

## CATHOLICS IN THE REA, 1903-1953

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### Abstract

This paper describes the involvement of Roman Catholics in the Religious Education Association during the first fifty years of its existence. It examines attitudes of Protestants towards Catholics expressed in journal articles, convention speeches, and archival material. It presents the contributions to Roman Catholics at conventions and in journal articles during. The paper contends that Roman Catholic deepened involvement in the R. E. A. went a long way to making the association a truly multi-faith organization. The history also documents changes in Roman Catholic viewpoints and emphases over the period of these fifty years from an exclusive concern with schooling to a broader view the educational mission of the church and from education in an authoritarian and dogmatic spirit to one slightly more open to outside influences and cautiously willing to cooperate with other religious groups.

The Religious Education Association began as a movement among liberal Protestant educators and theologians at the beginning of the twentieth century to inspire education with religion and religion with education as well as to keep the ideal of religion before the public. Evangelical Protestants, Roman Catholics, and Jews were not a prominent part of the early history of this association because of its stated aims and leadership. As time went on the religious education movement broadened its base by attempting to attract members who were other than liberal Protestants. This paper explores the involvement of Roman Catholics in the early years of the association. Did the association attempt to attract Roman Catholic members? Did Roman Catholics attempt to affiliate with the association? Who were the Roman Catholics who participated in the association? What attitudes did the founding members have towards Roman Catholics? The ultimate aim of the paper is to explore what the relationship to Roman Catholics tells us about the association, its goals and objectives. Also, what does this history tell us about Roman Catholic religious education in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Some interesting facts about Roman Catholic membership in the R. E. A. guide our historical inquiry. The first meeting of the association was held in Chicago in 1903. In the official Bulletin of 1903 there is mention of Catholic and Hebrew members, though they are not named. In Bulletin No. 4 there is mention of a Council of Religious Education of which the Roman Catholic Bishop John Lancaster Spalding of Peoria was among the elected members. (R. E. A. Archives, Yale University Divinity School, New Haven, CT). The first Roman Catholic addressed the third meeting in Boston in 1905. A second Catholic speaker did not address the convention until 1916. From 1906 to 1926 there were only two articles in the journal by Roman Catholics. More articles by Catholics began to appear in the 1930s and 1940s.

In an issue of the journal in 1926 it was noted that evangelical, Catholics and Jews were welcome in the REA since no theological position was required for membership (Hites 1926). . However, a survey of the association done in 1925-1926 by Professor H. N. Sherton and Hugh Harrie for the Institute of Social and Religious Research reported that though the association did not note denomination membership, it was determined that in the membership there were 130 Methodists, 96 Presbyterians, 95 Congregationalist, 75 Baptisms, 56 Unitarians. While the association had begun to seek out Catholic and Jewish members only 3 Catholics and 18 Jews showed up in the survey. It should be noted that 1719 members had unknown denominational affiliation. (R. E. A. Archives)

There was an effort by the association in the 1930s to accommodate Catholic membership and to avoid conflicts with Roman Catholics. Stephen Schmidt (1983) in his history of the association suspects, however, that behind the scenes there may have been prejudicial difficulties and old, reemerging sentiments. (1983, 95). One sensitive issue was the matter of religious services at conventions at which Catholics were forbidden by church law to participate. In the 1950's this issue seemed to have been largely resolved.

At a policy and strategy meeting in 1940, in which it appears that no Catholics participated, one member expressed the view that while present policy of the association encourages liberal Jews to join, Catholics do not join because of the assumptions of the association, presumably a decidedly liberal theology and a commitment to progressive education, which Catholics largely rejected. The issue of Catholic membership in the R. E. A. was often discussed at executive meetings of the association. (R. E. A. Archives).

In a documentary analysis of the journal from its beginning Reiman (1953) determined that Roman Catholics received considerably less space in the journal than Judaism. The total number of pages devoted to Catholicism before 1926 was exceedingly small. Every year after 1926 some space was given to Catholicism but at no time was there evidence of any special interest.

In a 1957 letter to Sophia Lyon Fahs, who had complained about less attention being given in recent years by the association to liberal Protestants, Herman Wornom, the General Secretary, noted that though the association had attempted to become more inclusive between 1930 and 1952 there were only 6 Catholics members in 1952. He went on to observe, however, that as of 1957 the R. E. A. had 200 Catholic members out of a total of 2500 members. He remarked that "the Catholics who have joined are not of the reactionary type, but persons who are eager for a broader intellectual fellowship than that which had previously been available to them" (R. E. A. Archives). Wornom's opinion of Catholics as reactionaries is confirmed by a number of references in the journal before that date.

