to play in educating morally. The members of the Catholic Committee see each one as valuable yet sterile if developed in isolation.

Catholic educators are urged to view moral education as a gradual learning process. For the Catholic Committee, this is an approach to moral instruction that lends itself to the achievement of the global objective of Christian moral education, namely, "to prepare moral agents who are both heirs and inventors" (Catholic Committee, 1985, p. 52). Christian students become *heirs* in the sense that they receive a great and holy tradition in whose story they find moral direction and support. They become *inventors* when they use their mental and spiritual gifts to find creative solutions in both personal and social difficulties.

This theory offers a view of moral education that goes hand in hand with religious education. As Weeran says:

> Educating morally, then, overlaps with educating religiously. Attempts to treat them as distinct and independent are bound to fail, though, superficially, the divorce may appear to have been effected. Allowing the two to work together will likely enhance

> the impact of each on students' development (Weeran, p. 19).

All forms of moral education are imbued with some kind of religious view or meaning system because there is always some prior context or understanding of the world from which any theory emerges. This theory of moral education emerges out of the belief and knowledge that human nature is a creation of a personal God who loves people and who longs to live in a loving relationship with them.

This theory of moral education promotes a concept of the person as responsible. It proposes that moral education is meaningful for children when the curriculum respects the accepted stages of the learning process.

It suggests that educators be gentle, allowing the awareness of the process of natural growth to play a role in the type of instruction selected and in the expectations of educators. The theory espouses interaction among students and notes the importance of providing opportunities for students to make choices as a means of facilitating the moral direction that the students pursue.

The theory notes the importance of self-discipline for channeling desires into virtuous behavior. It acknowledges the importance of being open to various teaching-learning strategies so long as they are consistent with a relational view of morality.

Catholic theology has influenced the moral theory presented in *Religion in Today's School* (1985). The next part of this thesis offers the views of three Catholic theologians whose views are in harmony with the Catholic Committee's vision of Christian moral education. It will explicate three concepts in Catholic moral theology that lie at the heart of that vision, namely: relationship, conversion, and personal responsibility.

Catholic Theology: Implications For Moral Education

The pages that follow, in this chapter, outline the views of three modern Catholic theologians whose thinking reflects the direction in which Catholic moral education is moving. Enda McDonagh's views are the first to be addressed. For him, moral education must employ instructional devices that promote morality as relational. Secondly, Bernard Lonergan's insights on the subject of conversion will be outlined. Finally there will be discussion of James O'Donohoe's observation that great minds like those of Rahner and Lonergan have influenced Catholic moral educators to look for ways to facilitate the transformation of the entire person.

Enda McDonagh: Moral Development and the Community Context

In his discussion of the relationship between moral theology and moral development, Enda McDonagh, a noted Catholic moral theologian, underlines what he sees as a major flaw in contemporary secular moral theory; namely, its focus on "the individual person or moral agent as source and term of the developmental process" (McDonagh, p. 326). McDonagh asserts that moral development occurs in community and that moral behavior is relational and communal as well as personal.

> Indeed I see the focus for each of us in learning morality and in behaving morally as lying equally outside and beyond the self in another person or community (McDonagh, p. 326).

Moreover, he warns educators and moralists alike, that individual moral development may be stifled and even threatened when the social context in which the individual abides, is ignored. For example, Latin Americans today, who are exploited by the privileged few, are calling for liberation. As McDonagh writes:

> This might be one of the great moral imperatives of our time . . . Paradoxically, however, the privileged may also need their liberation from self-centered, consumerist and trivialized lives which their society offers them (McDonagh, p. 330).

McDonagh sees moral development as a process of personal and communal growth in time, and notes that a part of the task of moral development lies in activity based on some understanding of the person and the world. But he wonders whether the greater part of the task does not lie in changing ourselves and our world. He makes the case for learning through praxis (reflection and action) so that we can harness the human creativity required to create a morally good climate (community) for the moral growth of the person. However, he says, we must have the ability to accept our limitations in the doing. We are victims, in a sense, caught up in the creative and destructive elements within ourselves and within our communities. As he argues, "some developing awareness of the creative resources of person and community, and of their destructive limitations seems essential to the task" (McDonagh p. 333).

Since McDonagh argues that morality is relational, the notion of **conversion** seems a more appropriate center upon which to focus moral development than that of **self-actualization**, which is espoused by many developmentalists. By conversion he means the "transcendence to others . . . that is at the heart of growth itself" (McDonagh, p. 333). In fact, the presence of another person who needs at least to be recognized, and may well have other needs, calls us out of ourselves, and causes us to move beyond ourselves. In this sense, by their very existence, other people enable us to grow. "In attempting to fulfill [their needs] we are ourselves converted, changed, if not 'utterly' at least partially" (McDonagh, p. 335).

McDonagh asserts that the extent to which we are able to transcend ourselves and turn towards others is also the degree to which we open ourselves to

knowing God. Morality and faith, he notes, have a long history of interaction. The dialectical relationship between faith in God and moral response to one's neighbor is evident in Hebrew and Christian Scriptures. He writes: "The character of your God is revealed by your treatment of your neighbor; commitment to the God of Israel demands very specific responses to the neighbor" (McDonagh, p. 337). The challenge for educators, as he sees it then, is to discern wherein lies the distinction between faith and morality and where it is appropriate to meld the two. It may be that the biggest problem for Christian moral educators in adapting devices of moral instruction such as those of Kohlberg, is the import of the underlying individualist philosophy in such devices.

Bernard Lonergan: Conversion

In *Method in Theology (1979)* Bernard Lonergan, S.J. philosopher and theologian, reflects on what theologians do when they do theology, and on what human beings do when they say that they know. Lonergan proposes a theory of knowing as a process that requires us to go beyond immediate experience. He describes this process as a transcendental method, explaining it "as the basic pattern of operations employed in every cognitional enterprise" (Lonergan, p. 4). He asserts that sometimes our awareness of this process emerges as a result of maturing, but often, he says, we require a conversion in order to become aware of what happens when we say that we know.

A brief review of Lonergan's transcendental method, his theory of knowing, is a helpful departure in discussing his notion of conversion. The following paragraphs are meant to serve as a summary of that theory.

Lonergan insists that we know, or become aware of, the world around us and the world within us through this transcendental method, a process by which meaning is given to that world. This meaning-giving method of knowing, "the

process of experiencing, understanding, and judging is a process of self-transcendence" (Lonergan, p. 239).

For Lonergan, knowing is more than seeing, hearing, touching, smelling or tasting. It is actively experiencing, understanding, and judging what one sees, etc. It is deciding, for example, that one sees a person in need and not a bothersome intruder or that one hears a beautiful song and not a howling wind. One makes a choice.

Deciding means that we must make choices, and the kind of choices that we make, depends on our attitudes. As Lonergan sees it, if we are to make good choices, we must have attitudes that enable us to transcend ourselves; we must be attentive to our experience, we must be intelligent as we attempt to understand, we must be reasonable in our judgments, and we must be responsible when we make decisions (Lonergan, pp. 14-19).

These attitudes, or ways of being in the world, allow us to exercise the freedom to move toward authenticity, to move beyond what he calls our horizons.

> Horizons are the sweep of our interests and of our knowledge; they are the fertile source of further knowledge and care; but they are also the boundaries that limit our capacities for assimilating more than we already have attained (Lonergan, p. 237).

Sometimes, says Lonergan, the exercise of this freedom springs sequentially out of our old horizons. Sometimes these attitudes flow from our learning. But often we must experience an about face, a conversion:

> It comes out of the old by repudiating characteristic features; it begins a new sequence that can keep revealing ever greater depth and breath and wealth. Such an about face and new beginning is what is meant by a conversion (Lonergan, p. 237-238).

Lonergan offers his readers three connected types of conversion: intellectual, moral, and religious.

Intellectual conversion is a change from the contention that knowing is seeing to the conviction that knowing is a process of self-transcendence. It is Lonergan's view that, if we are open to learning from others and if we consistently verify our perceptions with others, we can know the world, not as we might perceive it, but as it really is. He says that to do this, it is important to recognize the distinction between the world interpreted through meaning and the world of immediacy.

> For the world mediated by meaning is a world known not by the sense experience of an individual but the external and internal experience of a cultural community and by the continuously checked and rechecked judgments of the community. Knowing, accordingly, is not just seeing, it is experiencing, understanding, judging, and believing . . . The reality known is not just looked at; it is given in experience, organized and extrapolated by understanding, posited by judgments and belief (Lonergan, p. 238).

Intellectual conversion, then, is a change in our awareness of what happens when we are knowing. It is an admission that we give meaning to what we perceive through our senses and an acknowledgment that this meaning is derived from an historical and cultural context.

Moral conversion, says Lonergan, "changes the criterion of one's decisions and choices from satisfactions to values" (Lonergan, p. 240). Like intellectual conversion, moral conversion is a change in awareness. It occurs, he says, "when we discover for ourselves that our choosing affects ourselves no less than the chosen or rejected objects and that it is up to each of us to decide for himself what he is to make of himself" (Lonergan, p. 240). Moral conversion first requires us to become aware of what we believe, and like intellectual conversion, moral conversion requires us to be ready to learn from others, to be open to criticism, and to question (Lonergan, p. 240).

In itself, intellectual conversion is at best a cerebral experience and moral conversion tugs at the heart. But **religious conversion** is a total experience, passionate yet mindful, blissful yet painful, corporal yet spiritual. In truth, it is an awakening, and like intellectual and moral conversion, it is self-transcending. As Lonergan says, religious conversion is "other worldly falling in love (Lonergan p. 240). For Lonergan, religious conversion opens our minds and our hearts to truth, to Mystery.

> First there is God's gift of his love. Next the eye of this love [faith] reveals values in their splendor, while the strength of this love brings about their realization, and that is moral conversion. Finally, among the values discerned by the eye of love is the value of believing the truths taught by the religious tradition, and in such tradition and belief are the seeds of intellectual conversion. For the word spoken and heard . . . is not just a content of experience but a content of experience and understanding and judging and deciding. (Lonergan, p. 243).

An excellent model for Lonergan's view of conversion is found in the Christian Scriptures (Luke 24:13-35)[2] where two disciples on the road to Emmaus meet the Risen Jesus who quotes the sacred scriptures to them. They do not recognize him at first. It is only after they invite the stranger to stay with them that they are even open to recognizing him as their Risen Lord. After he took bread, blessed it, broke it, and handed it to them "their eyes were open and they recognized him . . . . Then they said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us as he talked to us on the road and explained the scriptures to us?" (Luke 24:31-35)

The disciples were then able to see with eyes of love that this stranger was the Risen Jesus, their friend. They heard words that seared their hearts like burning fire. It is significant that they invited this stranger to stay with them.

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[2]Heretofore all Scriptural References are taken from *The Good News Bible* (TEV) Today's English Version.

For Lonergan, conversion can only happen when our hearts are ready, when we are prepared to welcome the Christ who can make our "hearts burn within us" (religious conversion). It follows that once we see the suffering or healing Christ in others, we respond in action accordingly (moral conversion). Once we assume responsibility for our actions, we begin to become aware of the operations by which we discover the world (intellectual conversion).

Lonergan seems to be saying that conversion is a process that begins with a person's surrender to a loving God. For Christians, this means acceptance of Jesus. Through this kind of conversion, then, we find direction and the ability to choose values that reflect a relationship with a loving God. When we are in love, and open to being moved by love, it follows that we will *be attentive* to our experience; we will *be reasonable* in our judgment; and we will *be responsible* in our decisions.

James O'Donohoe: Moral Development and Personal Transformation

James O'Donohoe, a seasoned teacher of moral theology, explains that, in the years since the second Vatican Council of 1965, there has emerged in the official moral teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, a much greater emphasis on the growth of personal responsibility.

O'Donohoe credits great minds like Karl Rahner and Bernard Lonergan with influencing contemporary approaches to Catholic moral education that respond to the complexities of modern life. Rahner, he says, sees the Church's task as "no longer that of giving concrete answers; rather, she must work to form moral people" (O'Donohoe, p. 383). Lonergan, he says, highlights the need "for people to become aware of the elements in themselves which cause them to flee from reasonableness and personal authenticity" (O'Donohoe, p. 383).

O'Donohoe is convinced that the emphasis on the person, as the primary focus of moral teaching, is the impetus that has moved some moral theologians to consider carefully Lawrence Kohlberg's study of moral development and James Fowler's inquiry into personal faith development. Moreover, because of the insights of Lonergan and Rahner, Catholic moral theologians are now aware that moral education requires new approaches in methodology of teaching. He writes:

> The educator must not be satisfied merely to communicate content; he or she must also be concerned with the task of communicating to students the means of handling the content in a responsible and creative manner (O'Donohoe, p. 385).

With this in mind, educators have looked to the field of developmental psychology for new approaches to moral instruction which go beyond indoctrination. Kohlberg offers a theory of moral development, which has some implications for Christian moral education. O'Donohoe has gleaned some reactions to that theory from the perspectives of Roman Catholic and Protestant theologians. They see Kohlberg's theory as a helpful tool in understanding how moral thinking develops in young people. But they have criticisms: a concern for lack of apparent content; an overemphasis on reason to the exclusion of encouraging wonder about profound experiences as a means of examining interpersonal relationships; and a lack of stress on virtues other than justice. O'Donohoe adds that morality "is something which requires the transformation of the entire person" (O'Donohoe, p. 390). Nevertheless, he gives due credit to Kohlberg's theory which , he says, provides a structure within which to think about moral development. Likewise, he applauds James Fowler's work on the stages of faith, which serves as a useful structure for thinking about faith development. Since Christians view morality as faith in action, O'Donohoe suggests that Fowler's theory might influence Christian moral education.

However, as O'Donohoe observes, both these theories have a cognitive thrust. If moral development is to be served well, the affective side of human nature must be balanced with the cognitive. To this end, O'Donohoe notes that more and more attention is being paid by moralists to the notion of ongoing personal conversion, which he describes as "a transformation in a person's manner of acting in reference to any given person, place, or thing" (O'Donohoe, p. 398).

If moral maturity involves the transformation of the whole person, as O'Donohoe says, then it seems that educators who insist on forming responsible people are on the right track. To be responsible is to have the ability to respond positively to another, to transcend oneself. This is the goal of Christian moral education.

It is clear from Lonergan's perspective, that moral development involves the heart as well as the head. Moreover, it appears to begin with the heart. Personal transformation, in this view, is strongly influenced by what one believes and holds dear. And that is largely determined, as McDonagh says, by the community in which we live.

Summary

This chapter analyses the theory of moral education in *Religion in Today's School* (1985). It has organized the analysis around two principles: one that describes the Christian concept of person, the other that proposes an approach to moral education which emphasizes process as well as content.

The views of three Catholic theologians have been explored. Their visions of moral education shed light on some of the thick concepts that underlie the Catholic Committee's vision of moral education.

