

PROTESTANT EDUCATION IN QUEBEC :

**A CHALLENGING
FUTURE**

**L'ENSEIGNEMENT PROTESTANT
AU QUÉBEC :**

**LE DÉFI DE
L'AVENIR**

**COLLOQUE 1990
COMITÉ PROTESTANT
PROTESTANT COMMITTEE
RÉSUMÉ**

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Table des matières Table of Contents

Opening Presentation**D^r Norman Henchey****Le respect du régime pédagogique****5****Gerald Auchinleck et
Charles Levy****Le multiculturalism dans
le milieu protestant****8.1****Assanoie Quami****L'avenir du secteur franco-protestant et
les commissions scolaires****9****Denis Lampron****Le projet éducatif à l'école****12.1****René Labbé****Religious Education in Protestant Schools****13****Ross Davidson and
Don Neilson****The Linguistic Board Scenario****17****Keith Fitzpatrick****Multiculturalism in Protestant Schools****23****Serge Fontaine****Plenary Session****27****Presided by
David D'Aoust****Annexe****33****D^r Norman Henchey's address**

Opening Presentation

guest speaker

Dr. Norman Henchey

COLLOQUE '90

Opening presentation

Guest Speaker: Dr. Norman Henchey
Secretary: Don Neilson

On October 12th, 1990, teachers, professionals, administrators, clergy, parents and invited guests gathered on the Loyola campus of Concordia University to consider together the future of protestant education in the province of Quebec.

The theme of the colloque - Quebec Protestant Education: A Challenging Future - was addressed by the opening speaker, Dr. Norman Henchey, professor at the Faculty of Education at M^cGill University. His presentation was thought-provoking and provided an excellent reference point for the rest of the day. Here are some of the highlights of his presentation.

Dr. Henchey began by raising three pertinent questions to be considered:

- What are the trends today which will form the social context of the '90's?
- What are the trends within the educational milieu for the '90's?
- What might be an educational scenario for the year 2000?

Five trends influencing society and our culture were discussed as the context within which education will take place:

- Political turbulence in Quebec
- Economic turbulence
- Rapid technological change
- Demographic changes
- Secularization of values

They will be the preoccupation of Quebec society during the next decade. Immigration's impact on schools, the retiring of one-half of the teachers in the province of Quebec within the next ten years, and shifting cultural patterns and values will all have to be faced by the educational community.

Concerning educational trends, Dr. Henchey suggested that linguistic boards will replace confessional boards with the right of dissent being respected. Evaluation and quality control will be based on the performance of graduates with competition increasing between various countries.

Education will also move toward a free-market economy in which individual schools will have to compete to attract students, much like businesses do today. This will decrease centralized control over schools and give rise to innovative ways to increase enrolment. The core curriculum, the «basics», will also receive much attention and consideration. There will be an increasing demand for continuing education in the community rather than just between the ages of six and seventeen years old.

The scenario for the year 2000 proved to be the most provocative. He predicted that there will be a complete disassociation between protestant education and language distinction. Most people will not want religious content in the public school curriculum, and protestant education will become an alternative for the minority of people who request it. However, the issue of values within education will occupy an important place in on-going discussions. Questions concerning abortion, the environment, relationships and peace will be at the forefront of educational issues.

Dr. Henchey's entertaining and informative presentation was a stimulating beginning for all the participants, while raising important points for further discussion.



Note: For the full text of Dr. Henchey's address, see appendix A.

Le respect du régime pédagogique

présentateur

Gérald Auchinleck

et

Charles Lévy

Le respect du régime pédagogique

Le 12 octobre 1990

Atelier 1

Présentateurs: Gerald Auchinleck et Charles Lévy

Secrétaire: Lucie Lemelin

Après avoir défini brièvement les régimes pédagogiques et mentionné les titres de documents relatifs à ceux-ci, MM. Auchinleck et Lévy ont présenté en alternance les contenus du régime pédagogique de l'éducation préscolaire et de l'enseignement primaire et du régime pédagogique de l'enseignement secondaire.

