

Ni Dubhain, Eanna, 1999, *The Role of the Catholic School as an agent of Evangelisation in the context of Social and Cultural Change with particular reference to Irish Post-primary Education.*

ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

The purpose of this study was to consider the role of the Catholic school as an agent of evangelization in the context of social and cultural change, with particular reference to Irish post-primary education.

The study examined the concept of evangelization in the broad ecclesial context, the significance of the pastoral context of evangelization and the different emphases in evangelization in different contexts. It examined recent curricular changes and considered the possible implications for Catholic schools and for RE teaching, of the current proposals to include RE in the process of assessment and certification at Junior and Leaving Certificate level.

The study outlined details of a questionnaire administered to RE teachers in three Catholic schools, together with an analysis of results. These results indicated a good balance in terms of aims and aspirations on the part of RE teachers, in that they sought to incorporate the nurture and development of the cognitive, affective and behavioural dimensions of faith into their formal teaching. Results also indicated concern among RE teachers about the quality of RE programmes, the Catholic orientation of RE teaching and levels of students' knowledge of their Catholic faith.

There were clear indications of support among teachers for the inclusion of RE in the process of assessment and certification as a means of improving both the status of the subject and levels of student knowledge. Other concerns emerging from the study included the difficulties of teaching RE in the current socio-cultural context, which manifested themselves particularly in lack of interest on the part of students in the subject.

Finally the study considered some of the issues and challenges for the future, including possible structures aimed at improving the effectiveness of the Catholic school as an agent of evangelization.