Chapter III

A Reflection on *I AM WITH YOU* Book # 4 of the *Good News* Series

By examining the content of *I AM WITH YOU* (1990), this chapter aims to explore the Christian values highlighted in book # 4 of the *Good News* series. It is hoped that this discussion will serve to allow the surfacing of the thick ethical concepts embedded in the *Good News* series, and particularly, in *I AM WITH YOU*. This chapter also aims to shed some light on one of the questions asked at the outset of this thesis: Does *I AM WITH YOU* teach moral values without indoctrination, in the sense of asserting coercive authority or undue influence? As a prelude to this chapter, a few words devoted to some of the theories of the nature of moral development is in order.

Interpretations of the nature of moral development appear to emerge out of the perceptions of the individual or group that espouses a particular interpretation. These perceptions influence the context in which the concept of moral development is used and studied. Jean Piaget, for example, was a professor of experimental psychology. He studied the cognitive operations of children at play. So, for him, moral development referred to a series of stages determined by thought processes. Because he perceived human beings as rational beings, his understanding of the nature of moral development was essentially cognitive. He found that, at some stage of cognitive development, children chose to follow rules when motivated by reward and punishment (egocentric stage). At a more advanced stage they begin to criticize established rules and invent their own rules (autonomous stage). Based on his observations, Piaget conceived a theory of moral development whose essence was the child's striving toward autonomy: a

stage at which people create their own rules for moral behavior (Duska and Whelan pp. 7-41).

Building upon, and expanding Piaget's cognitive-developmental model, Kohlberg used empirical research methods to test his theory of moral development. Kohlberg also saw moral development as a rational process. For Kohlberg, Piaget's autonomous person grasps principles by insight and lives by them. Justice is the highest of these principles so that, in Kohlberg's view, the just person is indeed a morally good person (Duska and Whelan, pp. 42-79). But "justice is virtually bereft of meaning when torn from its background in an array of thick ethical concepts. Without that background the use of thin concepts [like justice] can be little more than pure caprice" (Callan, p. 3).

So these cognitive approaches to moral development are helpful to the educator in as much as they throw some light on moral reasoning. However, more and more practitioners and theorists in the field of moral and religious education see moral development not only as cognitive but also as part of the affective learning domain. This is well stated and documented by John Elias in his comprehensive work *Moral Education: Secular and Religious* (1989) where he summarizes some of the approaches to understanding the nature of moral development offered by contemporary Catholic and Protestant theologians. He reports, for example, on the writings of Catholic theologian Philip Keane:

> He does not dispense with the necessity of moral principles but sees them in a new light. Understanding and coming to accept moral principles entails the imaginative process of discerning principles, playing with ideas, and making appropriate connections (Elias, p. 147).

In his discussion of moral theology Keane makes a case for the development of the imagination. He says:

> Once we admit that moral decisions are not always simple deductions from principles, moral theology

> becomes much more than a theology of moral decisions alone. Moral theology becomes a theology of developing moral persons who have the resources to make good decisions, even when the circumstances are not that clear . . . . In this framework, moral imagination seems especially apt in helping people grow and develop as strong moral persons . . . (Keane, p. 103, 1984).

His concept of moral development is determined by his understanding of the complexities of living, which, for him, require large doses of thought and imagination that he says are still only part of the picture. Keane sees moral development in the context of a person's faith journey. For him, faith is a thick concept that guides moral action.

Yet another interpretation of moral development is offered in *Life Maps* (1980) where James Fowler and Sam Keen present their compelling personal and academic accounts of faith as a lifelong journey. In these conversations, Fowler, whose theory of faith stages emerges out of the broad context of the whole moral and spiritual person, challenges Piaget's separation of cognition and affection. He says:

> A separation of faith-knowing into cognitive and affective aspects is a vestige of Cartesian epistemology that will not work. Augustine knew better. St. Paul knew better. A great many theologians have always known better. They have always known that faith involves **valuing**. It involves resting one's heart upon something, trusting someone, committing one's heart to someone or something (Fowler and Keen, p. 137).

It is in respect of the thick concept of that which is called **person** that the *Good News* series was written. For the authors of this series, moral development is a multi-faceted learning process aimed at fostering, in students, three comprehensive capacities with which they are endowed by virtue of being human, namely: wonder, commitment, and being in community. This chapter reflects on *I AM WITH YOU*, book # 4 of the *Good News* series under four headings: 1. Three

Spiritual Capacities; 2. Prayer and Decision Making; 3. Use of Scripture; 4. The Person of Jesus.

1. The Spiritual Capacities for Wonder, for Commitment, for Being in Community: Overview of the *Good News* Series

The *Good News* series reflects the wisdom of Vatican II, which suggests that **forming responsible people** better facilitates moral development than did the Church's earlier practice of attempting **to lay down the law**. The fountain of human potential labeled, in the elementary program, as the spiritual capacities for **wonder,** for **commitment**, and for **being in community** is the source through which the *Good News* series attempts to foster the formation of responsible people. This moral dimension of the whole elementary program is explicitly articulated in the affective terminal objectives, which themselves are related to the capacities for wonder, for commitment, and for being in community. An example of these **affective terminal objectives** found in level six reads thus: "The student should be attentive to the faithfulness with which Jesus lived his choices (A. 2.10)."[3] (Plourde-Tardif, working document). This specific learning objective is related to the student's capacity for commitment. Although the three capacities weave their way in and out of the six levels of the elementary program, each one is given a particular focus in a specific grade level.

1.1. The Capacity for Wonder

The capacity for **wonder** is the focus of *GOD IS LOVE* (1988): Elementary One, and *MOVED BY THE SPIRIT* (1992): Elementary Five. Words such as awe, curiosity, admiration, celebration, amazement are found frequently scattered throughout these two levels.

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3 (A. 2.10) refers to the affective domain of Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives

In level one, teachers are urged to draw the students' attention toward respecting others, having an appreciation for the life the students discover within themselves and around themselves. The students are gently directed to focus their attention beyond themselves and, toward the wonders of nature. They are encouraged to observe the fact that living things and people have needs for attention and love. The students are encouraged to understand (in their own way) that these needs are as basic to spiritual survival, as the needs for water and sunshine are to physical survival. They are encouraged to marvel at all this life, and to wonder about its source. They are encouraged to ask questions about God, the Giver of life, about the Good News that Jesus brings, and about the Spirit whom they discover gives them good ideas. Focusing on wonder taps into the students' natural way of perceiving the world, for they are "ready to receive unrelated experiences of life. Everything is a source of wonder" (Goldman, p. 47).

Facilitating the students' questioning is a major teaching-learning strategy in the *Good News* series. It will be discussed in more detail in chapter IV of this thesis. But it is mentioned here because it is essential to fostering the capacity for wonder, thereby breaking the ground for spiritual awakening in children. What becomes clear in *GOD IS LOVE* (1988) is that, with this spiritual awakening, children begin to develop a sense of morality that is bound up with **reverence** for life. The implication for moral development then, is that with an awareness of life as a precious gift, people are moved not only to refrain from harmful actions toward living things but also to contribute to life's enhancement. That theme is deeply rooted in the vision of moral education explicated in chapter II of this thesis and permeates the six grade level's.

In level five, one of the ways that teachers are urged to foster a sense of wonder in the students is by helping them to experience the feelings that Peter and John must have lived when, faced with severe reprimand and told to stop rousing

the emotions of the crowd, they insisted, "we cannot stop speaking of what we ourselves have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20). The students are reminded that Peter had denied ever knowing Jesus because he had been afraid Now he was defying the authorities, shouting his affiliation with, and love for Jesus from the roof tops! What happened, the students are encouraged to wonder, to change this man from a sheepish coward into a bold defender of his faith in the Risen Jesus?

Again the students are encouraged to question. This time the subject is conversion; and the students are encouraged to notice some of the moments in their own lives when they were moved to change a negative attitude like fear into a positive attitude like trust. They are asked to explore the process that they lived at that moment, to wonder about the cause of that change. In general, level five students are prompted to marvel at the ways that the Spirit is manifest in the Church and throughout the world, in individuals and in groups, religious and secular, in small ways and in great and challenging ways.

This attempt to help students maintain their sense of wonder serves to help them feel empowered by their own *wonderfulness* which abides in them by the power of the Spirit. They learn that they can make a difference in their homes and in their communities. By promoting a sense of wonder, the *Good News* series intends to contribute, in the long term to helping them see the world with marveling eyes, eyes that see the splendor of creation, eyes that are filled with love and that are drawn like a magnet to goodness. This is an essential element in moral and spiritual development; for, as Edmund Fuller cautions:

> The loss of wonder, of awe, of the sense of the sublime, is a condition leading to the death of the soul. There is no more withering state than that which takes all things for granted. The blasé attitude means spiritual, emotional, intellectual, and creative death. (E. Fuller in A. & W. Howard, pp. 99-100)

1.2. The Capacity for Commitment

In its focus on the students' capacity for **commitment**, the *Good News* series reinforces the notion that being morally good requires not only that we think about morality but that we actually **do** something. To recall Lonergan, it requires us to make reasonable choices, to make responsible decisions. Consistently, in specific places throughout the six grade levels, the students are given opportunities to make moral choices appropriate to their age level. However there are two grade levels during which this capacity is highlighted: level three and level six.

During level three the students are introduced to people like St. Francis of Assisi and St. Clare who demonstrated that they cared deeply for everything in nature. They also see how devoted Jesus was to people. With Francis, Clare, and Jesus as models the students are invited to articulate particular ways in which they can take care of themselves, the people around them, and the environment. They learn that they can respond to God the Father's invitation to them to cooperate with him in being co-creators in the world. An activity taken from the elementary level three teacher's manual illustrates this point. In this activity, the students are asked to make a self evaluation form entitled: "How can I do my part as a co-creator with God the Father?" (Office de catéchèse, 1989, p. 143). Activities like this one, and questions that ask the students to consider what they personally commit to doing in specific situations are meant to foster in the students a sense of **personal responsibility**, which is a recurring theme in the literature in Catholic moral theology (Lonergan, Catholic Committee, O'Donohoe).

As was stated earlier in this chapter, Christian educators are encouraged to form responsible people in their attempts to enhance moral development. Responsibility is a dominant theme in the level six program. In the sense that it means the ability to respond to the world, it refers to making moral choices. The level six students are asked to observe how Jesus made his choices and how he

integrated values. They watch him grappling with dilemmas and reaching out to God the Father for guidance. They see him remembering, too, what God the Father did for his ancestors, how he led them out of captivity and made a covenant with them (Deuteronomy 7). They learn that Jesus chose to love people in the same way that his Father loved people (Plourde-Tardif, working document, S.T. chapter 3).

The students are given many opportunities to think about their own abilities to respond in love to the world. Their imaginations are fed with images of real people who, armed with a strength that they find in their relationship with God, chose to do something positive for others in the face of personal tragedy, death, injustice. The students are invited to contemplate their own relationships, with God, and with others. They are asked to articulate their own good deeds, which are manifestations of commitments they have already made and executed. They are asked to contemplate their futures and to articulate what they will **do** to shape their lives (Plourde-Tardif, working document, S.T. chapter 3).

These capacities for wonder and for commitment are linked in a very particular manner. Time and again throughout the *Good News* series, the students are given opportunities to see how those people who predispose themselves to wonder, who are awed by the positive aspects of the world, who marvel at the unexpected or illogical and label it a miracle (the hand of God), are those who, as Fowler says, are capable of "committing their hearts to someone or something" (Fowler and Keen, p. 137).

1.3. The Capacity for Being in Community

"Do this in memory of me" (Luke 22:19). These are powerful words in Christian thought and in Christian experience. Jesus is said to have uttered them on the night before he died when he shared a Passover meal with his friends. He reminded them how much he loved them and asked them to continue to love one another in the same way. He would die for them now just as he had lived for them. He would give himself now, just as he had given himself in a thousand ways, living with them and laughing with them. Now he would suffer a cruel death for them. And he asked them to **be** for others what he had been, to **do** for others what he had done.4

In doing what Jesus did, Christians unite themselves with Jesus. This is, in essence, the sense of the notion of **community** as it is used in the *Good News* series. The words "Do this in memory of me" sum up for the students what they can do to develop their capacity for being in community. The *Good News* series has attempted to make these words concrete for the students by offering them examples of how Jesus gave of himself totally to others, not only in his death but especially in the moments of his life when he **celebrated** with the joyful, **wept** with the sorrowful, **listened** to the troubled, **reached out to heal** the wounded, and **forgave** those who sinned. Throughout the six elementary years, the students are encouraged to be mindful of Jesus' words and actions as they contemplate their own lives.

Like the concepts of wonder and commitment, the concept of being in community is woven into the fabric of the program. But it is given prominence in the level two and level four curricula. *See How They Love One Another* (1988), the elementary level two text book, provides many examples of how Christians

4These thoughts on the Passover meal (the Last Supper) are the fruit of searching conversations with Dr. Thomas A. Francoeur, Faculty of Education, McGill University

should live morally good lives. The students are encouraged to take the time to reflect on events in their own lives in such a way that they follow St. Paul's recommendation to always look for the good (Paul's letters to the Romans and to the Galatians).

People cannot **be** as Christ was or **do** as Christ did unless they look only for the good, or see with eyes of love as Lonergan (1979) says. So the students are lovingly encouraged to **see themselves** as good people, capable of working together with others on specific projects where they have opportunities to practice loving each other by sharing their resources, listening to one another's ideas, and reaching out to those class mates who might be feeling vulnerable or unequal to the task at hand.

The authors of this series seem to understand that facilitating the students' ability to see themselves as good individuals, who are capable of loving, is essential to helping them develop into responsible beings. The theory is that once they know and feel that "I can do it!" a phrase that recurs frequently throughout the series, they become conscious of themselves as able to respond to the moral questions that they will encounter on their lifelong journeys of personal transformation.

In *I AM WITH YOU*, book #4 of the *Good News* series, the focus of this thesis, the capacity for being in community is once again highlighted. It is the contention of the authors of this program that the more aware the students are that God loves them, the more readily they will develop their capacity for being in community. Book #4 (*I AM WITH YOU*) achieves this mission by focusing on Jesus the Person whom the students have heard say, "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9). They observe how Jesus treats people, those who love him, those who are skeptical of him, those who harm him. The students are

shown that Jesus loved unconditionally each person he met and they are reminded that God the Father loves each of them in the same way.

In order to further the development of the capacity for community in the students, *I AM WITH YOU* encourages them to see themselves as a part of the whole community of Christians past and present. To this end each phase5 begins by setting a concrete scene with which most of the students should be able to identify. The whole of chapter three is devoted to present-day situations in which people encounter the Risen Jesus. These are actual stories about real people. The students are encouraged to look for similar situations in their immediate milieu.