Après avoir précisé que les régimes pédagogiques ne sont pas la loi, mais une série de directives pour appliquer la loi, les présentateurs ont souligné la distinction entre les deux «structures» inhérentes à chacun de ces régimes. La première est une structure obligatoire qui laisse peu ou pas de liberté de manoeuvre aux commissions scolaires (dans les domaines suivants, par exemple : l'âge de fréquentation scolaire, les règles d'admission, le calendrier de l'année scolaire); la deuxième structure sert plutôt de «guide» et permet à ces commissions de proposer certaines règles de fonctionnement dans leurs établissements scolaires (par exemple, le modèle des bulletins, la sélection des manuels scolaires sur la liste soumise par le ministère de l'Éducation, l'organisation des matières au programme selon les besoins et la philosophie du milieu).

Quelques participants ont posé des questions, notamment sur l'obligation de dispenser durant cinq ans le cours d'EMR au secondaire, malgré le fait que les élèves ayant réussi tout le cours ne reçoivent des crédits que pour quatre années.

La présentation de cet atelier s'est faite de façon très systématique et claire. Toutefois, il aurait été des plus intéressant que le sujet soit traité dans l'optique du thème du colloque.

Le multiculturalism dans le milieu protestant

présentateur
Assanoie Quami

Atelier : Le multiculturalisme dans le milieu protestant

Le 12 octobre 1990

Atelier 2

Présentateur: Assanoie Quami

Secretary: Cécile Beaulieu

Mme Quami souligne que le multiculturalisme favorise le respect de la différence, une meilleure compréhension les uns envers les autres.

Tous les intervenants ont une responsabilité.

► Il y a d'abord la direction de l'école qui doit trouver les moyens d'établir le rapport avec les parents. La direction doit donner le ton.

► Les enseignants ont aussi un rôle très important à jouer. Même s'il y a souvent un manque de matériel pédagogique, de petits projets peuvent quand même être réalisés : coin de classe multiculturel, utilisation de cartes géographiques, présentation de la langue ou de la religion, musique d'origine, repas, journées autochtones, visite d'une communauté, parrainage d'un enfant...

► Diverses activités peuvent aussi être organisées pour favoriser l'invitation des représentants de la communauté : par exemple, au secondaire, on peut donner un modèle positif aux élèves, en invitant un médecin ou un avocat, etc. à venir parler aux élèves.

Mme. Quami insiste sur le fait que l'éducation aux droits, au respect de soi et des autres, constituent la meilleure approche au multiculturalisme. Notre responsabilité commune est de créer des apports en sensibilisant les gens. Pour ce faire, il est nécessaire d'établir un plan d'action.

L'avenir du secteur franco-protestant et les commissions scolaires

présentateur
Denis Lampron

**L'avenir du secteur franco-protestant
et les commissions scolaires
Le 12 octobre 1990**

Atelier 3

Présentateur: Denis Lampron
Secrétaire: Lucie Lemelin

Cet atelier s'est divisé en deux parties :

- «D'où sommes-nous venus?» (bref historique de la présence des franco-protestants au Québec, plus particulièrement dans le système scolaire québécois);
- «Comment vivre une minorité majoritaire?» (réflexion sur l'avenir des franco-protestantes dans un système scolaire linguistique).

Cette présentation de Monsieur Lampron au sujet des origines du protestantisme franco-canadien, du début réel du secteur français dans les commissions scolaires protestantes québécoises et de la récente expansion de ce secteur, a donné lieu à des interventions qui se sont surtout limitées à la véritable définition du terme «protestant» dans un contexte éducationnel.

Selon quelques participants, ce mot doit être pris dans un sens large, c'est-à-dire devant être associé avant tout à la tolérance et au respect des valeurs d'autrui, non à une identité ou à des valeurs religieuses; selon d'autres, et c'est le point de vue de Monsieur Lampron, il faut comprendre ce mot dans un sens plus restreint, c'est-à-dire comme se référant essentiellement aux valeurs scripturaires des protestants de la Réforme. Selon le présentateur, ce sont les écoles évangéliques qui se rapprochent le plus du vrai protestantisme et il craint que celles-ci perdront leur identité chrétienne au sein d'une commission scolaire linguistique. Cet avis, sous ses deux propositions, a été contesté par les tenants du «sens large» qui croient que la nouvelle Loi ne menace en rien la position et les acquis confessionnels de ces écoles.