Finally, in an executive meeting in January 1967 Wornom reported that the Chicago meeting was a great success with many Roman Catholics joining the REA. He now expressed concern about the balance among Catholics, Protestants and Jews! (R. E.

A. Archives). In 1955 Dr. George N. Schuster, a Roman Catholic layman was elected president of the association.

It was a long journey for Catholics in the association from 1902 to 1953. From a handful of members and little effort to enlist them, to unsuccessful efforts to enroll them as members, to their increased membership to ten percent, finally to worry that their increasing number was threatening the desirable balance in the association.

Who were the Catholic pioneers in the association and why were there not more of them? Why did they start joining in the 1950's and 1960's? What does this history of participation or lack thereof tell us about Roman Catholic religious education? What does it tell us about the R. E. A.?

### **Catholics at the Very Beginning)**

Father Thomas J. Shahan, a professor at the Catholic University of America, spoke at the Third Annual Convention of the Religious Education Association held in Boston in February 1905. He addressed the convention on the topic "What Co-operation is Possible in Religious Education between Roman Catholics and Protestants." As far as I can determine another Catholic did not address the R. E. A until 1916. Father Shahan did not offer much hope of cooperation in religious education between Protestants and Roman Catholics. One can only imagine the reaction of the liberal Protestant audience when he told them that:

Religious education with Catholics is something positive, systematic, and exclusive, in accordance always with the doctrines and precepts of the church. For this reason, it is impossible to establish any system of immediate cooperation in religious education with those who cannot accept these doctrines and precepts, or the authority of the Church by which these are maintained (Shahan 1905, p. 102)

Shahan went on to tell his listeners that it would also not be possible to develop a joint manual of morality for use in the public schools unless the authoritative teachings of the Roman Catholic Church were recognized. The professor did end, however, on a positive note when he suggested that there might be a remote and preparatory cooperation in that both Roman Catholics and Protestants could agree on the importance of religion and morality in education. They could also teach with more earnestness "the common and traditional Christian doctrines concerning God, the soul, the moral law, sin, moral responsibility, prayer, divine providence, the divinity of Jesus Christ and the traditional character of the Scriptures." (p. 105). Shahan apparently did not realize that it was precisely these traditional teachings that were being rethought and reformulated by the liberal Protestant theologians and educators who made up the membership of the R. E. A.

After eleven years another Catholic speaker was invited to speak at a convention. Monsignor Philip McDevitt, Superintendent for Catholic Schools in Philadelphia, was asked to address the convention on the possibility of a united effort of religious groups to

support released time from public schools for teaching religion. Instead of addressing this topic he launched into a spirited defense of Catholic Schools and their philosophy. At this time the issue of released time for Catholics who attended public schools was not on the agenda for American Catholics, who were earnestly attempting to establish their alternative system of education at both the primary and secondary levels since in McDevitt's view "the Sunday school, as ordinarily conducted, is inefficient both because of the frequent lack of knowledge and skill in the teachers, and the brevity of the time allotted to the work" (232)

These first two presentations by Roman Catholic priest educators did not augur well for Catholic membership and participation in the R. E. A. One can only speculate what the history of the R. E. A. would have been if the convention had succeeded in securing an address by the most prominent Catholic educator of the time, Bishop John Lancaster Spalding of Peoria, Illinois. The author of many books on the philosophy of education and a prelate who tried strenuously to adapt Roman Catholicism to the cultural situation of the United States, he certainly would have presented a viewpoint with which members of the association could have dialogued. Spalding received an entire chapter in Merle Curti's (1935) influential *The Social Ideas of American Educators*.

### **Protestant References to Catholicism in Early Years**

In 1913 when Henry F. Cope, the General Secretary of the association, gave his ten year progress report on the association the only mention of Roman Catholic was the fact that they had begun to develop Catholic Sunday schools and that there were in existence special Catholic manuals of direction on organization and studies. He also noted that "new schools are being organized and parishes are supplementing the work of parochial schools by offering courses in Bible history and the catechism." (124-5) In his twenty years' report in which he outlined in glowing terms the achievements of the movement he makes no mention of any Roman Catholic contribution. (Cope 1923)

Other articles and book reviews in the journal by Protestants do make mention of Roman Catholicism. Thomas Hall (1914) of Union Theological Seminary, New York, asked for a fair assessment of Roman Catholicism and a recognition of the intelligence of some Roman Catholic scholars. He addressed his fellow Protestants:

Has Roman Catholicism a good case, it should be heard. It is a shame that Protestants are so often content with antiquated caricatures of Rome. Men like Leo XIII and Cardinal Newman were no fools. We need a clear and able defense of historic Protestantism with its claim for an infallible Bible instead of an infallible Pope. We need sane and non-hysterical treatments of the new Protestantism which has arisen since the days of Hume and Kant. (5).