In order to help the students to identify with Christians of the past, *I AM WITH YOU* provides numerous illustrations depicting the lives of the early Christians. There are also many opportunities for discussion about the similarities and differences between those times and now. Ignation contemplation6 exercises which allow the students to use their imaginations in order to participate in past events are found throughout the *Good News* series. In *I AM WITH YOU*, there are numerous other activities that facilitate the students' sense of belonging to the historical Christian community. For example, they are encouraged to write a letter to one of the evangelists (Plourde-Tardif, S.T., 1990, p. 52) and they visit the apostles in Palestine via a time machine (Plourde-Tardif, T.M., 1990, pp. 198-201).

In this thesis, it has been suggested that the words "Do this in memory of me" sum up the capacity for being in community as it is presented in level four. Moreover it has been stated that with an awareness of God's unconditional love for them, the students are likely to develop their capacity for being in community. Being in community, in this sense, is having the capacity to love others in a

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5A phase is a unit of study . *I AM WITH YOU* is comprised of 12 such units.
6Ignation contemplation is a form of prayer. It serves to help the students feel connected with other Christians

particular way. It means being charitable. Tad Dunne's understanding of charity reflects this capacity for being in community. He says that it is by charity "that we recognize the presence of absolute value in other persons and are moved to enhance their lives" (Dunne, p. 176).

Exploring the capacities for wonder, for commitment, and for being in community is the educational vehicle through which the *Good News* series aims to help students to become responsible people, to develop morally. By attending to the gradual development of these human capacities, the teacher can help students to recognize their potential for loving and for effecting change in their own lives. Instead of providing a forum for indoctrination, the *Good News* series offers the teacher a means of facilitating this recognition by offering the students a Christian perspective on responsibility: responding to God's invitation to live in loving relationships with him and with others in the world.

By promoting this sense of responsibility in the students, the *Good News* series empowers the students and helps them to develop the self-esteem that they will need to face the world throughout the turbulent years of adolescence. Developing this sense of responsibility also sows the seeds for becoming adult when moral choices will continue to fall into line with spiritual growth. This completes the examination of the spiritual capacities for wonder, for commitment and for being in community as exemplified in the *Good News* series. The next three parts of this chapter focus on *I AM WITH YOU* in particular.

2. Prayer and Decision Making in *I AM WITH YOU*: Tapping the Source of Courage and Wisdom

The introduction to *I AM WITH YOU* (teachers' manual) describes prayer as the human response to a yearning for God, which he himself has put in human hearts (Plourde-Tardif, T.M. 1990, p. 35). In the sense that it is a **response**, prayer is closely related to the concept of personal responsibility (the ability gradually to

take charge of one's life and to respond to one's feeling and knowledge of God's call). Personal responsibility, it will be remembered, is one of the thick moral concepts embedded in the Catholic committee's vision of moral education. In the Christian context, it requires an openness to God, and prayer is an attitude of openness that enables one to listen to the Divine. From the perspective of human activity, prayer is "an openness to God and to all the ways in which he chooses to manifest himself in our lives" (Plourde-Tardif, 1990, p. 35).

I AM WITH YOU shows how this attitude of openness to God can be an opportunity for people to tap the courage and wisdom that enables them to make difficult moral decisions. When right action is not obvious, prayer helps the process of discernment. The students learn that the courage and the wisdom to discern is available through the power of the Holy Spirit. They hear about Jesus' promise that the Father would send the Spirit to guide, and to help people in their difficult moments: "The Helper, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and make you remember all that I have told you" (John 14:26).

The students learn that after Jesus' Resurrection, and just before his Ascension, when the apostles were gathered together in prayer, Jesus assured them that they would not be left alone with anxieties about their mission to spread the Good News. He told them, "When the Holy Spirit comes upon you, you will be filled with power, and you will be witnesses for me in Jerusalem in all of Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

The students see how Gamaliel, a Jewish religious leader who, because he was a prayerful man, had the wisdom to remain calm and to trust that the story of the Resurrection would soon be forgotten if it were not of God (Plourde-Tardif, 1990, p. 15). They review chapter 2, verses 42, 44, 47 of the Acts of the Apostles, which they have studied in different ways since level one. These verses highlight

the importance of prayer in the lives of the early Christian communities. The students begin to see that these communities could not have found the courage to share and to reach out, or the wisdom to listen to and to forgive one another, had they not prayed together. *I AM WITH YOU* provides opportunities to enhance the students' awareness of God working in people's lives by asking them, for example, to express what amazed them most about the early Christian communities (Plourde-Tardif, 1990, p. 24).

As the students leaf through the pages of the first chapter of *I AM WITH YOU* to find out how the Gospels were written, they discover that Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John were also very prayerful people. In itself, leafing through these pages is a prayerful exercise because it disposes the students to become aware of how God worked in the lives of the early Christians. They have the chance to marvel at the Gospels, which they discover are the stories of communities who learned to dig deep into their personal histories to remember who Jesus was, and what he said and did. The students learn that in remembering these things, the early Christians found the courage to face their difficult situations and the wisdom to take positive action. But to do this they had to allow God to speak to them through one another. They had to **listen** to one another's stories of life as it was with Jesus, and they had to **discern** a message in the stories.

The students are frequently asked to leaf through the pages of their text books, and to look ahead. In chapter two this activity enables them to contemplate Jesus' life. They see how people reacted to him, how he changed many of them and how he prayed the *Our Father* to help him center himself.

Leafing through the pages of chapter three facilitates a deeper understanding of the words "I am with you." The students catch glimpses of real people living in Montreal, Ottawa, and Hull who face difficulties similar to those of the early Christians. They learn that these modern Christians have the wisdom

to recognize God's call and the courage to answer it. They listen to the Spirit by praying together in several ways: they read Scripture, they celebrate the Eucharist and they listen to one another.

As was stated at the outset of this discussion on prayer in *I AM WITH YOU,* prayer is a response to a yearning for God, which he himself has put in our hearts. From the perspective of divine activity, prayer is a stirring in the human soul. Contemplatives like Theresa of Avila and Ignatius of Loyola were very aware of this experience. It is an experience that a perceptive and prayerful teacher can foster in children.

I AM WITH YOU provides some opportunities for students to recognize and to express in song, art, drama, and other creative ways, the divine activity stirring within their souls, an activity that causes people to yearn for and to seek God. These opportunities can be seen as invitations for the students to develop morally because in becoming aware that the Divine lives within them, they can turn to God as a source of wisdom for making decisions, and as the source of courage to follow through on those decisions. As the prophet Jeremiah says, "When you seek me you will find me, when you seek me with all your heart, you will find me with you" says the Lord (Jeremiah 29:13-14).

This awareness of the Divine within them sparks children to grow into adults who are more capable of living in harmony with others, more creatively, and more uniquely. John Elias' reflection on moral persons provides some insight into this assertion:

> Moral persons are artistic creations because in their uniqueness they are not bound by the conventions of their culture. They incorporate the best of what is in the culture but go beyond it. As artists they cannot be dictated to by what is external to them but rather follow an inner voice or power (Elias, p. 190).

In the hands of a prayerful teacher, *I AM WITH YOU* may prove to be a most helpful instrument for facilitating in children the recognition of their inner voice, the Holy Spirit, and to listen to him for guidance, for courage, and for wisdom.

As was stated above, it is the intention of the authors of *I AM WITH YOU* that the students become gradually aware that God puts a longing for himself in our hearts. Besides being a manifestation of the Divine, this longing for God moves us to search to know ourselves authentically. This cannot be forced by means of indoctrination. It takes time and requires patience.

William Shakespeare wrote, "This above all: to thine own self be true, and it must follow, as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man;" and Socrates cautioned his students to, "know thyself." These statements underline the major moral task that each human being is to accomplish in his or her lifetime. It is to undertake a search for the authentic self, which requires us to make a series of moral choices (Dunne, pp. 61-78). Lonergan says that authentic knowing is being attentive, being intelligent, and being reasonable. When faced with judgments or decisions he says people must also be responsible (Lonergan, pp. 14-19). But we can never be certain, even as adults, maybe especially as adults, that the decisions we take are responsible decisions - unless we see with eyes of love. Then our decisions become loving decisions; our choices become morally good choices. Though we might be uncertain of the consequences, we have an intuitive sense we have been true to ourselves.

In studying *I AM WITH YOU* the students see how Jesus, too, lived through a struggle for authenticity. It is not labeled as such for these students, but they see that Jesus was able to make wise decisions because he maintained an intimate communication with the Father and the Holy Spirit. They learn that the Holy Spirit came upon him when he chose to be baptized. They hear that he went into the desert after his baptism where he prayed to know what was expected of him

before setting out on his mission (Plourde-Tardif, 1990, p. 104). They discover that when Jesus was unjustly accused of political insurrection he prayed for the wisdom to respond not with malice, but with love (Plourde-Tardif, 1990, p. 106). When he realized that dying was the authentic fulfillment of his life, he prayed for courage (Plourde-Tardif, 1990, p. 107).

Although *I AM WITH YOU* offers the students different methods of prayer (reading scripture, listening to each other's stories, singing, contemplating), method is not its main focus. *I AM WITH YOU* intends more precisely to create an awareness that God is present to us. It attempts to raise the students' consciousness of their own ability to pray, that is, to communicate with God. Moreover *I AM WITH YOU* endeavors to help students see that they can feel secure in the knowledge that, by the power of the Holy Spirit with whom they can communicate in prayer, they will be able to see good in others and bring about good in their lives. This is one way that *I AM WITH YOU* enhances the students' sense of personal responsibility and contributes to their development as moral persons.

3. Use of Scripture to Enhance Moral Judgment

Out of the first Christian communities, emerged four Gospels, each portraying a particular image of Jesus. As the students study these Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John they learn about Jesus, but they also learn something about the communities in which these Gospels were composed (Plourde-Tardif, 1990, S.T., pp. 8-61). They see, for example, that the concerns of the Christian communities in Ephesus (John's Gospel) and Antioch (Luke's Gospel), were like night and day. The students discover though that the similarities in each of the four communities lie in their profound conviction that Jesus was risen. This belief gave the early Christians tremendous hope for their

own lives. They knew that they too would be able to overcome great obstacles, just as Jesus had overcome death. They knew this because they believed his promise to be with them in Spirit (Acts 1:8).

In *I AM WITH YOU*, chapter one, the students learn that the early Christian communities continually referred to what Jesus said and did in order to help them decide what action to take when faced with dilemmas, doubts, or difficulties. Jesus' words and actions became the principles and values that guided their lives. When they gathered together they listened to the stories of Jesus' life, which would later be compiled and recorded in Scripture for generations to come.

The students first see an example of how the early Christians internalized these principles and values when they read about the community of Rome in their text books (pp. 28-31). Peter has just been crucified. The community is despondent, they wonder whether living this way is worth risking their lives. Mark reminds them that Jesus had suffered just as they were suffering, but that he had overcome death. So the community persevered and continued to listen to these stories, to read the Hebrew Scripture, and to pray together. The students then meet the communities of Palestine, Antioch, and Ephesus and learn that each in turn refers to Jesus' words and actions to guide them.

In chapter three, the students are introduced to four modern-day communities (a family with a handicapped child, the Sun Youth organization, a community that rebuilds the demolished house of an elderly couple, the community supporting Benedict Labre House) who rely on Scripture to guide their actions.

These accounts of Christians, early and modern-day, are explosive with signs of the action of the Holy Spirit who is mentioned in the first pages of the student's text. On page 13 the students find the Risen Jesus assuring his disciples that they will be "filled with power . . . you will be witnesses" (Acts 1:8).

These accounts lead the students to understand in their own way that the moral judgment of Christians is influenced by the Scriptures, but more importantly they learn that people who are open to the Spirit will allow Scripture to touch their hearts. Implicitly, they learn that unless people's hearts are changed, all the principles and values in the world will be unable to enhance their moral judgment.

Chapter two, (pages 77-89) of the students' text is dedicated to underlining the role that a changed heart, a converted heart, perhaps a wounded heart plays in the people's perceptions and how it influences their moral judgment. The question, "What has this Jesus done, that is so special?" recurs in several forms with each illustration of Jesus healing the people of his time. It is first uttered by a skeptical fish merchant who hears about all this in the market place (Plourde-Tardif, 1990, S.T., p. 77). By the end of the phase the merchant asks the question again. But this time she is depicted with a softer countenance (Plourde-Tardif, 1990, S.T. p. 89). She now has been healed of her smug attitude by the enthusiasm and joy pouring out of those wounded people who were healed by Jesus (Plourde-Tardif, 1990, S.T. p. 88). These examples are meant to help the students see that there is the possibility for being comforted or healed whenever Christ is in their midst. The message is that wounds can be healed by love. The students learn that Jesus demonstrated love when he lived and he continues to do it now through caring people (Plourde-Tardif, S.T. pp 128-167).

Approaching Scripture with an open mind and an open heart is a choice that people make. As was described in this discussion, this approach to Scripture can enhance moral judgment by influencing perceptions. It contributes to the moral development of children by influencing future action which is determined by the choices people make (Catholic Committee, 1985, p. 30). *I AM WITH YOU* and indeed the entire *Good News* series intends to foster this welcoming approach to Scripture by stimulating the students' capacity for wonder.

4. Seeing the Person of Jesus as a Role Model

A song in *I AM WITH YOU* (teacher's manual) entitled, "Who Is Jesus?" expresses how the people of ancient Palestine reacted to him. Some feared him; many loved him. No one was indifferent to him because he showed that he loved people and he challenged them to be honest (Plourde-Tardif, S.T., 1990, pp. 91-99).

In the person of Jesus, as he is portrayed in *I AM WITH YOU*, the students discover the ultimate role model for moral and spiritual growth. In the following pages, Jesus will be explored as a role model within five categories:

1. making moral judgments;
2. internalizing and referring to principles and values;
3. making free decisions and setting goals;
4. balancing mind and heart;
5. living up to intentions and choices.[7]

4.1. Making Moral Judgments

I AM WITH YOU illustrates several biblical passages in which Jesus demonstrates an extraordinary capacity to judge events and situations with compassion and understanding. In each instance the students see that Jesus was motivated by love; that he always looked for the good in people and took their needs into consideration.

On page 33 of their text books, for example, the students find Jesus feeding thousands of people (Luke 9:10-17). In Lonergan's sense, Jesus was attentive to his experience (he recognized that people were hungry); he was intelligent in his

[7]An elaboration of the Catholic Committee's five components of moral education (Chapter II of this thesis).

understanding (he knew that there wasn't enough food for everybody); he was reasonable in his judgment (he knew that there was a way to see that they were fed). They also hear that Jesus comforted little children who simply wanted to be acknowledged. The students learn that Luke tells these stories to teach his community that Jesus had empowered them to heal in their own way, with the limited resources that they had.

In order to help the students to contemplate the significance of Jesus' words and actions for their own lives, *I AM WITH YOU* frequently asks them questions like "what do you think about...?" or "what would you do...?" or "what do you suppose others thought...?" (*I AM WITH YOU* pages 85, 89, 117, 151, 152). These kinds of queries give the students the personal space to grow morally in their own time and in their own way by allowing them to reflect.