L'atelier s'est terminé par cette discussion à laquelle il n'y a pas eu de conclusion ou de consensus.

Le projet éducatif à l'école

présentateur
René Labbé

Atelier : Le projet éducatif à l'école

Le 12 octobre 1990

Atelier 4

Presentateur: René Labbé
Secretary: Sylvain Croteau

Chaque école doit se définir et ce projet communautaire s'appelle **projet éducatif**.

Deux objectifs étaient visés dans cet atelier.

- a) comprendre ce que c'est qu'un «projet éducatif».
- b) les démarches à prendre pour en établir un.

La base d'un tel plan d'action s'élabore à partir :

- 1) de la réalité de l'école.
- 2) de l'orientation commune.
- 3) des valeurs fondamentales qu'on veut partager.

Le cours d'EMR peut-il être une base sur laquelle on devrait bâtir un projet éducatif?

Un retour historique a permis de souligner le choix qui a été fait par le comité protestant en favorisant un point de vue multiconfessionnel (judéo-chrétien).

Cette démarche dynamique qui définit les critères propres à l'école demande la concertation de tous les intervenants, à partir des enfants eux-mêmes, des parents et jusqu'au concierge.

Finalement, le projet éducatif est le point de convergence des forces de l'école pour avancer. Il requiert une constante réévaluation.

**Religious Education
in
Protestant Schools**

presented by
Ross Davidson
and
Don Neilson

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN PROTESTANT SCHOOLS

October 12th, 1990.

Workshop 5

Presenter: Ross Davidson and Don Neilson

Secretary: Maureen Scullion-Robitaille

Mr. Davidson opened the session with introductions from the participants, followed by a viewing of the MRE videocassettes, showing elementary and secondary levels at work.

Don Neilson went on to describe, in a few words, the philosophy of Protestant education:

"Essentially, it was the right of the minority in a municipality to dissent from the preference of the local majority; to set up its own school, and manage and control what that school teaches and who teaches in it...

...Traditionally, it had been the philosophy of the Protestant system to be Protestant but not church controlled, secular but not irreligious, and educational but not proselytising." (extracted from **Whither the Protestant School System in Quebec**, written and researched by Harry Kuntz and Calvin C. Potter, 1989.)

Mr. Neilson outlined the content of the present MRE programme by reviewing the three modules:

- 1) BIBLICAL MODULE:
 - a) influence of the Bible on education and western culture
 - b) education and exposure, not indoctrination
- 2) CELEBRATION / PHENOMENA OF RELIGION
 - a) origins, expressions, rites
 - b) religious experience of humanity

3) PERSONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

- a) awareness of morality
- b) its effect on behaviour
- c) sense of personal responsibility

Mr. Davidson continued by outlining the legal base for confessional school boards and for Protestant moral and religious education. He referred specifically to Bill 107 (the present Education Act) and the Regulation of the Protestant Committee.

In passing, he alluded to the sections which make provision for religious instruction in a particular religious tradition.

The question period highlighted qualifications for teachers of MRE, where the common complaint was lack of training.

The Linguistic Board Scenario

presented by
Keith Fitzpatrick

THE LINGUISTIC BOARD SCENARIO

October 12th, 1990.

Workshop 6

Presenter: Keith Fitzpatrick

Secretary: Maureen Scullion-Robitaille

Mr. Fitzpatrick described the kinds of boards existing previous to law 107:

- Catholic and Protestant school boards
- Dissident school boards (Catholic or Protestant)
- School boards for Protestants (i.e. Chateauguay Valley, Bedford)
- School boards for Catholics

Post law 107 (fully implemented), the scenario would be subtly different:

- Catholic school boards
- Protestant school boards
- English language school boards
- French language school boards
- Dissident school boards (from any category)

Essentially, the government will divide all territories into two and a board will be established in each territory. Minorities can apply to be dissident.

Why, then, was bill 107 proposed?

- most believe that a linguistic board would more accurately reflect the preoccupations of Quebecers today
- nationalists were disturbed by immigrants choice of Protestant school boards which happened to be anglophone

What impact would linguistic school boards have on Quebecers?