References to Roman Catholics increased in the journal in the 1920's, though Catholic membership apparently remained very small. Catholics are still singled out as having little interest in religious education in public schools nor in joining the Protestant effort for a united effort to achieve this. (Fergusson 1921, 356).

A common Protestant view of Roman Catholic religious education was expressed by George Coe (1922) in his description of the Roman ecclesiastical model whose

most basic presupposition is authority; its content is dogma plus participation in the sacramental life of the church plus prescribed rules of conduct; its intended effect, individual salvation through the church. It assumes the order, First the ideas, or the formula, then the deed. The gradation is chiefly simplification of a content that is the same for all (149).

Coe does commend the Catholic textbooks written by professor Roderick MacEachen that softens the rigidity of Catholic catechetics by stressing that love is the essence of religion. However, he takes issue with the professor's inclusion in a textbook for children of such doctrines as trinity, original and transubstantiation. Even as late as the 1940's Coe (1947, 322) was criticizing Roman Catholic authoritarianism, citing the issue of birth control. He did, however, praise some aspects of Catholic social teaching.

In the 1920s there regularly appeared in the journal statements expressing a welcome to prospective members who are not identified as liberal Protestants. Laird Hites (1926, 43), the new General Secretary, expressed the view that evangelicals, Catholics and Jews are welcome in the R. E. A. since the association takes no theological position. While from the very beginning the association eschewed labeling members according to their denomination, specific identification of Roman Catholic and Jewish members was found necessary.

The school issue remained prominent for Protestant educators. Carl Zollman (1926) noted that Catholics struggled with these issues except where they were in the majority. However, he did admire Catholic efforts to establish their own schools and to become involved in local politics to promote their interests. Luther Weigle (1926, 90) decried the secularization of public schools but contended that this process began long before Catholic efforts to remove the Protestant bible from the schools. In his view Protestants were equally to blame for the secularization of the public schools.. He sadly admits that Dewey's view on removing religion from the public school life and curriculum was beginning to prevail. In the aftermath of the recent Oregon decision legitimizing the right of religious groups to establish their own schools he called for unity in the effort for released time.

The journal (1927, 345ss) gave attention to various attitudes on the critical issue of relations between church and state. It reviewed Catholic documents on education that were existent before the educational encyclical of Pius XI (Smith, 1927, 345ss). Bowers (1927, 371-372) surveyed Catholic teaching on education, the rights of the Catholic school and its distinct philosophy.

Harris Franklin Rall of Garrett Theological Seminary wrote a controversial editorial "The Pope and the Professor" (1928) in which he criticized the Roman Catholic Church for its denial of the validity of Anglican Orders, calling it a narrow view of

Christianity. He coupled it with a criticism of a conservative professor at Princeton University.

Praise for Catholic efforts in education often found its way into the journal. Bower (1928, 642) praised Catholic efforts in education and psychology and speculated that there might be more cooperation in this area. In the discussions on character education Calhoun (1929), commended the work of the Jesuits and other religious orders in character education during the counter Reformation.. But he noted that Trent prevented the development of liberalism as well as gave the world the Index of Forbidden Books..

One gets a sampling of Protestant attitudes towards Catholic education through reviews of Catholic books on education by Protestants. I have already mentioned Coe's criticism of Professor MacEachen's book on grounds that in a book for children he included difficult and controversial doctrines. William Harper (1934) criticized William McGucken's *The Catholic Way of Education* (1934) for fostering indoctrination and for seeking state support for Catholic schools. Like many critics he charged Catholic education with an excessive supernaturalism, relying as it does on authoritative papal encyclicals. Charles Lyttle (1937) criticized the thesis of Sister Mary Augustina on "American Opinions of Roman Catholicism in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century" for presenting a selective history in which she ignored the persecution of Protestants by Catholics in Europe. George Axtelle (1938) found Edward A. Fitzpatrick's *Readings in the Philosophy of Education* indoctrinatory, selective, and slanted. Bower's (1941) review of Roy de Ferrari 's two edited volumes of *Vital Problems of Catholic Education in the United States* came to the conclusion that Catholic education is a chief means of propagating Catholicism. In Bower's view of the second volume of this work he contended that there was an "irreconcilable difference between the Catholic philosophy of education and that which underlies the dominant mode of modern education theory and practice." He did see, however, some helpful developments: Hebartianism, religion viewed as a way of life, the growth of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, and the growing recognition of a large number of Catholics in public schools. A 1941 review of William Cunningham's *Pivotal Problems of Education: An Introduction to the Christian Philosophy of Education* contended that while good for Catholics the book offered little for non-Catholics A very positive review by John Brubaker (1945, 374) was given to Daniel F. Reilly's study of Archbishop Ireland's plan for schooling in Minnesota, which involved state support for religious schools. Unfortunately,