4.2. Internalizing and Referring to Principles and Values

One of our great thinkers of the modern era, Albert Schweitzer, once said that there are three ways to teach: example, example, example. A corollary to this proposition is that there are three ways to learn: remember, remember, remember. Considerable attention is focused on the action of remembering in the level six program where the students learn that it was through remembering the loving action of God the Father in the lives of Jesus' ancestors that Jesus was moved to show compassion for the people around him (Hosea 2:16, 20; Jeremiah 30:10-11; Isaiah 31:5).

It was through the process of remembering that Jesus was able to internalize these loving actions so that the principle of love underlying these actions became his guiding influence.

I AM WITH YOU demonstrates the process of internalizing and referring to principles and values by illustrating that the early Christians remembered Jesus'

words and actions (Plourde-Tardif, S.T., 1990, pp. 26-44). They also see that present-day Christians refer to Scripture for guidance, and often, for affirmation that their actions are an authentic reflection of who God intended them to be. *I AM WITH YOU* (pages 144-149) explores the meaning of four particular biblical passages from the Gospel of Matthew and their impact on Christians today (Mt 28:19-20; 25:35-36 and 40; 7:21). These are real experiences that students can relate to their own life experience. As such, they are a valuable source of promoting moral development in nine-and-ten year old children. "By doing what the child knows and can explore for himself . . . concepts can be formed which are not distortions" (Goldman, p. 118).

There are also several illustrations throughout the students' text showing how very intimate Jesus was with the Father and the Holy Spirit. The message that Jesus was deeply influenced by these persons emerges with great clarity (pages 29, 84, 97, 104, 106, 111). Some of these moments in Jesus' life have already been discussed in chapter III (2) of this thesis under the heading "Prayer and Decision Making: Tapping the Source of Courage and Wisdom."

In *I AM WITH YOU* the numerous illustrations of Jesus transforming people physically, mentally and emotionally serve to hold him up as a model of a loving person with whom the students can relate. There is more emphasis on what Jesus did and said than there is on how he came to internalize the love that moved him to do and say these things. In *I AM WITH YOU* Jesus is less a model of a person who internalized principles and **more** a model of a compassionate, tenacious lover of people.

4.3. Making Free Decisions and Setting Goals

In *I AM WITH YOU* the decisions that Jesus makes flow from his fundamental option to see with the eyes of love. This option colors every word he

utters, and every deed. There is a **tenderness** that emanates from Jesus, which is beautifully captured in the illustrations of *I AM WITH YOU.* This tenderness is evident among many other instances, in the way Jesus holds the chin of the man wounded by leprosy (page 82), in the way he looks into the eyes of a child (page 80). These examples go beyond the barriers of cognitive processes. They evoke a sense of empathy[8] in learners in a way that no discussion of what one ought to do ever could. *I AM WITH YOU* helps level four students to see that, like Jesus, they can make moment by moment decisions which are motivated by the principle of love.[9]

With *I AM WITH YOU* there are many opportunities for the creative teacher to guide the development of empathy. Although the educational intentions for most assignments are outlined in the explicit curriculum (objectives), which may or may not be focused on the development of empathy, the momentary needs of the students may demand it. As Eisner says: "Life in classrooms . . . is seldom clear. Purposes are not always precise. As a matter of fact, there is much we do and need to do, without a clear sense of what the objective is" (Eisner, p. 116). It is true for many subject areas in the curriculum, but especially so in moral and religious instruction that the teacher need not be slave in the pursuit of objectives. Human nature is far too complex and students' lives are much too diverse not to digress from the planned curriculum. *I AM WITH YOU* is rich enough in content to accommodate diversified needs.

I AM WITH YOU reveals that Jesus set his sights on one major goal: he said, "I have come in order that you might have life - life in all its fullness" (John 10:10). With this in mind and motivated by love he is said to have traveled

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[8]Although Piaget and Kohlberg see moral development primarily as a function of rational operations, they do admit to the importance of developing a capacity for empathy. (Duska and Whelan p. 107).

[9]Peck (1978) describes the principle of love as the ability to extend oneself for the sake of another Lonergan (1979) refers to love as one's capacity for self-transcendence.

throughout Palestine teaching, listening to people, healing them and converting them to his simple loving way of being. Having this worthwhile goal enabled Jesus to channel all of his activities toward this fulfillment (Plourde-Tardif, S.T., 1990, chapter two). Students learn that Jesus has but one purpose, that is, to love. In their own way, and in their own time, they might choose to adopt the same purpose, and in so doing develop as moral persons.

4.4. Balancing Mind and Heart

When *Religion in Today's School* (1985) discusses balancing the mind and heart as a major component of moral education, it refers to the necessity of channeling desires through self-discipline. Balancing mind and heart is an all pervasive and lifelong task of human development. "The essence of this discipline of balancing is 'giving up' . . . . Balancing is a discipline precisely because the act of giving up something is painful" (Peck, 1979, p. 66). *I AM WITH YOU* offers several instances in which Jesus demonstrates his capacity for 'giving up.' The ultimate example, of course, was the giving up of his life (Mark 8:31-32). In so doing Jesus teaches us that there is hope for new life even in the most discouraging of circumstances.

When Jesus decided to go the route of preaching the Good News, he let go of the many other paths that he might have followed (Plourde-Tardif, S.T., 1990, p.104). When he struggled for recognition by the authorities, he opted for peaceful settlements (Plourde-Tardif, S.T., 1990, p. 106). Any student who has ever been in a school yard fight can draw counsel from that example.

Finally, Jesus was revolted by the suffering and injustice that he saw throughout Galilee. He let go of his feelings by going off alone and praying the *Our Father* (Plourde-Tardif, S.T., 1990, p. 118). He left us this prayer as a means

of centering ourselves in the Divine, of letting go of our self-centered concerns to make room for the Kingdom of God.

In observing Jesus' example in *I AM WITH YOU*, the students might see that giving up an idea or a behavior to make room for something new helps them to grow up a little, to be better people. Letting go, like learning to respond, takes time. *I AM WITH YOU* intends simply to plant the seeds of this awareness in the students so that their lifelong attempts to balance mind and heart may bear fruit.

4.5. Living Up to Intentions and Choices

It has been frequently stated thus far that Jesus' intentions were clearly motivated by love. The choices he made were always made through a vision of love. *I AM WITH YOU* illustrates how all of Jesus' choices were in response to love. He was, in the fundamental sense of the word, *responsible*. It also illustrates that Jesus always prayed for guidance to carry out the will of his Father.

Jesus was always open to the Spirit and asked for guidance before making a decision or searching for an answer. This was addressed in chapter III (2). It should also be noted, however, that the teaching, in elementary school at least, which portrays Jesus' struggle to know who he really was, and to discern his mission, as is conveyed in *I AM WITH YOU* (pp. 102-110), is relatively new. It is not new theology but it is new information for many teachers. It is welcome information for those who, because of it, feel less alone in their search for truth or more specifically, affirmation.[10] Knowing that Jesus struggled as we struggle has the potential to soften the painful moments of simply living the pain.

Teachers who grasp the fact that Jesus' mission was only gradually revealed to him, that he too had to pass through moments of darkness, should be better able to help children who, though not abused or neglected, perhaps more than others,

[10]Personal testimonies from teachers in the public elementary school system in Quebec

are sensitive to their own process of moral growth and who might feel very alone as they try to do the right thing.

In studying *I AM WITH YOU* the students should become aware that Jesus struggled to live up to his intentions. They also see that Jesus had the courage to carry out his mission because he communicated with the Father and the Spirit. The Person of Jesus serves as the ultimate role model for moral development, in his capacity to make loving moral judgments, in his ability to internalize moral values, in his talent for making free decisions and setting goals, in his gift for balancing mind and heart, and in his courage to live up to his intentions and choices.

In *I AM WITH YOU* Jesus also emerges as the wondrous model of the *wounded healer*. This term was coined by Henri Nouwen, S.J. who saw that those who would minister to the needs of others must be prepared to do so admitting their own vulnerability (Nouwen, 1990). In *Intimacy: Essays in Pastoral Psychology* (1969), Nouwen asserts that "the main witness to [the message of Christianity] is Jesus who in the exposure of his total **vulnerability** broke through the chains of his death and found his life by losing it" (Nouwen, p. 37, 1969).

Jesus is the ultimate model of the wounded healer. For the early Christians in Rome, Jesus was the *Persecuted One*. In *I AM WITH YOU*, the students see how these Christians drew strength from the knowledge that he suffered as they were suffering (Plourde-Tardif, S.T., 1990, pp. 28-31).

The image of Jesus as healer permeates the presentation of the Gospels in *I AM WITH YOU*. This image of Jesus has implications for moral development because all human beings are wounded beings; everyone needs to be healed, needs gradual growth to full human maturity. Literature, music, and the daily news are testaments to this assertion. Although being wounded is part of living, being

healed points to the importance of continual growth. That is a biological fact and a spiritual fact.

Modern times has its sobering share of wounded people, children in particular. Our children require deep healing, not a bandaid, superficial healing. The image of Jesus as a wounded healer is important to children today. It is because of his vulnerability that children can identify with him, for they too are so very vulnerable. Many of them carry in their hearts a shame that should not be theirs. *I AM WITH YOU* contains illustrations of Jesus healing people who were victimized and who suffered wounds through no fault of their own (pages 77-83, 86, 129-147). It also tells stories of modern Christians who continue to heal individuals and communities in his name. For Nouwen, these Christians are like the people whose lives exemplify the attitude of hope, in their self-awareness and self-acceptance. They are "constantly . . . stretching forward to a future which [they] experience as an inexhaustible source of new life" (Nouwen, 1969, p. 6). These Christians are bearers of hope (Plourde-Tardif, S.T., chapter three). The image of Jesus as healer has the potential to further the moral development of children when they recognize him as the bearer of hope. *I AM WITH YOU* explores that very theme.

As they read, and examine the illustrations of the healing of the leper (pages 82-83), and of Peter's mother-in-law (pages 78-79), it is hoped that the students perceive beyond the physical healing to a personal transformation. *I AM WITH YOU* intends to plant a seed in the hearts and minds of the students so that, when they recognize a need for healing in themselves, and, gradually in others they will remember that Jesus too was wounded.

Summary

Chapter III of this thesis reflects on *I AM WITH YOU* as a vehicle for stimulating moral development in children. It describes, at the outset, the concept of moral development, perceived by the authors of the *Good News* series, as a gradual and complex process involving the whole person. It proposes that the process can be facilitated in children by fostering the spiritual capacities for wonder, for commitment, and for being in community. Then it points out how *I AM WITH YOU* intends to help children to recognize their capacity for loving, which is the ultimate Christian expression of moral maturity.

In this discussion, prayer is defined as a form of communication between the human and the divine. The chapter explores how this communication between people and the divine enables them to find the courage to respond to others lovingly. It also examines how *I AM WITH YOU* highlights the notion that moral judgment is enhanced when people open their minds and hearts to the Scriptures.

Finally this chapter looks at the Person of Jesus as a role model. It examines how people were changed, not only by **what** he said and did, but also by the loving **attitude** that flowed from his words and actions. This loving attitude is what can be identified, in *I AM WITH YOU*, as the catalyst that stimulates moral development. A loving attitude can be modeled; it can be facilitated but it cannot be forced. It takes time and patience to cultivate. Instead of insisting that such an attitude must be cultivated, *I AM WITH YOU* invites students to consider its benefits. In this way *I AM WITH YOU* is true to the Catholic Committee's vision of moral education and avoids the practice of teaching moral values by indoctrination in the sense of exerting undue influence on the students.

Chapter IV

Pedagogy: An Examination of *I AM WITH YOU*, Book #4 of the *GOOD NEWS* Series, Through Two Lenses

It has been seen, in Chapter III, that *I AM WITH YOU* promotes moral education as a cognitive and an affective enterprise designed to enhance the students' sense of *response-ability*, a concept that lies at the heart of the Catholic Committee's vision of moral education. Chapter IV (A) expands this notion in a discussion of a teaching-learning transaction that aims to give the students at least a tacit awareness of the process by which people come to know, and by which they respond to God who is at once immanent and transcendent.

To this end, in chapter IV, an approach to religious and moral instruction proposed by Thomas Groome in *Christian Religious Education: Sharing Our Story and Vision* (1980) will be summarized and then compared with the teaching-learning transaction proposed in *I AM WITH YOU*. Chapter IV will then explore the implications of the narrative described by Hauerwas (1980), as it is used in *I AM WITH YOU* and in Groome. Thus it will explore the function of a religious tradition as a context for learning to narrow the gap between what we say and what we do. It also points out the benefits offered by a community that acts as a concrete yet dynamic standard with which to interact, and with which to compare one's attitudes in a dialectic. Chapter IV (A) is offered as the first lens through which to examine the pedagogy in *I AM WITH YOU*, and part (B) as a second lens.

In chapter II of this thesis the concept of the personal responsibility, which arises out of four characteristics outlined in *Religion in Today's School* (1985), was examined. These characteristics, namely, a *being-on-the-way*, a *being-in-the-world*, a *being-with-others*, a *free and creative being* (Catholic Committee, 1985,

pp. 42-48), spiritual, personal ways of being are the subject of authors M. Scott Peck and Bernard Boelen in their respective discussions of spiritual growth and personal maturity. Both Boelen and Peck see moral development as rooted in the spiritual nature of human beings. Each author, using different language, traces moral development to the **response** to the dwelling of God or *Being* or *Love* within. An awareness of this reality, they say, nurtures moral development. The observations and insights of these two authors give rise to the tasks related to moral development in adult life. These observations and insights serve as a second lens through which to examine the pedagogy in *I AM WITH YOU*. In the light of these tasks, this chapter examines whether *I AM WITH YOU* serves as a prelude to adult development.

It has been suggested that educating morally is a complex process. It presents multiple challenges to teachers and to those who design curricula. The Catholic Committee recognizes this and suggests that there is no one device or theory that properly addresses the needs of the developing person. Moreover it envisions the development of the person as the primary aim of Christian moral education. In this sense, moral actions are important, but only in as much as they serve as a guide to helping people become progressively more authentic.

This chapter continues to examine *I AM WITH YOU* in order to discover whether it reflects the Catholic Committee's vision of moral education as a lifelong enterprise for which programs of instruction must indicate a sense of the slow, gradual process that occurs as people grow morally and spiritually. This chapter also examines how *I AM WITH YOU* intends to educate morally without indoctrination on the one hand, or relativism on the other.