Boards maintain the right to **allow** schools to remain protestant or catholic. However, this right will not be as "automatic" as in the past; a community will have to decide which values are important to them, and become active within their schools (orientation

committees) in setting up an educational project. Otherwise, the confessional aspect of the school will disappear. Should the board not respond to a school's request to maintain its confessionality, the school can exercise its right to be dissident.

Problems to be encountered:

One very real problem that might be encountered with the linguistic board scenario is that of multiplicity. One territory might feasibly have an English catholic sector, English protestant sector, French catholic sector, French protestant sector, French linguistic (neutral) and English linguistic (neutral) school boards, all trying to attract students.

The Protestant Committee will have to be able to define itself to protect the needs of the protestant school boards.

How confessionality can be protected:

The government considers confessional rights to be those of:

- a) dissent
- b) choice of the school best suited to personal values (according to the educational project) No transportation arrangements will be made between territories; it will be parents' responsibilities to get their children to and from schools outside of their local school board's territory.
- c) Protestant or Catholic moral and religious education
- d) religious care and guidance

How to exercise rights.

There are three levels of intervention:

1) SCHOOL:

- a) educational project
- b) assignment of qualified teachers to MRE
- c) application for recognition of confessional status

2) BOARD

- a) application for recognition of confessional status
- b) MRE instruction
- c) religious care and guidance
- d) allowing MRE other than protestant or catholic

3) GOVERNMENT

- a) consultation with boards
 - b) parent consultation
 - c) power of Assistant Deputy Minister
 - i) right to visit schools
 - ii) investigation, verification to ensure compliance with provisions of law and/or regulations
-

**Multiculturalism
in
Protestant Schools**

presented by
Serge Fontaine

Multiculturalism in Protestant Schools

October 12th, 1990.

Workshop 8

Presenter: Serge Fontaine

Secretary: Quentin Robinson

The workshop began with a brief lecture on the history of the Canadian and Quebec approaches to multiculturalism. The replacement of the word/term **multiculturalism** by the term **interculturalism** was explained. The information given in this section of the workshop came so quickly that reliable notes were impossible to take; however, Serge Fontaine was reading his speech so I'm sure he could provide a copy if it is useful.

The workshop really took off when Mr. Fontaine started to show slides of the school where he was principal. He spoke of his approach to "accueil", which he calls "Accueil with a meaning". His approach is that the immigrant student must be prepared to compete on an equal level with non-immigrant students once they graduate into the workforce. He sees us doing no favours for the immigrant by making life easier for them. He described the introduction of "Saturday School" for those whose French language skills were inadequate and he spoke of Saturday evening discussion groups with parents on how to help their children in school (babysitting provided during these groups). He spoke of helping the children integrate by learning the same sports as Canadian born children, i.e. skating.

Mr. Fontaine said that the principal must be the pedagogical leader of the school. He was asked at the end of the workshop how he was able to motivate teachers to put on all the extra programmes he was describing. The answer was self evident to all who had heard Serge speak. His example and commitment to immigrant children would motivate most anyone to do exactly what Serge asked of them!

He spoke of interculturalism as bringing the ethnic majority and the ethnic minority to interact with one another.

He emphasized that one culture is as rich, as important, as another.

He mentioned that concrete programmes for interculturalism are not available; that training of teachers and administrators is just starting. His emphasis was not to separate programmes of "Accueil", special education and main stream. He described the visit of members of the Protestant Committee to their school, who wanted to evaluate the effectiveness and cost of programmes of intercultural activities. He said

that they had "caught the vision"; that is, that interculturalism is a way of life, not a course or a programme.

Mr. Fontaine emphasizes the place of good communication, law, order and discipline. He shared his opinion that having children line up in silence for various purposes enhances their ability to listen to instructions. He emphasized the importance of starting meetings with parents on time.

He mentioned that he favours traditional teaching methods for core subjects and more modern approaches for other topics. He stressed that the kids are at the centre of everything he does.

He shared his answer to the "latch-key kid" problem, The school was made available for kids to do homework after hours. Teachers supervise and snacks are available. The key is to provide a nice, warm atmosphere in a safe place.

Mr. Fontaine observed that for many of the children, school is a place of freedom, while home is hell. This is in part due to cramped quarters at home and the noise constraints of apartment dwelling.

Where the population does not allow for a viable intercultural exchange, school exchanges with a community having more of a diverse cultural representation were recommended.