Articles and reviews in the 1940's expressed concern over increased Catholic political power and influence. F. Ernest Johnson (1946, 193-202) , the president of the R. E. A. wrote about inter-religious conflict between Protestants and Catholics over Catholic power, strength, and publicity in news papers. Concern with Catholic power was revealed in Conrad Moehlman's (1949, 313-314) highly favorable review of Paul Blanchard's *American Freedom and Catholic Power*. Moehlman focused on the education sections of the book where Blanchard singled out the divisiveness of Catholic schools and their efforts to propagate faith. In Blanchard's view Popes do really accept American public schools. Catholic teachers are unqualified. Catholic higher education,

especially at the graduate level, is very weak. The church stands opposed to all state aid to schools. Blanchard contended that Catholicism held that only it, the true religion, has the right to exist. Thus it would appear that the 1940s manifested a less favorable treatment of Catholics in the journal than the 1930s. This might be because of increased Catholic power or perception of it and the great growth of the schools. Yet in the forties the association did introduce multi-religious symposia and forums where Catholics often joined Protestants and Jews.

The Catholic position on church and state received treatment from John Otwell (1950, 35-40) in which he drew on the encyclicals of Pope Leo XII which contended that the authority of church and state comes from God. The church can make demands on the state to help the church achieve its goals. In his view while the Catholic position seems to favor church domination of the state, increasingly leaders of the state were ignoring the churches more and more. This analysis was important in the debate over the state's obligation to support aid to parochial schools.

In the 1950's there are few references to Roman Catholics by Protestant writers in the journal. The multi faith nature of the association seems to have been established. Invariably Protestants, Catholics, and Jews are represented at panel discussions and symposium. Under the leadership of Herman Wornom a concerted effort was made to broaden the base of the organization. Generally books are reviewed by members of one's own faith. Once actually misses the earlier critical reviews.

### **Early Catholic Participation**

John M. Cooper, an Associate Professor Sociology at Catholic University of America reviewed recent developments in Catholic religious education (1926, 45-50). He praised the progressive ideas of Frs. Thomas Shields and Pace at the Catholic University, who introduced experimental programs including the project method for teaching religion. One wonders if the 1929 papal encyclical on Christian education, which was highly critical of the naturalism of progressive education, dampened these efforts. There is no evidence of Shields and Pace's involvement with the R. E. A., though they would appear to have been well suited for active participation.. Both Shields and Pace were active the principal Roman Catholic educational association and its journal. (Bryce 1978)

James H. Ryan (1927a) of the National Catholic Welfare Conference (NCWC) described on recent developments in Catholic Schools in Mexico. Ryan also addressed the R. E. A. convention in 1927 to make the Catholic case for parish schools and point out the limitations of public education. While school issues were still paramount in his presentation he did note the work of Newman Clubs. (1927b)

The journal published other articles on Catholic education in the 1920s. Francis Crowley of the NCWC gave statistical data on Catholic schools, parish education, universities, seminaries, Sunday schools. (1927) He also mentioned the experimental work at Catholic University. William Brady wrote on Catholic education, its history and

development. (1928). Wolfe (1928) reviewed Catholic efforts in leadership training, noting the great number of Catholic organizations. Robert O'Brien (1929) gave a description of Catholic schools in Chicago.

George Bull, a Jesuit from Woodstock College, spoke at the 1930 convention. He spelled out the differences between Catholics and non-Catholics in theology and education (1930). He provided an essentialist, authoritarian, and supernaturalistic viewpoint on education. It is noted that he responded to all questions authoritatively. As one reads these earlier pieces on Catholic education one is struck by the unanimity of ideas and approaches.

### **J. Elliot Ross and the R. E. A.**

Until the 1950's the most prominent Catholic participant in R. E. A. was J. Elliot Ross who published his first article in the journal in 1926. At the time he was Catholic chaplain at Columbia University. Ross was a Paulist priest who received his doctorate in sociology from Catholic University and later went with under some controversy to the Iowa School of religion, controversial because Catholics were then forbidden to teach in secular institutions. Ross was the closest thing to a liberal that the association could find until the fifties. His greatest contribution to the association was his participation in Christian-Jewish dialogues, to be treated in the next section.