A. The Teaching-Learning Transaction in *I AM WITH YOU*: Emphasis on Process and Content

The approach to moral instruction in *I AM WITH YOU* acknowledges that moral action is an outcome of the processes of thinking, feeling, believing, and acting. *Religion in Today's School* (1985) adheres to this principle. O'Donohoe (1980) sees this principle clearly reflected in the thinking of Lonergan and Rahner who called for a reexamination of the devices used in moral instruction. He writes:

> The educator must not be satisfied merely to communicate [moral] content; he or she must be concerned with the task of communicating to the students the means of handling the content in a responsible and creative manner" (O'Donohoe, pp. 384-385).

Implicit in the principle is the assertion that moral education is a complex learning process. This process can be facilitated, the Catholic Committee proposes, through a meaningful approach to instruction which follows "the stages of a true learning process" (Catholic Committee, 1985, p. 51). Following the curriculum design of the Quebec Ministry of Education, the *Good News* series labels these stages: OBSERVATION, EXPLORATION, and RESPONSE. In speaking to these stages of the learning process, the *Good News* series intends to foster the gradual process of building moral consciousness. As the ministry argues, "learning is centered around three distinct but interrelated operations: observation, exploration, and response (Quebec, 32-2100A, p. 13). These three stages are mirrored in Groome's third, fourth, and fifth movements of his shared praxis approach to moral and religious instruction.

1. Groome's Shared Praxis Approach

Groome bases his understanding of shared praxis on the work of Paulo Freire who defines praxis as "reflection and action upon the world in order to

transform it" (Groome p. 176). Freire, he says, proposed "a 'problem-solving' critical reflection approach" to education, which, he argues, should be an exercise in freedom (Groome p. 176).

Freire's approach was meant to serve politically oppressed people. He proposed a method of educating that would empower people to take charge of their own lives, that would make them free to direct their destinies. This desire to set people free and to help them take charge of their lives is not unlike the vision of the Catholic Committee, which espouses an approach to moral instruction that aims to facilitate the development of responsible people. In order to be responsible, a person must be free to respond to the Immanent God and to the Transcendent God to the extent that he or she is able.

Groome refines Freire's praxis. His methodology of religious and moral instruction, based on Freire's philosophy of praxis, promotes knowing in the biblical sense, that is, knowing with the heart. He says:

> For the Hebrews, yada [to know] is more by the heart than by the mind, and the knowing arises not by standing back from in order to look at, but by active intentional engagement in lived experience (Groome p. 141).

Unlike the traditional theory to practice method of educating, Groome's approach narrows the gap between what we say we believe, and how we live.

His approach involves five sequential movements:

1. Naming Present Action
2. The Participants' Stories and Visions
3. The Christian Community: Story and Vision
4. Dialectic Between Story and Participants' Stories
5. Dialectical Hermeneutic Between the Vision and the Participants' Vision

1.1 First Movement: Naming Present Action

Participants are asked to focus their attention on some particular experience. Instead of theorizing about an experience, they are then asked to identify their own thoughts and feelings about that experience (Groome, p. 210).

1.2 Second Movement: The Participants' Stories and Visions

The participants "are invited to reflect on why they do what they do, and what the likely or intended consequences of their actions are" (Groome p. 210-211). Groome cautions readers that these questions are not meant to challenge the participants to a defense of their actions. He also notes that this particular movement will look very different depending on the variation in the ages of the participants. It can be very difficult for adults, he says, whereas children take to it quite readily (Groome p.213).

1.3 Third Movement: The Christian Community Story and Vision

Through personal or other testimony, the educator relates the Community's Story regarding a particular topic and its Vision for the future. Groome explains the terms Story and Vision:

> I use Story and Vision as metaphors used to represent the faith tradition of the Christian community and the lived response and promise toward which this tradition invites us (Groome p. 214).

1.4 Fourth Movement: Dialectic Between Story and Participants' Stories

The participants are invited to enter their own stories (reflections and actions) into a dialogue with the Community's Story. Out of this dialogue should emerge a new discovery of the Community's Story. Seeing the *Story* in a new light, they should make it their own. Groome explains:

> As the second movement is an opportunity to reflect on their individual knowing, the fourth movement is an opportunity to reflect on the community's knowing, to appropriate it, to name their new knowing of it with a sense of discovery (Groome, p. 220).

1.5 Fifth Movement: Dialectical Hermeneutic
Between the Vision and the Participant's Vision

This fifth movement is meant to facilitate a re-evaluation of present action in the light of what has been learned in movements one to four. It is meant to help the participants to make a decision about future action.

Groome reminds his readers that decisions are to be made within the structure of three guidelines: Consequences, Continuity, and Community/Church.

a. *Consequences*: The consequences of our decisions, he says, should lead to justice, freedom, peace, wholeness (the Kingdom of God).

b. *Continuity*: There should be some evidence that the decisions made in shared praxis are in keeping with the essential elements of the Christian community's Story.

c. *Community/Church*: Decisions should take into consideration the official teaching of the Church, the research of theologians and Scripture scholars, and the discernment of the faithful (Groome p. 198).

These three guidelines provide the criteria by which Christians can evaluate their response to God within themselves, and to God in others. They also provide the criteria by which to decide future action through the process of shared praxis in groups varying from elementary school-age children to adults (Groome, pp. 176-177). However, he warns educators that because we have our own hopes for students, we must not bend to the inclination to indoctrinate. We must risk hearing responses that we are not prepared to hear and those with which we might disagree (Groome, pp. 220-223).

These five movements comprise an approach to teaching-learning that bears a striking resemblance to the pedagogy in *I AM WITH YOU*. It has already been mentioned that Groome's third, fourth, and fifth movements reflect the

Observation, Exploration, and Response stages respectively. Similarly, there are parallels in Groome's first two movements and in the first two sections of each chapter in *I AM WITH YOU*.

2. Pedagogy in I AM WITH YOU: A Comparison with Groome's Shared Praxis Approach

In harmony with Groome, the authors of *I AM WITH YOU* see moral and religious instruction as a means to facilitating the lifelong journey of personal, moral, and spiritual growth. The methodology of teaching proposed in *I AM WITH YOU* unfolds in the structure of the chapters, which consist of the following sections: Prelude, Overview, Observation Stage, Exploration Stage, Response Stage.

2.1 The Prelude

Each chapter opens with a *Prelude* where the students not only have an opportunity to preview the content, but also to select topics that are of particular interest to them. The *Prelude* is meant to evoke in the students a recognition of their own experiences and help them to consider their own hopes for change in the future. In chapter two, for example, the topic is Jesus, the Good News. The students are given an opportunity to express what they already know about the significance of the Good News as the message and person of Jesus. They are then invited to browse through the chapter and to pick out what appeals to them most. They are asked, "In what way do you think your discoveries will be important to you?" (Plourde-Tardif, S.T. 1990, p. 63).

In Groome's model of shared praxis, this type of activity is a combination of the first two movements: *Naming Present Action*, and *The Participants' Stories and Visions*. In the *Prelude* of *I AM WITH YOU* identifying what they want to learn helps the students to express what is important to them at the moment, that

is, what they value presently. Articulating how their discoveries might be important to them personally, helps the students to reflect critically on what they value. This kind of critical reflection is a total personal response to what is happening in their lives at the moment. In becoming aware of what they do, and why they do it, the students are given an opportunity to improve their present attitudes and to extend themselves that much more in the future.

2.2 The Overview

At the outset of each phase in the chapter, the students are encouraged to look back at the goals they set for themselves' in the *Prelude*. They not only refer to these goals, they also look to what is ahead. They set their sights on new information, on content that sparks their interest. In each *Overview* the students have the recurring opportunity to reflect critically on a situation that is presented as a springboard for the *Observation Stage*.

The titles of each of the phases prompt the students to ask, "why?" It is with this question that they enter each of the three stages of the teaching-learning process presented in *I AM WITH YOU*. For example, the title "People Are Talking! What Happened!" (Plourde-Tardif, S.T., 1990, p. 10), conjures up the question: "Why are people talking?" The students hear about different present-day reactions to the Resurrection of Jesus. They learn that the news of Jesus being raised from the dead has people talking. In the *Observation Stage* when they eventually listen to the Gospel accounts of the Resurrection, they learn that two thousand years ago, people had the same kind of reactions to the Resurrection as they do now (Plourde-Tardif, S.T., 1990, pp. 10-18). This kind of scenario is intended to teach the students to respect other peoples' beliefs and interpretations of events.

Encouraging the students to see beyond their own interpretations helps them to extend themselves and to grow. That growth is stimulated by their awareness that a gap exists between what they do in thought or deed, and what they hope to do, between **who they are** and **who they hope to become**. Roby Kidd underlines the educational challenge of narrowing the gap between who we are and who we hope to become when he says, "Being and becoming are not only what living is about, but also the chief object of learning" (Kidd, 1976, p. 125).

The *Overview* of each phase provides an opportunity for the students to engage in the process of thinking about why certain events occurred and to become aware of their feelings about the events. Examining events from a distant perspective allows the students in a non-threatening way to explore significant questions that might have personal implications for their moral and spiritual growth. For example, the last phase in *I AM WITH YOU* returns the students to the scene in Rome where Christians were being persecuted. The students hear that these Christians really had not experienced major changes in their lives, for all they endured in Christ's name and in his memory. Yet these Christians continued to pray together, and to hope for change. This hopeful attitude enabled them to look for signs of change, even the tiniest change (Plourde-Tardif, S.T. 1990, pp. 154). The students then are asked to read and to dramatize the parable of "The Growing Seed" (Mt. 4:26-29), which reinforces the notion that the Kingdom of God is like the seed that seems to grow without the help of the sower. The Kingdom of God, they learn, can be seen by those whose minds and hearts are open, yet who know not how it comes into being.

The content in this particular *Overview* stimulates the students to open their eyes and to look for signs of the Kingdom all around them. Recognition of one such bit of evidence is meant to spark an openness in the students, to more signs of the Kingdom. In reflecting critically on their own lives, the students will learn

to refocus their attention at times and to see situations in their lives in a new light. By guiding the students in this way teachers can use the *Prelude* and *Overview* sections in *I AM WITH YOU* to raise the students' consciousness. In this way the students will gradually become aware that the gaps between what they do and what they hope to do can become opportunities for change, for moral growth. For Groome this consciousness raising emerges out of the specific content of each individual's present action. He says, "The primary task is always to enable the participants, (the educators included) to reflect critically on their present actions, their reasons for it, and the consequences of it" (Groome, p. 213).

In I *AM WITH YOU* the students reflect on an event, real or fictitious, outside themselves and from it may become aware of their own actions in similar circumstances.

2.3 The Observation Stage

The first phase in a chapter in *I AM WITH YOU* always highlights the *Observation Stage* where the students learn the Christian community's perspective on the kind of event presented in the *Overview*. The *Overview* sets the scene for each of the phases in a chapter. Each phase highlights a particular stage in the proposed teaching-learning transaction. The main intention of *Observation* is to prompt the students to say, "I am interested." It is a motivational phase in which the students are not only encouraged to observe and to listen, but also to **ask questions** about what they see and hear. In the first phase of chapter two (pages 64-75), for example, there is a presentation of the social and political conditions in Palestine during Jesus' time. With the help of the diary of Claudius, a Roman public official, the students observe how these conditions reflect the need for change. Because Claudius writes with a sense of wonder, sometimes astonishment, the students are moved to ask questions about their observations.

The authors of *I AM WITH YOU* see this opportunity for questioning as a significant part of learning. As does Lonergan, they believe that the only good answer is the one that asks a new question.[11] In questioning the content, the students begin to compare what they see and hear in *I AM WITH YOU* with what they have already experienced in their own lives. This comparison takes them into the next stage of the learning process: *Exploration Stage*.

Before embarking on a discussion of the *Exploration Stage* of the teaching-learning process in *I AM WITH YOU*, some discussion of Groome's third movement is in order. For Groome, the goal of this third movement is for the participants to encounter the Christian community's thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and experiences. Moreover, he insists that it should be made clear to the participants that this presentation is not the last word on the *Story*. They must feel that, in some way, they are contributing to the *Story*. Groome explains:

> It requires that the Story/Vision be made present in a disclosure rather than a closure way, that is, a way that invites people bringing their own stories and visions, to reflect upon, grapple with, question, and personally encounter what is being presented (Groome, p. 214).

The disclosure of the *Story* happens differently at various age levels. "Fourth graders," he says, "should not have to invent the ideas of a loving and forgiving God . . . This is part of the revelational heritage of our faith community which they deserve to inherit (Groome, p. 217). *I AM WITH YOU* provides this heritage and offers the students an opportunity to ask questions about it.

2.4 The Exploration Stage

The *Exploration Stage* is always highlighted in the second phase of a chapter. In chapter one, it is extended into the third phase; in chapter two, into the

[11] Dr Thomas A Francoeur referred to Lonergan's assertion during a lecture entitled "From Self-Image to Loving Guidance" given at the National Catholic Educational Association's 87th Annual Convention held in Toronto in 1990

third and fourth phases. During the *Exploration Stage* or learning phase(s), the students are invited to go deeper into the content, to interpret it in the light of their own experience and to appropriate some of it. The students are encouraged to say, "I will try it." Phase two of chapter one (pages 20-24) reveals that onlookers in Jerusalem were amazed by the way the first Christians interacted. After an illustrated description and citation of Acts 2:42, 44, 47, the students are asked what amazes them most about the first Christian community in Jerusalem (Plourde-Tardif S.T., 1990, pp. 22-24). But first, in the *Overview* of phase two, the students express some examples of events in their own experience that astonish them (Plourde-Tardif, S.T., 1990, pp. 20-21). This exercise is meant to facilitate their critical evaluation of their own experience. In this instance, the *Overview* sets the tone meant to evoke, in the students, what amazed them most about the first Christians in Jerusalem. Similarly, in phase three (*Exploration Stage*), before the students examine what each of the four early Christian communities in the Mediterranean World did to overcome their difficulties, the students are asked what they think about the ideas proposed by some young people to help out a friend who has lost everything in a fire.

As they explore the contents of phase three, the students discover four different images of Jesus. They are asked to select which of these images they like most. The image of Jesus that they select is meant to enhance their awareness of a particular dimension of God; they have already learned that Jesus is like the Father (Jn. 14:9). For instance, the student who chooses the image of Jesus emerging from Matthew's Gospel (Plourde-Tardif, S.T., 1990, p. 36-39), will attend specifically to the understanding that God is available to all people, not just the Jews or the Christians or any other religious denomination, but **everyone**. This is not to the exclusion of other understandings of God that emerge from the three remaining Gospels; the students work in groups on all four Gospels. But inviting

them individually to select the image that appeals to them most enables the students to deepen that particular understanding of God.

The students also have an opportunity to explore the deeper significance of each image of Jesus for them personally when they explain how the Christian Scriptures were written and why these Scriptures are important to them (Plourde-Tardif, T.M., 1990, p. 116). The *Exploration Stage* is a time for deepening, exploring, analyzing, and appropriating some of the content. It facilitates moral development in that it requires the students to become aware of their thoughts and feelings about who Jesus was and what they can learn about conducting their own lives by remembering his life, and by trying to be like him.