Mr. Fontaine mentioned that one of his own children attends the school.

Plenary Session

presided by
David D'Aoust
Associate Deputy Minister
of the
Protestant Faith

THE PROTESTANT COMMITTEE COLLOQUE
October 12th, 1990.

**Protestant Education –
A Challenging Future**

Plenary Session

President: David D'Aoust

Secretary: Maureen Scullion-Robitaille

The Associate Deputy-Minister for the Protestant faith, Mr. David D'Aoust, introduced the four panellists who had been invited by the Protestant Committee to comment upon the issue of the future of Protestant education in the province of Quebec:

Joan Doherty, past president of the Protestant Committee and deputy for the Liberal party.

Ms. Doherty is of the opinion that the Protestant school boards should no longer be considered as confessional but rather as having a specific philosophy; that is, respect for the dignity of every individual and the formation of personal values.

The protestant philosophy has taken shape over the years, as different needs arose and were met. In the process, such qualities as resourcefulness, flexibility, pragmatism and a spirit of independence have been formed. Strong parent/teacher involvement, constant evaluation of our programmes and openness to new dimensions characterize the protestant philosophy.

Molière Estinvil – involved in multiculturalism project with the PSBGM.

Mr. Estinvil's opening question to the audience: What is the pertinence of Protestant Education in a pluralist society?

He went on to give a brief history of the role that the PSBGM has played within the Haitian community. Although Haiti is recognized primarily as a French catholic country, only 10% of its inhabitants actually speak French and catholicism ranks lower than voodoo and protestantism.

Haitian immigrants coming into Montreal some years ago were franco-catholic white collar workers and were integrated into the Catholic school boards with few problems. However, another group of blue collar workers ten years later were faced with problems adapting to the school system (many had received little or no education in Haiti) and into society in general (communication problems principally). Within the PSBGM, they found openness on the part of the school board and the teachers, and were able to work alongside the educators in first defining, then resolving such problems as adequate lunches for the underprivileged families, homework assistance for parents with little or no education, and helping teachers understand the Haitian's ethnic background.

Mr. Estinvil praised the openness and the willingness of the Protestant school board, which allows immigrants to integrate in a welcome, compliant atmosphere. This gives newcomers hope for the future.

Douglas Clarke – past Education Development Officer for the Protestant Education Service; past lecturer at M^cGill; and present Assistant-Director of Laurentian High School.

- What is a protestant school?

In looking at the future of protestant education, Mr. Clarke called for clarification of terms.

He defined two main themes:

- ▶ collective right to freedom of and freedom from religion
- ▶ a values oriented enterprise

To the latter, he questioned **which** values are espoused by Protestant education in view of the multi-cultural nature of the society in which we live.

Quebec education stands upon the «Plan d'action» put forth by the Parti Québécois in 1979:

«A sense of inner self,
A sense of things spiritual,
Service, charity,
And the gift of oneself.»

Are these values uniquely protestant?

Mr. Clarke's personal observation is that «protestant» is no longer equated to «christian», and that the term is to be looked at in a new and creative way. While protestant education may value its past, according to Clarke, it is no longer compatible with a pluralist and open society.

Danielle Gilbert, principal of Queen Elizabeth (two-part, bilingual) school in Val D'Or.

«Whereas in a Catholic school transformation is slowly born of a crisis situation, protestant schools respond spontaneously by developing solutions often called for in a multi-ethnic culture.» Ms. Gilbert has come to understand protestant values in terms of tolerance and caring in an open atmosphere where **all** values are considered. She sees the franco-protestant school as a place for learning sharing and respect; not just philosophically but practically, as well.

The plenary session included a question/commentary period:

Gerald Auchinleck, past president of the Protestant Committee:

- Our values come from the Scriptures;
- Our ease to cope comes from our very multi-denominational nature.

Assanoie Quami, teacher, active in the Haitian community.

- If we do not have (well defined) values, we will destroy each other.
-

Annexe 1

QUEBEC PROTESTANT EDUCATION: A CHALLENGING FUTURE

Norman Henchey
McGill University

Opening address for a conference on Protestant Education organized by the Protestant Committee of the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, held at the Loyola Campus of Concordia University, October 12, 1990

SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

I am honoured by your invitation to speak to you this morning on the future of Protestant education in Quebec. It is an important and sensitive subject and I approach it with the perspective of one who is outside the Protestant community, one who is Roman Catholic and -- even -- Jesuit educated on this very campus.