Ross's articles and book reviews appeared regularly in the journal over the years. He described the work of the Newman Clubs, mentioning that Catholic attendance at secular colleges was not ideal but that much work was being done by a few chaplains at secular colleges universities. (1926, 399-405). In a later article Ross (1928, 856) defended the Catholic church for its work in meeting human needs. In 1929 (479-480) he wrote on the future of character education wherein he argued that the churches could learn from psychology and social sciences while these sciences can learn from the churches. Ross was hopeful for the future of character education, which emerged as a dominant issue for the R. E. A. when members realized that explicit religious education could no longer be given in public schools.

Ross continued his writing into the 1930's. He described the need of youth for anchor in a world of change, the Catholic Church being a sure anchor (1930). In 1931 Ross described religious worship in the life of the Catholic child. He said of Catholics and Protestants at prayer. Protestants pray with eyes shut to avoid distractions Catholics prayed with eyes open to focus in on something outside themselves like images of Jesus or the saints. In 1932 Ross, now professor and Associate Director of the School of Religion and Lecturer in Religion at the University of Illinois, discussed sin and salvation in an age of science in which he saw value in science and technology and observed that Paul the Apostle would have made use of it.

Ross wrote a number of books: *Sanctity and Social Service*, *Five Minute Sermons*, *Truths to Live By* and other books. With other authors he wrote *Indulgences as a Social Factor in the Middle Ages*. With Louis Finklestein and William Adams Brown Ross



published *The Religions of Democracy: Judaism, Catholicism and Protestantism*. Devin Adair, Co. 1941. In 1951 he published *Christian Ethics* with Paulist Press.

In his last article in the journal *Ross* (1943, 110-115) made the case for a natural theology to go along with revealed theology. In the same article he described the ecumenical efforts of the School of Religion at the University of Iowa where he had been Professor and Associate Administrative Director.

### **The R. E. A. and Ecumenical Seminars**

An initiation of the R. E. A. in which Ross participated was a series of seminars on Christian Jewish relations. In 1928 the R. E. A. collaborated with the newly founded National Conference of Christians and Jews to conduct the first in a series of seminars at universities on Christian Jewish relations. The first seminar was held at Columbia University. Other Catholics attending the seminar were Dr. George Schuster of *Commonweal* and Fr. J. McSorley, the head of the Paulist Fathers.

Nicholas Murray Butler, President of Columbia, was enthusiastic about the seminars and agreed to give one of the opening addresses, along with Rabbi Isaac Landman and Ross. Nearly 1,000 people attended the Columbia, which the *New York Daily Mirror* heralded on its front page as a breakthrough among the faiths. (Hayes 2000, 322)

At the Columbia seminar Ross (1929b) spoke of the need for frankness and fairness in entering the dialogue. He addressed some misconceptions about Catholic beliefs and practices. Catholics were thought to be too political, lacking in conscience, exclusive, idolatrous, believing in infallibility, and interested in proselytizing. At a roundtable discussion he dealt openly with such a sensitive issues as Jewish responsibility for the death of Jesus. After this seminar Ross toured the country with Everett Clinchy, a Protestant, and Rabbi Morris Lazon to promote better Jewish Christian relationships. (2000, 324).

While Ross was well suited for the liberal ethos of R. E. A., the Jesuit Fr. George Bull, SJ of Woodstock College and later dean of the School of Education at Fordham University, presented the views of the more dogmatic Roman Catholic. In his talk he spelled out the differences between Catholic and non Catholic education. For him religion is not incidental but essential in Catholic schools. He presented his views with directness, certainty and sureness, embracing a decidedly supernatural orientation. One can see from this talk why more Catholics of his type were not invited to speak at conventions.

Bull was the Roman Catholic speaker at the Seminar for Christians and Jews held at Dickenson College in December 1930. He remarked that "so far as Catholics are concerned loyalty to the Catholic Church involves a complete cleavage between the modern mind and Catholicism." Bull gave a spirited defense of Catholic views on education, birth control and infallibility. One commentator on the conference remarked

that his view neither engendered nor received the slightest manifestation of ill will. Another commentator noted that Rabbi Modstaler regretted the position of Catholics and hoped that liberalism would eventually influence the Catholic position.. Bull's (1931) published paper was entitled "What We Can Do About Religious Discrimination." Other conference were held at Harvard and Boston University.

The April 1932 (297-301) issue of the journal had a report on the National Seminar on Christian Jewish Relations held in Washington, DC. Fr. Francis Haas of the NCWC Social Service Department and Carlton Hayes of Columbia University were Catholic participants.