In Groome's model the participants are encouraged, in the fourth movement, to reflect on the meaning that the Community's *Story* has for them personally. So, for example, after a presentation on the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the Penitential Rite in the Eucharistic Celebration, Groome asks fourth grade students "what they think and feel about a time for forgiveness in the [Eucharistic Celebration]" (Groome, p. 219). This kind of question directly contrasts with one such as: What is the Penitential Rite in the Mass? It enables the teacher not only to evaluate formatively whether the lesson has been understood, but also to facilitate the students' appropriation of the content. If the aim of the program is the gradual development of faith and morals, then appropriation of the content is an important step in the learning process; for we value that which belongs to us.

Groome's fifth and final movement in the shared praxis approach to religious and moral instruction sometimes overlaps with the fourth movement, especially when the participants in the group are children. Taking into consideration Groome's three guidelines, the instructor attempts to help the participants reevaluate present action in order to make a decision about future

action. In *I AM WITH YOU* decision making proper is facilitated in the *Response Stage*.

2.5 The Response Stage

The *Response Stage* is always the last phase in the chapter. During this time, the students are given opportunities to reframe the questions they asked and the problems they observed during the Observation Stage (Plourde-Tardif, T.M., 1990 p. 24). In the last phase of chapter three, for example, the students are prompted to ask, how they can be open to the Kingdom of God. This question inches them toward a commitment to become increasingly aware of the evidence that the Risen Jesus is present in their lives. It is a reframing of the tacit question that emerges in phase one of chapter three (pages 130-141): Where can we find the Risen Jesus? They learn that he went to Galilee and that each person experiences his/her metaphorical Galilee. The question has been reframed in the context of their own experience. Likewise the last phase of chapter two (pages 112-121) offers the students an opportunity to reframe the tacit question that emerges in the first four phases of chapter II: How could Jesus make a difference to the people of Palestine? In this last phase, the *Response Stage* of the chapter (pages 112-121), the students consider how they can make a difference in today's world. They learn that they can pray the *Our Father* just as Jesus did, and they can follow through on its message.

During the *Response Stage* the teachers are urged to help the students synthesize various aspects of the content presented in the phase and to transfer their conclusions to their own lives. The students are encouraged to say "I will take a stand." The teacher is asked not to insist on a response from students, but rather to facilitate a response which should emerge naturally as a result of the process of observing, questioning, analyzing, interpreting and synthesizing the

material. Groome underlines the significance of allowing a response to emerge in its own time. He says:

> We must never presume that because our students do not choose the response we had envisioned for them that they are inevitably being unfaithful to the Story and Vision. Our intentions for them are not necessarily God's intentions. In fact, our students may choose other than as we had hoped, but in that go beyond our limited vision as teacher to a more faithful Christian response (Groome, p. 223).

Groome's words also emphasize the value of allowing students the freedom to take charge of their own lives, to truly respond to God not only in their own time, but also in their own way.

Religion in Today's School (1985) underlines the importance of viewing moral education as a gradual learning process, which aims "to prepare moral agents who are both heirs and inventors" (Catholic Committee, 1985, p. 52). If students are to become inventive, that is, if they are to find creative solutions to personal and, eventually, social problems, then as Lonergan asserts, they must become aware of what they believe, be ready to learn from others, be open to criticism, and they must question their observations (Lonergan, p. 240).

I AM WITH YOU offers the students opportunities meant to sharpen their awareness of the world around them. It attempts to enhance an awareness of their own processes of thinking, feeling, believing, and acting. It offers them an opportunity to become aware of the attitudes that motivate them to act as they do. It determines how people relate to others in the world. As it has been suggested in chapter III, a loving attitude is the catalyst that stimulates people to become responsible.

Admittedly, students are more likely to be moved by a personal experience of being loved than they are by simply observing the demonstration of a loving attitude in someone. However, the stories and illustrations of caring and

compassionate individuals in *I AM WITH YOU* are meant to contribute to the students' awareness that responsible people are authentic. In the actions of these people, they should also recognize their own capacity to extend and to transcend themselves.

The approach to teaching-learning in *I AM WITH YOU* attempts to facilitate moral development by providing opportunities for the students:

- to observe individuals and groups who are concerned for the well being of others;
- to find examples of such people in their own lives;
- to consider how they might respond to others themselves;
- to become aware of the presence of God in their lives, which gives them a sense that they are loved unconditionally.

This is a major task for an educational program and it requires the efforts of dedicated and compassionate teachers.

I AM WITH YOU serves as a program, and programs have their limits. At best, they can provide a structure for teaching-learning and the appropriate content, objectives, and learning strategies. By inviting students to become participant-learners, *I AM WITH YOU* offers a structure for teaching-learning moral content that facilitates moral development in children. By focusing on process as well as on content, *I AM WITH YOU* offers students the opportunity to become aware of their thoughts, feelings, and beliefs regarding certain experiences and events.

This is a sound approach to teaching-learning, because although it resists indoctrination, it does not succumb to relativism. *I AM WITH YOU* clearly asserts the Christian belief that God loves people unconditionally and that we are invited to respond to that love. It shows some responses exemplified in the words and actions of Jesus and of Christians throughout the ages. But it leaves the students free to choose how they will respond to God. They are also free to choose not to

respond. This is essential in an approach to educating that claims for the student the right to be "the main author an actor in education" (Catholic Committee, 1975, p. 30). By allowing the students time and space required to think about possible courses of action and by calling for a change in the mentality of those educators who are accustomed simply to imparting knowledge, *I AM WITH YOU* remains true to the Catholic Committee's vision of moral education. As the Catholic Committee states in its insistence on a "pedagogy of growth and quest:"

> The primary element must be the students' own search for answers and their own meaningful experiences. Such a view brings about a change in the role of the educator, who no longer is seen simply as a supplier and transmitter of knowledge, but rather as a guide who offers the travelers companionship and stimulation (Catholic Committee, 1975, p. 36).

Groome reflects this vision when he suggests that the teacher himself/herself should be a learner. He says:

> One mark of a great educator is the ability to lead students out, not just to his or her own position but beyond that to new places where even the educator has never been . . . the educator should be the "leading learner" (Groome, p. 223).

Thus far it has been noted that the Catholic Committee's vision of moral education aims at forming responsible people. It has also been stated that, in this view, moral education is a complex process for which traditional methods of imparting knowledge, skills, and values no longer suffice. These factors call for an approach to moral instruction that emphasizes process as well as content.

The approach in *I AM WITH YOU* is true to that vision. Its focus is on the students who are invited to participate actively as they formulate their own personal objectives. It offers the students a method of reflecting critically on their feelings about their present actions in order to help them decide on future action. The teacher is asked to guide the students in this method by inviting them:

- **to label or identify an experience**: At the outset of each phase (unit of study) the students are asked to focus on a specific experience to which they should be able to relate. They are asked to name the experience and to think about their own lives in relation to the experience.
- **to give their personal evaluation of it:** They begin to reflect critically on why certain actions were taken in the lives of the characters in their text books. This reflection indicates the gap between what is and what could be, which acts as a springboard for learning.
- **to listen to how Jesus and/or particular Christians handled similar situations**: Through biblical passages, illustrations of Scripture, and modern-day Christian activity, the students learn about Christian tradition. They are invited to ask questions about this view and to wonder about the demonstrations of wisdom, courage, compassion, and other gifts evident in these people.
- **to reflect on the experience in the light of that knowledge**: They are invited to reflect on and to share their own interpretations of the Christian community's view as well as to deepen their understanding of it.
- **to incorporate the fruit of that reflection into a decision for future action**: They are sometimes asked to select an action from a proposed few or to articulate what might be done in a specific situation.

I AM WITH YOU encourages teachers to see that helping the students to grow morally and spiritually is a challenge and that it demands, as St. Paul says, that "the attitude you should have is the one that Christ Jesus had" (Phil. 2:5). Clearly, *I AM WITH YOU* calls attention to the fact that what Jesus and those who follow him **do** is very much influenced by what they **believe**, that is, what they give their hearts to. Its methodology of teaching and its content harken to the assertion that there is more than a loose connection between moral growth and a

yearning to know a loving God. Tad Dunne S.J. expresses this assertion eloquently when he says,

> The very fact that our conscience is expansive by nature tells us that we long for a good beyond criticism. This is a powerful piece of evidence that we are already in love with som thing that transcends ourselves and transcends every human achievement (Dunne, p. 83).

3. A Reflection on the Use of the Narrative in *I AM WITH YOU*

For Christians, this yearning to know God, which motivates moral growth is a lifetime of discovering how to be open to the person of Jesus. It requires a lifetime of learning who the historical Jesus was, and who the Risen Jesus is. Hauerwas (1980) points out that Christian morality is more a question of imitating Jesus than it is a dema d to follow principles. It requires more that we perceive our lives as gift than that we aim to achieve autonomy. The problem of living morally, he says, "is not knowing what I must do but how. And the how is learned by watching and following another" (Hauerwas, p. 445). We need a story in the fashion of Groome, or a narrative in the style of Hauerwas to help people develop morally. In *Character, Narrative, and Growth in the Christian Life*, a paper published in 1980 and delivered at the Senanaque conference in 1979, Stanley Hauerwas explains the significance of the concept of narrative for growth toward moral maturity.

> No moral theory is capable in principle of closing the gap between what I should do and what I can or have to do. What is needed . is an account of how my way of appropriating the convictions of my community contributes to the story of that people (Hauerwas, p. 450).

He raises some questions about the theories of moral development explicated in contemporary moral philosophy, specifically stage theory. Hauerwas argues:

> Modern moral philosophy has been written from the perspective of some last stage as if everyone were already at that stage or at least should be working to achieve it. The problem of moral development is then taken to be how to reach the last stage of morality where growth morally ceases. Childhood is largely ignored because it is taken to represent a pre- or nonmoral stage of development (Hauerwas, p. 448).

With a view to exposing stage development theory as an inadequate means to foster *appropriating the convictions* of the community, Hauerwas asks, "Why would anyone backslide if they had reached a higher stage of morality?" (Hauerwas, p. 450). Unsatisfied with the response of some theorists that "backsliders have yet to form every aspect of their lives according to the supreme moral principle," Hauerwas observes that in our struggle to lead decent lives, "as soon as we feel we have 'made it' we discover that we have lost the skills necessary to sustain the endeavor" (Hauerwas, p. 450).

For Hauerwas, there is a need for a language of moral growth that expresses its reality more precisely. Moral growth, he says, is the development of the self and it requires a language that "provides a sufficiently truthful account of our existence" (Hauerwas, p. 452). Christians have traditionally used concepts like "growth in holiness, the pilgrimage of self, being faithful to the way . . . the notion of perfection" to describe moral growth. But this kind of language, says Hauerwas, "directs attention to the development of the moral self in a manner quite different from the contemporary concern with moral development" (Hauerwas, p. 443). The development of the self, he says, is a continuous transformation for which Christian reflection has failed to provide the necessary *conceptual categories* by which to understand and articulate the process. As a result of this lack of conceptual categories, there has been a theoretical division, in Christian thinking, of the inner (spiritual) and outer (moral) life (Hauerwas, p. 446).

In an attempt to provide an appropriate language for moral development, Hauerwas proposes the concepts of *character* and *narrative* as categories within which to articulate moral growth. "Character," he says, "is but a reminder that it is the self that is the subject of growth . . . . the narrative [however] trains the self to be sufficient to negotiate our existence without illusion or deception" (Hauerwas, p. 447).

The story in Christian tradition is that life is a gift. So, for Christians, moral growth is **less** a question of achievement and **more** an acknowledgment of surrender of self to loving *Giver* of life. "Moral growth," says Hauerwas, "requires a narrative that offers the skills to recognize the ambiguity of our moral achievements and the necessity of continued growth" (Hauerwas, p. 450). His use of the narrative lends credibility to the methodology of moral and religious instruction proposed both in Groome and in *I AM WITH YOU*.

Entering our personal stories into a dialogue with the Christian *Story* is a means of developing attitudes that will enable us to evaluate how we respond to God within ourselves, and to God in others. In order to evaluate these responses we must have a standard with which to compare them. For Groome and for Hauerwas, the standard is the Community's *Story*. But it is more than a static standard. The *Story* speaks to us. Our stories interact with it and out of this dialogue we emerge with a new perspective on our activities, and the *Story* is made richer by our contribution to it.

As an educational device for moral instruction, the use of the narrative facilitates the students' participation in forming the content of the program by inviting them to tell their own stories. *I AM WITH YOU* provides many opportunities for students to enter into a dialogue with the Christian narrative where they can reflect on what they think and feel about their own lives in relation to it. Examples of this have already been mentioned in this thesis in the discussion

of the *Observation* and *Exploration Stages* of the teaching-learning process.

When Hauerwas speaks of a narrative, he refers to the tradition in which we are raised. In the Christian tradition, part of the story is God's manifestation of unconditional love for people and his invitation for them to live in a loving relationship with him and with others. The other major part of the story is the human response to that invitation played out in Jesus' life and death, and in the struggle of all those people throughout the ages who have attempted, not without some difficulty, to be faithful to God. But their faithfulness is evident in their willingness to listen to their *inner voice*, which, in Christian experience, is the Holy Spirit.

I AM WITH YOU, book #4 of the *Good News* series, is filled with indications that Christians look to the Spirit for guidance, and find hope and affirmation in an awareness of the Spirit's presence in their lives. The students also see in *I AM WITH YOU*, people in whom the presence of the Spirit manifests himself in the loving ways they respond to people who hope for change in their lives.

Many of these accounts or stories are taken from the Christian Scriptures. Some are actual accounts of contemporary people attempting to live the moments of their lives in harmony with the teachings of the Scriptures, which they frequently consult and to which they are open. All of these accounts demonstrate that learning to live morally good lives, or living one's faith, requires people to question their observations, and to listen and respond to the voice within.

B. Two Visions Linking Personal Transformation and Moral Development: Implications for *I AM WITH YOU*

It has been seen that moral education calls for an awareness that moral growth is a lifelong and complex process. Moreover, it has been argued that in the classroom, an instructional approach that encourages students to practice attending

to what they think, feel, and believe facilitates this process of personal, moral growth.

In the fields of religion, psychology, and philosophy, there have been some attempts to lay bare the journey of the human soul.[12] Some of these have illuminated the philosophical framework within which human development unfolds. They ask, for example, what motivates human growth, and what are the implications of developmental theory for moral and spiritual growth. Two of these inquire into personal transformation explicating the notion of moral consciousness as a lifelong pursuit. An exploration of these inquiries is offered here as a *second lens* through which to examine the approach to moral instruction found in *I AM WITH YOU*. Specifically, they are meant to highlight *I AM WITH YOU* as a prelude to the tasks of developing morally that are required in adulthood. They are M. Scott Peck's understanding of spiritual transformation as a lifelong process, and Bernard Boelen's vision of human development as a series of existential crises.