To set the proper mental attitude for this consideration of the future of Protestant education, let me share three reflections from my past.

(1) In 1955, I graduated with a B.A. from Loyola College. It was then a distinctively Catholic and Jesuit college and no one then would have imagined it was destined within twenty years to join with Sir George Williams to form Concordia University.

(2) In 1966, I was teaching in the St. Joseph Teachers College on Durocher Street. In the period following the publication of the Parent Report, the College was attempting to define its future. It submitted a brief to the Minister of Education outlining the major options to be considered, the favoured one being a Faculty of Education in a new English-Catholic university. An amalgamation with McGill was not considered sufficiently feasible to be one of the options presented. Yet in September 1970, St. Joseph's and the McGill Faculty of Education at Macdonald were amalgamated in a new building on the main campus.

(3) In July 1989, I attended a conference in West Berlin. I visited East Berlin, passing through a long and careful inspection by East German border guards at the famous Checkpoint Charlie. I saw the Wall from both sides, and in talking with people in both Berlins, I found general agreement: Yes, it was sad about the Wall. Yes, probably some day it may be taken down. No, probably not in our lifetime. Within six months, the Wall was gone.

The moral of these stories is this: we need to be both open-minded and skeptical about the future. Present trends and assumptions do not always continue to be valid; new choices emerge, often suddenly and dramatically. But if we must be open, we must also be skeptical, examining our alternatives with a critical eye.

In this spirit, I would like to present three questions:

- (1) What are the major social trends that will affect the future of Protestant education?
- (2) What are the major educational trends that will affect its future?
- (3) What is our vision of Protestant education in Quebec in the 1990s, what scenarios can we create?

SOCIAL TRENDS

The future evolution of Protestant education will not take place in a vacuum but in a context marked by a number of major social trends. Among the most relevant are the following:

Political Turbulence

The only thing clear about the political future of Quebec and Canada is that this future is very much in doubt. The political option which Quebec selects, if it is indeed able to muster sufficient support for any particular choice, will certainly provoke one or more political options in the rest of Canada. Who can say what the political structure of Quebec will be in ten years? A province in a decentralized confederation? An independent nation? An American state?

36. What may be the legal and constitutional status of a Protestant school in each of these options?

Economic Turbulence

The economy of Quebec is being "restructured" by a number of factors: trends on the global economic environment, free trade with the United States (and soon probably Mexico), increasing competition with other regions, (especially Ontario, the united Europe and the Asian rim countries), the transformation caused by technology, and the movement from the primary and secondary economic sectors to the tertiary sector of services (consulting, media, research, information systems).

What resources will the Quebec economy have at its disposal to support education? For what kind of job market will the schools be preparing young Quebecers?

Technological Change

We have already moved rapidly into the information era of computers, media, satellites, robots, and what have come to be called "knowledge industries". Already, schools are competing with other information systems (computer networks, television) in their attempt to form and inform young people.

What role will schools (Protestant or otherwise) have in the high-technology information environment? What will "literacy" mean in the year 2000? What does it mean now?

Demographic/Cultural Patterns

In recent decades we have watched the demography of Quebec change in often dramatic ways: the decline of the traditional Anglo-Saxon communities, the increase and diversity of communities from other language, cultural and ethnic traditions, and the general ageing of the population. There are fewer English who are Protestant and many more French Quebecers who are not Catholic. Patterns in the metropolitan area differ from those elsewhere.

What will happen if (or when?) the traditional identification of "Protestant" with "English" no longer holds true? Will there be many Protestant schools that are English? Will there be many English schools that are Protestant?

Value Challenges

During periods of turbulence and change, values are under stress -- values related to religion, to ethics, to social behavior, to sexuality, to public policy, to human relationships. Many of our traditional sources of value and meaning are losing their influence: home, church, ethnic group, social class, gender, community. We see different responses to the challenges of change and uncertainty: conservatism (to guard the past), fundamentalism (to guard against complexity), liberalism (to promote progress), existentialism (to become), pragmatism (to adapt).