### **Catholic Participation in the 1930's and 1940's**

In the 1930's and 1940's Catholics became more prominent in the R. E. A. both at the national conventions and in articles in the journal. Many of the Catholics involved were from Catholic higher education, especially from Jesuit institutions. Even though Leo Honor (1933, 193), a Jewish educator and highly respected member of the association, stated that the R. E.A. encouraged its members to refrain from emphasizing their distinctive outlook upon life and to concentrate on what they have in common with all religions, increasingly denominational identification appeared.

#### **Msgr. George Johnson**

A second prominent Catholic in the early years of the association was Monsignor. George Johnson, Executive Director of the NCWC. Johnson, also a professor of education at Catholic University, was the first Roman Catholic to be a Vice President of the association. In an article on character education in the Catholic Church Johnson (1929) contended that Catholics avoided quietism and naturalism. It uses liturgy and retreats. He commended some work that was done in England and the work of Maria Montessori. He mentions the work of Thomas Shields, which emphasizes self action and progressive ideas. But he notes that his textbooks though influential were not universally accepted.

In 1930 Johnson published "Abiding Values in Inherited Religions" (1930a) in which he contended that religious education is the imparting of religious truths. Such indoctrination in his view does not destroy free will. He also spoke at the annual convention on "Consequences of Education without Religion," (1930b), in which he spoke in general terms about the value of religion for individual and social life..

Johnson (1937) addressed the 1937 convention on "Render unto Caesar: Render also Unto God." He stated that the worship of God is paramount, family rights in education should be recognized and that the government should help family and church to teach well. He also condemned "the domination of error, of worldliness, of fashionable liberalism that form of religion that disposes of God."

When he died suddenly in 1944 a touching tribute was published in the journal. . His article on Catholic education for citizenship (1944) was published in the issue of the journal in which his death was noted.

### **Catholic Higher Education**

In the 1930s and 1940s Roman Catholics in higher education became involved increasingly with the association and the journal. Maurice Sheehy of Catholic University wrote in October 1930 on the confessional as a procedure in student counseling: In this article he stressed on the human side of counseling, especially of college students.). Michael King SJ of Spring Hill College, Mobile made a plea for social justice based on and the papal encyclicals. (1931) Xavier University of Cincinnati was one of the hosts for the 13<sup>th</sup> convention in 1933, in which there were Protestant, Catholic and Protestant participants. Hugo Stoctemyer, S. J., president of the University led devotions at the convention. He also contributed an article on temperance in the journal in 1934 on the appeal of Prohibition, which he favored, and called for emphasis on the virtue of temperance. At the convention Fr. Joseph Luther, SJ, participated in a panel discussion on problems brought to bear on religion and character education by the social economic debacle of the depression (1934). Edward Fitzpatrick, SJ (1935), wrote on "Catholic College Ideals" in which he presented a supernaturalist philosophy of education following the encyclical letter of the pope. While he asserted the right to academic freedom he also emphasized the rights of the church in education.

The first article by a Catholic woman appeared in 1932. Sister M. John Francis, CSC., Professor of Philosophy at the College of St. Mary of the Wasatch, Salt Lake City. In "If Winter Comes" she criticized Oswald Spengler's pessimistic view of history. She exhibited a wide knowledge of philosophy and history and literature, using no specifically Catholic sources. Countering Spendler She ended on an optimistic note (Francis 1932).

In a conference on religion and higher education James McQuade, SJ, (1942, 138-9), Head of the Department of Religion at John Carroll University in Cleveland presented a rather dogmatic philosophy of education in which there is an emphasis on objective truth and a rejection of relativistic liberalism. It was his contention that the relativist does not commit himself. McQuade and many other Catholics were now serving on the program committees for R. E. A. conventions.

Fr. Francis Fitzgibbon (1947), Dean at St. Joseph's College for Women, Brooklyn described the typical curriculum of studies at a Catholic liberal arts institution. Ten courses in theology were required. The curriculum resembled what was done in Catholic seminaries. He notes that in New York at that time no state aid was given to schools under religious auspices, This would be changed in the 1960;s with the introduction of McBundy grants and the secularization of many Catholic institutions of higher education.

## **Catholic School**

Articles about Catholic schools continued during the 1930's and 1940's. Though not many Catholic schools embraced the principles of progressive schools at this time Corpus Christi parish school in New York City was a notable exception. Under the pastorate of Fr. George Ford, a long time member of R. E. A., the school introduced progressive methods in all subjects including the teaching of religion (Gans, 1938).

In the midst of the Second World War intercultural education became an issue for the association in its efforts to promote better relationships among groups to counter the group hatred that were involved in the conduct of the war. The renown educator Leonard Covello (1944). wrote about how New York City Catholic churches deal with the assimilation of immigrants. Sr. Mary de Lourdes (1945) described intercultural education in and though the nursery school, a program at St. Joseph's College, Hartford, Connecticut. In a symposium on religion and race Mildred Moody Eakin (1945) a Methodist teaching at Drew University, described experimental efforts in Madison, New Jersey among Catholic and Protestant teachers and students.