1. M. Scott Peck: Moral Development as a Lifelong Task of Spiritual Transformation

In *The Road Less Traveled* (1978) M. Scott Peck explores the rewarding yet sometimes painful process of spiritual growth. This process, he insists, is a complex, arduous and lifelong task" (Peck, 1978, p. 11). It requires that people uncover the unconscious, that is, raise it to a conscious level and become aware of that which motivates moral action. In his description of the struggle in which people engage as they grow toward personal authenticity, the thick ethical concepts of discipline and conversion emerge as essential elements of that growth. Like the members of the Catholic Committee, Peck is convinced that discipline is required "to establish a practical balance . . . between reason and passion (Catholic

[12]For example in the writings of Eric Erickson, Carl Jung, Rollo May, James Fowler, among others.

Committee, 1985, p. 32), and that conversion is the process by which we come to understand that God loves us unconditionally.

For Peck, discipline is the set of tools that facilitates passage through stages of spiritual growth, "which can be achieved only through the persistent exercise of real love" (Peck, 1978, p. 97). He delineates four aspects of discipline: delaying gratification, being responsible, balancing, and dedication to reality (Peck, 1978, pp. 13-78). These, he says, move people forward on the personal growth continuum. This growth does not happen easily. It requires continuous and renewed effort to incorporate these aspects of discipline into our lives. In *The Different Drum* (1988), Peck offers a theory of spiritual development in which he describes how he began to discover that "there is a pattern of progression through identifiable stages in human spiritual life" (Peck, 1988, p. 188). In an attempt to understand this growth pattern, Dr. Peck, a practicing psychotherapist, describes four stages of spiritual development through which the individual passes as s/he journeys through life. He names them as follows:

Stage One: Chaotic, antisocial
Stage Two: Formal, institutional
Stage Three: Skeptic, individual
Stage Four: Mystic, communal

1.1 Stage One

In Stage One, people he says, are underdeveloped spiritually and most all young children fall into this category. Moreover, Peck observes, one in five adults are stuck in this stage. These adults are characterized as generally incapable of loving others although they pretend to be loving. They are manipulative and self-serving, unprincipled and therefore lack integrity. In adults, these characteristics are manifestations of fear, which he says, impedes spiritual and moral growth (Peck, 1978, p. 272).

1.2 Stage Two

Peck observes that Stage Two adults characteristically *submit* themselves to an institution such as church They need rules and attach great importance to the forms rather than to the essence of their religion. They envision God more as a transcendent Being so that the concept of "God within"[13] requires a great deal of exploration.

1.3 Stage Three

During adolescence, individuals usually become skeptical. When it is healthy, this skepticism moves them into Stage Three. They question family and societal values as well as institutionalized religion. Although adults in Stage Three often do not believe in a deity, they are considered to be more spiritually developed than Stage Two adults precisely because a period of doubt is essential for the development of honest and critical reflection, hence spiritual evolution. Rarely, says Peck, do people move into the higher Mystical Stage without having endured Stage III. It is only through the process of questioning that "we begin to become even dimly aware that the whole point of life is the development of souls" (Peck, 1988, p. 200). People are individualistic during this stage, yet are often deeply involved in social causes; they make up their own minds. Eventually through **persistent questioning**, Stage Three people become passionate searchers after truth.

1.4 Stage Four

As they progress towards Stage Four, reports Peck, these people begin to see the resemblance of their world view to that of their Stage Two relatives and/or

[13]This concept is similar to the Christian belief in the Holy Spirit who has also been referred to as the "inner voice" in this thesis.

friends. They begin to understand the meaning of unity in all things. Gradually they try to penetrate the unknown. "Having become practiced at emptying themselves of preconceived notions and prejudices . . . they know this to be one world" (Peck, 1988, p. 193). Stage Four is never really completed and Peck admits that it is really the beginning of a greater awareness "that we are all on an ongoing spiritual journey and that there is no end to our conversion" (Peck, 1988, p. 200).

Peck suggests that one major task for the Church is to facilitate the passage of people from Stage Two to Stage Four so that they don't have to spend almost their entire adult lives in Stage Three. The practice of **discipline,** he asserts, would greatly facilitate that passage. He acknowledges the existence of a loving God who "has it in mind for us precisely that we should attain His position, His power, His wisdom, His identity" (Peck, 1978, p. 270). He asserts that we are confronted with our own spiritual laziness when we become cognizant of a nurturing God within us. He observes that the "natural inclination to keep things as they [are], to take the easy path is what constitutes our own laziness or spiritual entropy" (Peck, 1978, p. 270). Spiritual growth, he says, is spiritual healing. "Most specifically I would define it as an on-going process of becoming increasingly conscious" (Peck, 1988, p. 19). This healing is the process of gradual growth toward full human maturity. For Peck, it requires the employment of the four skills subsumed under the concept of discipline referred to above: responsibility, delay gratification, dedication to reality, and balancing.

I AM WITH YOU attempts to facilitate this gradual development by helping the students to become aware of their attitudes and by giving them opportunities to articulate some examples of self-discipline in their own lives and in the lives of Christians throughout the ages. For example, *I AM WITH YOU* encourages responsibility throughout each of the *Response Stages* where the students are given

an opportunity to reflect on their abilities to respond to God and to others. It also presents the students with examples of people who demonstrate compassion, generosity, and understanding toward some of the most vulnerable members of our society. *I AM WITH YOU* encourages the students to become aware of the needs of others and their own abilities to respond (Plourde-Tardif, 1990, S.T., Chapter three).

Gradual growth is also facilitated when children learn to delay gratification. Nurturing and caring teachers and parents encourage this when they insist that children attend to first things first. But as Peck says, learning to wait and to listen to the God within is a very important form of delaying gratification. *I AM WITH YOU* fosters this by encouraging the students to be aware of, and to listen to, the Holy Spirit who not only guides them to make appropriate moral decisions but who also helps them to always look for the good. It is by listening to the God within, the inner voice, that people also learn to balance the mind and the heart, reason and passion.[14]

Personal growth is only possible when people attend to reality. Since children are still in the process of discovering their reality and adjusting to it, Peck's notion of dedication to reality is more germane to a discussion of adults who need to be honest with themselves. However, *I AM WITH YOU* helps students attend to reality by asking them to articulate how their discoveries might be important to them, in the *Prelude*; by giving them opportunities to reflect critically on their own lives, in the *Overview*; and by encouraging them to question the content in *Observation Stage*. When children grow into adolescence, it is important that they have the skills to question intelligently and the knowledge to ask appropriate questions especially when they enter the period of skepticism that

[14]Examples of balancing are discussed under "Jesus as a Role Model" in chapter III of this thesis.

Peck describes. *I AM WITH YOU* prepares them by facilitating this important part of the learning process at an early age.

As stated above, besides discipline, another concept that is central to Peck's understanding of spiritual transformation and to the informing vision underlying this curriculum is the concept of **conversion**, which he defines as "the development of the individual through these spiritual or religious stages" (Peck, 1988, p. 198). Whereas children appear to move from Stage One to Stage Two without much ado, Stage One adults, he says, convert to Stage Two only when their lives seem to be so chaotic that they can't stand the pain of it. In both the religious and the psychological sense this conversion is dramatic. It is unlike the gradual conversion which occurs in the movement from Stage Three to Stage Four when people begin to recognize the interconnectedness of all things (Peck, 1988, p. 197). The process of movement into skepticism and out of a strict adherence to forms and institutions is also a conversion for Peck in both the religious and psychological sense.

Peck is convinced that moral issues can be resolved correctly when people question their observations and feelings and listen to the God within themselves before making choices. He cites the biblical myth about original sin to illustrate the point:

> Adam and Eve were afraid of what might happen to them if they were to openly question God. Instead they took the easy way out, the illegitimate shortcut of sneakiness to achieve knowledge not worked for (Peck, 1978, p. 274).

If they had taken the time to get God's side of the story, Peck says, they might not have sinned. So it has been with people throughout history, the more we take the time to examine issues reasonably and to listen to the God within us, the more likely we are to make good moral decisions. This listening employs the mind and the heart.

In examining the concepts of conversion and discipline it is clear that Peck's study is more than an examination of who we are. It is a statement about who we can become and in that sense his work stands as a contribution to the informing vision of the curriculum under discussion. It speaks to our children's right to know that they are not only body, mind, and emotion, but that they are also spirit; and that it is **spirit** that makes of them **persons** who are capable of an increasing awareness of who they can become. His observations indicate that children, who are given opportunities to develop an awareness of their spirituality, gradually gain a sense of self that gives meaning to their lives. This spiritual sense of self colors their perceptions and influences their actions.

Peck is not alone. He is part of a rich community, whose members have a long history of commitment to bridging the gap between the conscious and the unconscious, finding God beyond God. Some, like Jung have left a wealth of knowledge as yet still untapped. As a psychotherapist Peck stands on Jung's shoulders. There are those working in other disciplines like Boelen, philosopher and author of *Personal Maturity* (1978) who have contributed to an understanding of the developmental process of personal growth from a philosophical perspective. Boelen writes:

> Developmental stages and crises are not merely biological and psychological phenomena . . . they are philosophical and existential phases in the birth-process of Being continuing throughout life (Boelen, p. ix).

It is to Boelen's vision of human growth and development that we now turn.

2. Bernard Boelen: Personal Maturity

Personal Maturity (1978) is "a study of human development as the gradual birth of the Being-process in man" (Boelen, p. 22). Like Peck, Boelen speaks of personal, moral development as continuous and unending. His notion of personal

maturity, which is never totally achieved, is rooted in *Primordial Wonder*, or a profound awareness that causes one to ask questions about ultimate concerns.

For Boelen, it is not through a strict adherence to moral principles that people achieve moral maturity or become whole. It is more a matter of being in touch with one's **inner life**. The mature individual, he says, "does not primarily concern himself with doing the right thing, but with being the true Person" (Boelen, p. 154).

Embedded in Boelen's vision of human development are the concepts of being, person, inner life, and wonder. For Boelen, this process of personal growth engages people in a search for deeper meaning systems, ways of understanding and interpreting *the world of Being*. Viewed existentially, this growth process is a cyclical process of being reborn to new understandings. Boelen is careful to note the etymological significance of the word *ex-sist*: to emerge, to transcend. He explains that human development, in this sense, requires people to endure a series of existential crises in which they transcend themselves and out of which they emerge increasingly more capable of participating authentically in the *world of Being*, that is, in their own inner lives and in their relationships with others. Boelen explains:

> Man does not develop into personal maturity by growing in a merely additive way, or by out growing his earlier phases or stages. Man does not develop like a butterfly by shedding his cocoon, nor like an onion by the mere addition of successive layers. Man develops by playfully recreating his entire existence, by continually re-integrating all his former structures, functions, and values into the unitary whole of his emerging personality (Boelen, p. 54).

Throughout his book, *Personal Maturity* (1978), Boelen returns to the notion of development as "a playful experimentation in the discovery of the Self." He delineates five stages or phases of human development, which emerge out of

the creative tension between differentiating one's Self from the surrounding world, and merging with Being.

Before outlining these phases, it is important to emphasize that Boelen's perspective on stages of personal growth is **existential** rather than objective. Boelen insists that "to grasp the fundamental meaning and unity of the data of developmental psychology, they must be viewed within the philosophical perspective of existential thinking." (Boelen, p. 13). What follows is a brief outline of Boelen's view of critical moments in the development of the person.

2.1 Birth and Life of the Infant (Birth - 1 1/2 years)

The birth of the infant is "the first existential crisis on the road to full humanness" (Boelen, p. 16). The developmental task of this first phase is a preview to the rest of life. The infant engages in a playful experimentation with new discoveries (Boelen pp. 21-26).

2.2 The Emergence of the World of the Child (1 1/2 years - 10 years)

In this phase, with the emergence of the conscious ego, the child experiences the existential crisis of autonomy. "The emergence of the child's conscious ego is the birth of an entirely new way of being in the world" (Boelen p. 29). This is the beginning of movement in the direction of authenticity. The child's development task is to differentiate himself from the surrounding world, that is, to find an identity. He begins to playfully discover himself "in opposition to the surrounding world" (Boelen, p. 33).

2.3 Five Worlds of Adolescence (10 years - 30 years)

The next existential crisis, the crisis of negativity, emerges in mid-adolescence. During this period, the adolescent wonders whether life isn't absurd. He loses

touch with who he understood himself to be. His developmental task is "listening to the dreadful call of nothingness" (Boelen, p. 94). Nothing, or "no-thing" as Boelen says, makes sense to the adolescent during this time, for life's meaning is still hidden from him. He becomes bored and eventually anxious. This anxiety causes him to wonder about the puzzling world, about himself and his relationship to the world. Wonder motivates him to ask deeper questions and causes him to be even more restless. In this restlessness the adolescent is moved slowly toward new understandings (Boelen, pp. 55-111). Another developmental task, namely, the differentiating "of the *person* into the young *personality* takes up the entire phase of late adolescence" (Boelen, p. 110).

2.4 The Stage of the Adult Personality (27-35 years in women, 30-40 years in men)

It is during this phase that the next existential crisis occurs, "the crisis of the limits." Boelen explains that "the fundamental significance of the crisis of the limits . . . is that man cannot fulfill himself in his mere humanness, but only in his original integrity with the whole of Being" (Boelen, p. 124). The developmental task at this stage is for the person to be actively open to transcend the adult personality and to move towards becoming a mature personality. The person emerges from the crisis of the limits only when he begins to seek change within himself. "As soon as he discovers that he gets nowhere by merely changing jobs or places, but only by seeking change within himself, the crisis of the limits comes to an end" (Boelen, p. 129). As John Shae puts it:

> When we reach our limits, when our ordered worlds collapse, when we cannot enact our moral ideals, when we are disenchanted, we often enter into the awareness of Mystery. We are inescapably related to this Mystery which is immanent and transcendent, which issues invitations we must respond to, which is

> ambiguous about its intentions, and which is real and important beyond all else (Shae, p. 39).

This coming to an end is, in fact, the beginning of the emergence of the mature personality.

2.5 The Birth of the Mature Personality

"The developmental task of the mature personality is the achievement of an ontocentric World, and this task is even more dynamic, more comprehensive, and more meaningful than any tasks of his earlier development" (Boelen, p 133). Boelen sees the development of people through stages of life as a creative Birth-process where no stage is final and where most people die before they are fully born" (Boelen, p. 201). Personal maturity, then, marks the beginning of a new and more exciting form of existence in which a person's awareness of himself, others, and God is such that new challenges are presented and new vistas open up. Personal maturity is not an end in itself. In the fundamental sense, it is the process that facilitates how a person continues **to be** in the world with others, how a person relates to others.