What does Protestant education have to say to such value challenges? What vision or visions does it offer? What fundamental beliefs do its schools embody and exemplify?

Protestant education will be shaped by these trends and by the response to these trends offered by Protestant educators and policy makers.

EDUCATIONAL TRENDS

In the more immediate environment of education, there are other trends that will influence the character and shape of Protestant education:

Linguistic Boards

I will not presume to go into details about Bill 107 and the possibility of linguistic boards; you are more expert on these matters than I. If Quebec moves to a system of linguistic boards, with the right of religious dissent, what is now the Protestant system (staff, students and facilities) will be distributed among English-language boards, French-language boards, and perhaps concentrated in a few dissentient Protestant boards.

For some, this may seem the end of Protestant education in Quebec; for others, a rational realignment more in keeping with current realities; for others still, an opportunity for the strengths of the Protestant tradition in education to influence English-language boards and perhaps some French-language boards, and an opportunity to offer a more clearly defined Protestant education than is possible in the

political/cultural mix we now have.

Quality Control

In almost every country there has been a recent surge of concern for the quality of education, greater stress on performance and achievement, and more attention given to evaluation. This involves a shift of attention away from matters of philosophy, structures, and administration to matters of curriculum, instruction, school climate, and learning achievement.

These new priorities are ones that Protestant education in Quebec has long pursued with a good deal of success, areas in which Protestant educators and policy makers, whatever the legal structures, can continue to show leadership.

Market Forces

In many countries, especially the United States, United Kingdom and Canada, there is a trend to favor choice among schools and school systems, within and across political boundaries. We witness the growing popularity of private schools, of Catholic separate schools in Ontario and elsewhere, and of alternative schools (like the International Schools) in the public sector.

Protestant schools -- both within linguistic boards and in dissentient boards -- may well become popular alternative schools, as they are now for many non-Protestants, because of their educational philosophy, openness, and general repute.

General Education

Everywhere, too, there is stress on the problem of defining, selecting and imparting the fundamentals, the core of skills, concepts and attitudes that every person, young and old, will need to function in the society of the 21st Century. One aspect of this is literacy; another is finding sources of meaning in our lives and in our understanding of our turbulent times.

In Quebec we have had a tendency to lock (and, I think, lose) these fundamentals in a structure of régimes pédagogiques,³⁹ terminal objectives, and specific courses. We need different

and imaginative approaches to the fundamentals, in courses like Religious and Moral Education, and in the humanities, social sciences, science and fine arts courses on our curriculum.

Lifelong Learning

The time is clearly past when we can "graduate" from school to life at eighteen, when adult learning is a privilege or a frill or a form of recuperation for past failure. Our clients for educational services are becoming younger and younger (we may soon have early childhood educators outside delivery rooms) and they are becoming older and older. The public school system, directed almost exclusively towards those six to sixteen, is becoming less important, one part of a continuing program of learning services for everyone.

This implies that Protestant schools are no longer preparing children and adolescents "for life." If they could get everyone "started" for life, that would be a great achievement. At the same time, the clients for Protestant education are persons of all ages, and the services they want may not be best offered in schools but on community television, in voluntary organizations, in business, or as part of the work of other institutions such as churches and social services.

A SCENARIO FOR THE 1990s

What Protestant education in Quebec will look like in the year 2000 -- a museum display or a thriving social project -- will depend on how Protestants (and the rest of us) respond to these external and internal trends. If we are passive, pessimistic and defensive, or if we are energetic, confident and creative, we will develop different scenarios for the future.

Let me suggest five elements of one possible scenario for Protestant education in Quebec towards the end of this decade, century, and millennium.

1. There is an uncoupling of Protestant education from any one specific language or cultural tradition.

We have tended to identify Protestant schools in Quebec very closely with the English language, with a particular Anglo-Saxon-Celtic tradition, and with a set of British and American influences (religious tolerance, local government, business orientation, etc.). In the educational battles of recent decades, more than one Protestant spokesperson said that to defend Protestant education was to defend English education. The Protestants were the leaders of the English Community.