A prominent Catholic member of the R. E. A. from the 1940s on was Monsignor Thomas Quigley, Superintendent of Schools in Pittsburgh, a member of the executive board and eventually a Vice President of the association. Quigley (1948) in his evaluation of a statement on religion and public schools noted that Catholic schools had become tainted with secularism since they taught religion as a separate subject and not as integrated in all subjects. Quigley (1948) presented the Catholic philosophy of education, which in his mind avoids a secularism that leads to totalitarianism. Also, John Casey (1949) in a symposium on religious education described Catholic schools, their structure. He also mentioned the work of Catholic University, the Encyclical of Pius XI, and efforts in adult education.

## **Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD) and other outside-school education**

While the earlier Catholic contributors to the journal were in some way connected with Catholic schools and colleges, the work of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine with Catholic youth in public schools and adults began to receive more attention in the journal. In the 1950s and 1960s accounts of this organization appeared even more frequently.

Fr. William Russell (1938, 224-5), the first chair of the Religious Education Department at Catholic University, wrote on Catholic education efforts in religious education giving the standards philosophy of Catholic education. He cited among other developments the liturgical revival through group participation at Mass, the CCD, Catholic Evidence Guilds, and the Catholic Worker movement.

In a symposium on why young people abandon the religion of their youth the Catholic response was given by Edwin V. O'Hara (1939), Bishop of Great Falls, Montana. The bishop pointed to lack of proper education, mixed marriages, ill-instructed

parents and a spirit of worldliness. He emphasized that there was a great need to supplement the education that parents had been given. At a symposium on released time Thomas A. Ryan, Director of the CCD for the Archdiocese of New York, noted that one-half of Catholic children were in Catholic schools at the elementary level and one-fourth at the secondary level. This statistic is often repeated by Catholic writers and speakers in this period. Ryan also noted that his diocese used the catechetical program, *The Adaptive Way* authored by the Mission Sisters in which biblical materials were added to doctrinal teachings. (Ryan 1943).

Paul Tanner (1945) of the Youth Department of the NCWC published a symposium paper on the Catholic Youth Apostolate. He quoted heavily from the popes and describes the Jocist Inquiry Method of the Belgium priest Canon Cardign, See, Judge, Act. (1943). Joseph B. Collins (1946) from the CCD office in Washington described how the Catholic Church had come to support released time education for religious bodies.

Other prominent Catholics outside the field of education were also involved in the journal and at conventions. Fr. James Gillis (1932), a Paulist priest and a prominent Catholic speaker and writer spoke at the 1932 convention on a theistic basis for morality. R. A. McGowan of the NCWC Social Action department wrote on "The Philosophy of Catholics in its Relation to Industry using both papal and Episcopal teachings. John LaFarge, SJ (1944), Executive Editor of the influential Jesuit weekly *America* and a priest deeply involved in promoting interracial relationships, discussed the causes, nature and anti-religious spirit of Anti-Semitism.

### **The 1950's R. E. A. A Multi-faith Association: Catholics Come to Prominence**

An interesting exchange took place in the journal in 1951 about whether or not the R. E. A. was an interfaith organization. George Coe (1951), one of the original founders of the REA contended that the REA is not an interfaith organization since members belong as individuals and not as affiliated with a particular religious faith. Coe was concerned with the inclusion of authoritarian Catholics and well as Protestants in the membership. F. Ernest Johnson (1951), the President of the association, countered that members could not realistically be separated from the groups to which they belonged.. Coe could not have been pleased with the new General Secretary's letter in 1952 in which Wornom (1952, 179-180) announced that the REA must broaden its base to include Catholics and Jews, public and private, and all interested citizens. The journal in 1953 specifically referred to the R. E. A. as a multi-faith organization. (4)

Articles by Catholic educators describing the Catholic viewpoint on education increasingly made their appearance in the journal (Crowley 1950); Pitt (1952); Quigley 1951); McManus 1953). Msgr. Frederick G. Hochwalt of the NCWC evaluated the function of the public school in dealing with religion. He applauded efforts in this regard but admitted that Catholics would have problems with religious observances in public schools. He preferred the system of released time which had grown in many areas. (1953).