Boelen's perspective of personal growth articulated as a series of existential crises is significant for an examination of *I AM WITH YOU* because it sheds some light on the intentions of this curriculum to help students develop their ability to question their observations and to wonder about the stirring that they might sense within their souls. His assertion that personal growth is a "playful experimentation with self-discovery," serves to further elucidate the informing vision underlying *I AM WITH YOU* which provides opportunities for students to gain insights and to experiment with the realities that they find within themselves and around them.

I AM WITH YOU, in its effort to enhance students' **awareness** of the dynamic nature of their **relationships** with others and with God, contributes in a small way to their understanding of themselves and their stories. By nurturing the

consciousness of their inner lives, *I AM WITH YOU* and the whole *Good News* series prepares the students to respond to the ultimate questions that they eventually ask in adolescence and adulthood, with even deeper questions, questions through which they experiment with Mystery. As Shae observes,

> Our dwelling within Mystery is both menacing and promising, a relationship of exceeding darkness and undeserved light. In this situation with this awareness we do a distinctively human thing. We gather together and tell stories of God to calm our terror and hold our hope on high (Shae, p. 39).

Both Boelen and Peck see personal growth and development as a lifelong task. Boelen labels this process *personal maturity*. He speaks of the road to maturity lived out in childhood and adolescence and the road of maturity lived out in the adult years. Peck names this process *spiritual growth*, and as befits a psychotherapist, he speaks of this growth as spiritual healing.

Each author points to a principle that directs the process. Boelen's language is philosophical. He speaks of *Primordial Wonder* as the principle that leads us to yearn for a relationship with **Being**, the ultimate fount of life. *Primordial Wonder* he says, moves us to transcend ourselves. Peck uses the language of *spiritual growth*, directed by the principle of *Love* which he defines as "the will to extend oneself for the purpose of nurturing one's own or another's spiritual growth" (Peck, 1978, p. 268).

Both Peck and Boelen are concerned to explain that personal, moral growth is a lifetime commitment to love and to being open to wonder. They are also careful to underline the paradox of personal growth. On the one hand it requires work on the part of the individual, on the other, it requires waiting, surrender to the ultimate source of life and love. This sense of commitment is exemplified in *I AM WITH YOU* by the four evangelists and their communities (pages 28-51), by

Jesus (pages 77-110), by modern-day groups and families who demonstrate an openness to God and a commitment to others (pages 130-157).

In each chapter of their text books, the students are encouraged to become aware that these people are not only conscious of the suffering of others, but that they bring hope to others by giving of themselves. The students are encouraged to become aware of the little signs around them that help them to begin to be open to the *Primordial Wonder* which Boelen says, motivates us to transcend ourselves and our particular worlds.

Summary

In order to expand on the concept of personal responsibility embedded in the informing vision underlying the curriculum, this chapter has examined the pedagogy of *I AM WITH YOU* from two perspectives. In the first instance, the structure of book # 4 of the *Good News* series was analyzed and compared with Thomas Groome's shared praxis approach to religious and moral instruction. This analysis exposed not only the large role played by Christian tradition in *I AM WITH YOU*, but also the attention that the book has given to the process of human learning, in particular the questioning aspect of that process. It advances the idea that moral education can be taught in a religious context without indoctrination or relativism. The significance of facilitating moral development within a context was further explored in Stanley Hauerwas' discussion of the narrative as a means of understanding and promoting moral development.

The second part of this chapter has viewed *I AM WITH YOU* in consideration of lifelong learning. It explores the reflections of Peck and Boelen who refer to personal, spiritual development as the human struggle to become increasingly conscious, increasingly aware of the thread of divine nature that is woven into human nature. In fact Boelen uses the terms *spirit* and *person*

interchangeably. The chapter points to the significance of fostering wonder and encouraging meaningful questioning in students at an early age as a means of preparing them for their journey of spiritual and moral growth. By exploring the concepts of discipline, conversion, inner life, being, person, and wonder, the chapter reveals that *I AM WITH YOU* is true to the vision of moral education proposed in *Religion in Today's School* (1975 & 1985).

Chapter V

Conclusion: Toward Moral and Religious Maturity in *I AM WITH YOU*

Summary

The last three chapters of this thesis have been devoted to an explication of the informing vision underlying the *Good News* series which stands as the primary teaching material for the curriculum in Catholic religious and moral instruction in Quebec schools. In particular, *I AM WITH YOU*, book # 4 of that series, was examined.

This thesis is not an empirical study, nor has it attempted to provide any proof of the effectiveness of the program. What it does do, is provide a structure for the emergence of the thick moral concepts that lie at the heart of the curriculum and which reveal its intentions.

One thick concept, that of personal responsibility, emerged in chapter II where the aims of Christian moral education proposed by the Catholic Committee in *Religion in Today's School* (1985) are presented as a basis for discussion. It is woven into the web of principles that lead the curriculum to treat the concept of person in Christian context, and to follow an educational approach to facilitating moral development in children.

An examination of personal responsibility gave rise to the problem of educating morally without indoctrination or relativism. It also addressed the importance of helping children to learn not only what it means to be responsible, but also how to go about that task.

In the second part of chapter II, three thick concepts were brought forth to support the Catholic Committee's vision of moral education: relationship, conversion, and personal responsibility. Enda McDonagh, who speaks of the need

for a community within which we can recognize the shape of our limitations, and where we can attempt to change ourselves, echo's the Catholic Committee's conviction that religious and moral instruction best serve the interests of moral education when they are treated as interdependent. Lonergan's explication of conversion, and O'Donohoe's recognition that morality requires the transformation of the entire person resound in the Catholic Committee's call for new approaches to educating morally.

Chapter III attempted to shed some light on the thick concepts lying at the heart of the informing vision of the *Good News* series, and *I AM WITH YOU* in particular, namely: person, wonder, commitment, being in community, prayer, and responsibility. These were held up to the light, turned and observed, and like Anne Morrow Lindbergh's seashells, explored for the deeper meanings embodied in their shapes.

In part (1) of chapter III, the concepts of wonder, commitment, and living in community revealed the intentions of the *Good News* series to stimulate in students a sense of respect, a sense of belonging, and an ability to follow through on decisions. An examination of these concepts explored that, in its focus on personal responsibility, the *Good News* series fosters the students' recognition of their potential for becoming more loving persons.

In its focus on decision making (part 2), and moral judgment (part 3), chapter III facilitated the surfacing of the thick concept of prayer which is seen as a human response to the knowledge and feeling of God's call. The chapter gave rise to the notion that the knowledge on which to base making moral decisions and judgments is handed down through a tradition. For Christians this knowledge is an awareness of Jesus' words and actions, as well as those of Christians throughout the ages.

Part (4) of chapter III elucidated one of the thick concepts that lie at the heart of the informing vision of the curriculum, namely, person. In exploring the significance of seeing Jesus as someone to imitate, the concept of a person who responded fully to life emerged. To know that he was compassionate and forgiving, that he healed even in his woundedness, is to gain some sense of the person he was and the attitudes he exemplified in his words and actions.

Thus chapter III began to explore one of the questions asked at the outset of this thesis: Are the value commitments that underlie *I AM WITH YOU* true to the informing vision that unfolded in Catholic moral theology? Chapter IV continued to explore this question from the perspective of pedagogy, but, in chapter III, an examination of the thick concepts underlying *I AM WITH YOU* showed the similarities between value commitments in the curriculum and those in Catholic moral theory. For example, both the Catholic Committee and I AM WITH YOU consider faith in a loving God as a reason for moral action.

As stated above, chapter IV continued to explore the value commitments underlying the vision of moral education within *I AM WITH YOU* by examining the pedagogical thrust of that book. Again, it was found that *I AM WITH YOU* and Catholic moral theory were in harmony. Both were seen to be committed to teaching moral values without indoctrination or relativism. Both called for a clear delineation of Christian values. The Catholic Committee suggested that educators respect the natural growth of the child and resist the inclination to indoctrinate. In *I AM WITH YOU*, it was seen that the students were gently urged to listen to the stories of people who have chosen realistic, reasonable, and compassionate responses to moral issues and moral problems.

The views of three Catholic theologians (Enda McDonagh, James O'Donohoe, and Bernard Lonergan), and those of the Catholic Committee clearly showed that the development of personal responsibility was the major aim of

Christian moral education. In the discussion of the narrative, as it is employed in *I AM WITH YOU*, it was seen in chapter IV that a community is not only necessary for transmitting values, it also enables individuals to compare their attitudes with its members in a dialectic.

It was seen that the method of having students focus on learning goals, observe narrative content from which thick moral concepts emerged, ask questions, explore and analyze, and only then venture a response was mirrored in Groome's approach to religious an moral instruction, an approach that required the students to reflect critically on their own actions and to compare them with those of the Christian Community. A comparison of Groome's approach with *I AM WITH YOU*, in chapter IV, showed how in its pedagogical thrust, *I AM WITH YOU* was true to the informing vision underlying the curriculum.

Chapters II and III explored the notion that moral education, as a lifelong enterprise, is deeply embedded in the informing vision underlying the curriculum. Chapter IV (B) examined the notion of moral development as a lifelong task from the perspectives of M Scott Peck and Bernard Boelen who delineated the spiritual, personal development of the person throughout the stages of life. It showed that *I AM WITH YOU* has the potential to act as a prelude in the lives of children who will continue to face challenges to their moral, spiritual, personal development throughout their lives.

Conclusions

An attempt was made to show that there is more to moral instruction than the development of moral reasoning. From a Christian perspective, as Hauerwas mentioned, living life as a gift takes precedence over the achievement of autonomy It means that people make moral decisions based on what they think, feel, believe, and do. It means that people are gifted with personal resources,

which it is their responsibility to develop, and on which they can draw when faced with complex moral issues. It means, for example, that, in the Christian view, compassion, a personal quality that emerges from the head and heart working together, takes precedence over justice, a rational principle.

Since the conceptions of good, or thick moral concepts, upon which all approaches to moral education are based, stem from beyond observation and reasoning, since they are, as Weeran says, part of the realm of the transcendent, moral and religious instruction should be viewed not as separate, but as complementary disciplines focused on the same end, namely, the development of the responsible person.

It was argued that *I AM WITH YOU!* moves beyond moral principles to foster the development of the whole person. Its structure allows for a method of teaching that puts the students at the center of learning. By attending to their need to set goals, and by allowing time for reflection and prayer, *I AM WITH YOU!* facilitates moral decision making that draws on the students' thoughts, feelings and beliefs.

The knowledge that people have the spiritual resources which allow them to take charge of their lives empowers the students. Children need to know that they have these resources; it is their right. They need to be given opportunities to develop an awareness that these spiritual gifts lie within them and they need to learn to tap these gifts through prayer and meditation.

Again this work suggests that if we can facilitate the development of this awareness in children, as a community, and then as a society, we might be able to avoid, as Peck says, having people spend most, if not all, their adult lives being skeptical about the spiritual power they have within themselves to direct their lives in a positive, morally good, spiritually healthy manner.

The development of this awareness, in essence, is the core of the informing vision underlying the curriculum in question. This vision, it is seen, presents great challenges to educators at all levels.

It has been suggested that moral education is a lifelong process of spiritual transformation, and that there is no final stage. As Peck and Boelen have both noted, in their schema of personal, spiritual developmental stages, each stage is a new beginning and the so called last stage begins a life that sees the interconnectedness of all things and gains a deeper awareness of the immanent God. We live through this process by learning to know who we are with our limitations and whom we have the potential to become.

It is seen that recognition of this is a graduai process. We get momentary glimpses of it, and the major criterion for engaging in this process is to be open to the possibility of transcendence. We must be prepared to learn from our mistakes, and that requires the courage to persist, and the humility to acknowledge that spiritual power does not have its source in us, but in the Divine. As Lonergan says, moral conversion is an about face that occurs once we realize that we are "responsible" for our own moral growth, and that the quality of other people's lives is affected by the level of our personal development. In its pedagogical thrust and in its content, the thesis suggests that *I AM WITH YOU* serves as an imperfect but carefully crafted stepping stone in this long and sometimes arduous journey of becoming spiritually, personally transformed.

Problems and Questions for Further Research

One of the problems that an explication of the informing vision hopes to avoid is the potential misinterpretation of the intentions of *I AM WITH YOU*. For example, unless teachers are aware of the teaching - learning process proposed in *I AM WITH YOU*, the content is rich enough that they might opt to have the students

learn it. These teachers might seem to be teaching the program, however, their students are missing out on the opportunity to enrich the spiritual dimension of their lives. It behooves any teacher of moral and religious instruction, therefore, to take seriously his or her responsibility for on-going study and reflection. Attention to their professional development might reduce the level of fear felt by some teachers, that students "don't know the tenets of their faith." They may be less inclined to focus on a list of doctrinal contents.

Another problem with misinterpretation is the risk that some educators will reject the book and teach what they are comfortable with. For example, one might very well be less inclined to teach a program that purports to teach about Jesus' life by beginning with the events after his **death** Once the teachers grasp the notion that the program intends to spark students to ask questions, and to wonder, they become more open to the approach. Once they see that the intentions of *I AM WITH YOU* go beyond teaching the life of Jesus, to helping the students form an attitude of openness both to people who believe and to those who do not believe, the opening pages of the book then make sense.

A major challenge in the field of moral education is bringing together people of different faiths and cultures who are prepared to share their resources and enter into deliberation in order to find out, not only what they hold in common, but also to learn to become more tolerant of differences.

A common ground which might act as a point of departure for this kind of deliberation is the study of spirituality as an issue for mental health, and the thick concepts that underlie it. Anyone who truly understands love can relate to the notion of extending oneself. With work on the subject of relationship, the concept of transcendence, which is a mystical experience of love, could be explored in these deliberations. As Hanigan says, spirituality is essential if we are to assume responsibility for our own moral development, that is, to become moral agents. It

is necessary if we are to present opportunities to our young people to become conscious of their responses to the life around them and within them, and to become moral agents themselves.

Further argument in favor of the exploration of spirituality as the basis for moral development surrounds the notion of time. Whereas it is generally accepted that it takes time to grow and develop, the reality of the time it takes to transfer elements learned at a cognitive level to the affective domain is less understood. For example, parents and teachers are often baffled by children's propensity for fighting after they have been taught to care for one another. Some deliberation about spirituality and what can be done to foster it might raise consciousness and prompt adults not only to be patient with children, but also with themselves.

Whereas this thesis has proposed that moral and religious instruction go hand in hand, it is not suggested that Christian moral education is the only worthy vehicle for moral instruction. That is not the intent of this thesis. What does emerge however, from a study of Jesus, the person, is that in him, we have an extraordinary model with whom people, particularly children and those who would become like children, can identify because he is wounded as we are wounded. He is a model of a person who was true to himself, who was authentic, who followed his inner voice, and who listened to his community. This dimension characterizes *I AM WITH YOU*, the text book under discussion.

It is felt that this paper opens the way to a study of the shape of moral formation in the entire series.

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