However some may regret the passing of this order of things, this linkage is no longer so clear. A majority of English-speaking Quebecers do not see themselves as Protestants in any real sense, but as Catholics, Jews, Hindus, Orthodox, or of no formal religious affiliation. At the same time, many (in some places perhaps a majority) of those who do see themselves as Protestants do not see themselves as English-speaking but as French-speaking.

Through the 1990s, there continues to be a Protestant educational community but it will be bounded less by tradition and language than by common religious and moral visions. Many administrators, teachers, trustees and parents who are now identified with the Protestant school system may be more comfortable in an English or French school system.

2. Protestant education defines its mission.

Faced with the blurring of the distinctive historical and sociological roots of Protestant education, a new "Protestant mission statement" begins to emerge. I imagine a mission statement would include such elements as:

- (1) importance of the religious dimension in life and in intellectual affairs
- (2) individual responsibility for belief and for action and for the quality of one's work
- (3) respect for diversity in belief, world view, and approach to living
- (4) emphasis on literacy, on the word, as the basis of learning and maturing
- (5) active participation and involvement of parents and the community in educational policy and practice
- (6) system of governance and management that is pragmatic and flexible.

3. There is an "alternative" network of Protestant schools.

There are fewer Protestant schools in Quebec in 2000 than in 1990. The mainstream school systems are secular, divided along language lines. Parents have a choice among schools and there are a variety of public and private schools offering different kinds of service. Protestant schools are linked in a network not unlike the associations for independent schools. This network sponsors communication through computer linkups among schools, and between schools and other organizations; it also provides resources, coordination of activities, and acts as a public interest group on behalf of Protestant education.

Some Protestant schools are part of dissentient boards, some are private (receiving some public funding) and others are part of the major language systems. After a sharp decline in enrolments in Protestant schools in the early 1990s as a result of school board reorganization, enrolments in Protestant schools has been steadily increasing each year since 1995.

4. Protestant education establishes new links with churches and local communities.

Protestant schools form only one part of the system of Protestant education in Quebec. The Protestant Committee has been providing leadership in expanding the structure of Protestant education beyond schools to include community cable television programming, community organizations, local churches and congregations and a variety of support and action groups for women, the aged, the environment, literacy, and social assistance. Protestant schools become local centres for educational services and resources

Providing lifelong education services of high quality and wide range is the major goal of Protestant education, and the adult services are more extensive than elementary and secondary schools.

- 5. Protestant education has been giving priority to five key issues: (1) environment, (2) the human aspects of economic progress, (3) individual rights in a multi-cultural society, (4) positive human relations, especially in reference to sexuality, and (5) peace and non-violent modes of conflict resolution.**

During the 1990s, Protestant education has been seeking areas of focus or priority that reflect the strengths of its tradition and goals. Out of long-standing concerns for simplicity, frugality and stewardship naturally flows an educational concern for the protection of the environment and models of simplified lifestyle. Experience with international development and advocacy programs for the poor, the handicapped and the powerless leads educators to stress the human dimension of an advanced, competitive and high-technology society. Preoccupation with the rights of the individual naturally leads to a support of rights within a multicultural society, against standardizing and collective pressures. The attention given the human relationships and human sexuality in religious and moral education programs continues to influence the content of programs and, even more important, the culture of Protestant schools. And the work of the Protestant community to further peace and lower the level of violence in our society finds an expression in many of the areas of the curriculum, from history and literature to school behavior codes.

These are only a few elements of a possible scenario for Protestant education. There are surely many more and far better ones to be created by those whose responsibility it is to guide and sponsor and give life to an education community in Quebec that is "Protestant."

CONCLUSION

In The Name of the Rose Umberto Eco provides us with a powerful image of the 14th Century monastery, and of the scriptorium and the library which were major learning institutions of the Middle Ages. At the time one could hardly imagine what would happen to learning without them.

Eco also provides us with a powerful metaphor for the 20th Century, for at the end of the book, the library is set afire and the monastery burns, smoldering for weeks as the burnt fragments of parchment from the library settle over the landscape. But as the scriptorium burned, the printing press was being developed by Gutenberg, and from it a new kind of library, new media, new messages, and a new education.

The novel ends: Stat rosa pristina nomine nomina nuda tenemus. Once we had both the rose and the name of the rose; 43. now we have only (but at least) the names.