Wornom, the new General Secretary of the association, put a great deal of effort in preparing for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the association in 1953. He made a special effort to include many prominent Catholics and Jews in the convention program. Many Catholics were listed as sponsors for this anniversary and sent messages of congratulations; members of the planning committee for the event included the Roman Catholics Francis Crowley of Fordham, George Shuster, President of Hunter College and Dr. George Ford Pastor of Corpus Christi Church in New York City. (Archives) Wornom) proudly announced that of the 71 persons to make presentations at the anniversary convention in Pittsburgh 32 were Protestants, 21 Catholics, 18 Jewish. There were to be a number of principal addresses by Roman Catholics: Paul Reinert, SJ, President of St. Louis University, Edwin V. O'Hara, Bishop of Kansas City Missouri, and Msgr. Thomas Quigley, Superintendent of Schools in Pittsburgh and Vice President of the association. (R. E. A. Archives)

The multi-nature of the organization was greatly in evidence at the convention was enthusiastically supported by Roman Catholic speakers. Paul Reinert, SJ. (1954) argued for a place for religion in the nation's intellectual life and stated that

America can endure only if our people are sincerely religious--sincerely Jewish, sincerely Protestant, or sincerely Catholic. But his full sincerity can be widely achieved only if religion is restored to a place of respect and esteem in our hall of learning.(77)

It took almost fifty years for Roman Catholics to adequately address the question about cooperation between Protestants and Catholics that the organizers of the 1905 convention had posed to Fr. Thomas Shahan. Father Vincent Flynn, President of St. Thomas College, St. Paul Minnesota ended his address with these memorable words.

Catholics must work with such organizations as the R. E. A. and the American Council of Education to find ways and means for improving the religious climate and content of public education in America. For one, I am humbly grateful for the opportunity to join hands with the earnest, God-fearing, dedicated men and women who are assembled here to further this lofty purpose. And I pray to God to bless our common efforts and restore religion to the place it once enjoyed in the curricula of all our American schools. ( 1954, 94)

In 1955 the Religious Education Association announced that Dr. George N. Shuster outstanding Catholic layman, President of Hunter College for fifteen years was elected was elected president of the association. He was described as an outstanding Roman Catholic layman, an author, translator, editor, and premier educator.

### **Conclusions and Discussion**

The Religious Education Association changed a number of times in the first fifty years of its history. In my mind the battle between the liberals and the neo-Orthodox,

which is highlighted in Schmidt's history may not be the most prominent storyline in the history of the association. The chief event may have been the change from an association of liberal Protestants to a multi-faith association. Roman Catholics had a large part to play in this change and in this history.

Roman Catholic membership in the early years was meager. Significant efforts were not made to include them. Yet there are strong reasons for holding that these efforts would probably have been in vain. For many years the interests of Catholics and the R. E. A. did not coincide. The R. E. A. was greatly interested in a non-denominational and thus non-dogmatic religious education. It was concerned with Sunday schools, religion in schools, colleges, universities, and seminaries. Catholic educational interests tended to be dogmatic and centered on Catholic institutions.

The decidedly liberal orientation of the early R. E. A. was not conducive to Catholic membership. During this time Catholic liberals or modernists were under attack by the Vatican. The *Syllabus of Errors* of Pope Pius IX in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, Pius X's Encyclical against modernism, an imposed oath against modernism demanded of priests and seminary professors put the church strongly against liberal tendencies in theology and education. Liberal theologians would again come to the fore only with the emergence in the 1950s of the Nouvelle Theologie in France.

The Notre Dame historian John McGreevy (2003) has recently argued that Catholic during this time were in the midst of a Catholic revival which emphasized the power of the papacy, Catholic institutions, and Catholic forms of piety. All of this was in opposition to liberal movements in theology and education. An earlier Catholic historian William Halsey (1980) described Catholics during this time as attempting to maintain an innocence by establishing their own associations in theology, education, history, psychology, philosophy, and the arts. Catholic educators had a Catholic educational association in which to participate and a Catholic educational journal in which to publish their research and opinions.

As time went on the R. E. A. reached out to include Catholics in their membership and in the journal. The Catholic viewpoint on education found many expressions in the journal and in the conventions. Catholics regularly began to be part of symposia and panel discussions. But these earlier pieces, except for the efforts of J. Elliot Ross, were not congruent with the early liberal and progressive spirit of the association. The remarkable change took place in the 1950s when Herman Wornom made a concerted effort to seek Roman Catholic membership and found that there were now a group of Catholic educators who readily responded to the spirit of the association and were willing to participate. Roman Catholic interests in education now largely coincided with Protestant and Jewish issues, although there were still some important differences. The 1953 convention was a watershed not only in demonstrating the new multi-faith nature of the organization but also in the emergence of Roman Catholics into the organization and into the mainstream of religious education in the United States. The R. E. A. had changed and Roman Catholics had an important role in that change.

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