

FROM CHECKPOINTS TO CLASSROOMS

From Checkpoints to Classrooms:

The managerial challenges facing Catholic school leaders in East Jerusalem and  
the West Bank and their relation to and influence on school Catholicity

By

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*Parturient montes, nascetur ridiculus mus.*



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I give you thanks.

# FROM CHECKPOINTS TO CLASSROOMS

## Abstract

This thesis identifies the managerial challenges facing Catholic school leaders in East Jerusalem and the West Bank and isolates those that have a relation to and influence on school Catholicity. Data were collected from 14 schools using a non-experimental, descriptive design that involved interviews with school leaders as well as conversations with staff members or teachers. To nuance all discussions and to provide concrete examples, observations of school operations and evaluation of institutional documents occurred. Analysis of the data revealed 10 functions, tasks, and behaviours (collectively called managerial challenges) that Catholic school leaders regularly carry out. Once these were identified, they were compared to the elements of school Catholicity described by Thomas Groome. A discussion about the managerial challenges facing administrators revealed that Catholic schools of East Jerusalem and the West Bank reflect one area of excellence, four areas of growth, and three areas of concern. This seven-chapter thesis was undertaken to show the collective challenges facing Catholic school leaders in East Jerusalem and the West Bank and to provide insight into how these might affect local Catholic education in the future.

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**Chapter 1:**

**Introduction**

**Foreword to the Study**

Christians have lived in and around Jerusalem for almost 2000 years. Yet today, they are poorly represented to the global community. Christians in the West Bank are a religious minority within a larger Islamic population; Christians in Israel, most of whom are Arabs, are an ethnic minority within a larger Jewish population. Because of their unique situation, they are often overlooked. Questions about where they live, what they do, and how they are educated are usually footnotes in a larger narrative. As a Roman Catholic graduate student of educational administration, I have an interest in the region's Catholic schools. Speaking about this topic to both friends and colleagues nevertheless shows me that my interest is not broadly shared. Most do not know that sizable numbers of Christians live in Israel and the Palestinian territories. Additionally, most do not know that many Catholic schools in the region have histories that span more than 400 years. Most of the international attention – for better or worse – seems to focus on the Israeli and non-Christian Arab populations alone.

**Delimitations of the Study and Purpose**

My interest relates to Catholic schools in Israel and the Palestinian territories, yet the topic is complex. Before any of the research for this study was undertaken, I met with school leaders in the region to gain an understanding of the needs they had and the issues they faced. After having received the necessary approval from the Education and Nursing Research Ethics Board (ENREB) at the University of Manitoba, I travelled to Jerusalem

and the Palestinian territories in April 2010 to meet with school leaders. Although there are numerous Catholic schools throughout Israel and the Palestinian territories, it seemed clear that those in East Jerusalem and the West Bank had the most diverse sets of challenges. These schools cater largely to students of Arabic descent who are not recognized in Israel as legal citizens. Additionally, the student populations of these schools are predominantly non-Christian. Because of their unique situation, I decided to focus my research on Catholic schools in East Jerusalem and the West Bank. At that time, I anticipated that this study would likely highlight the complex relationship between Israel and Palestine with reference to its impact on Catholic education. However, I soon realized that this would be an imprudent and unwieldy decision.

At its simplest, the tensions between the two groups are traced to the Six-Day War in 1967 when Israel entered the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. At its most complex, they extend back beyond the Arab-Israeli war in 1948 to an origin upon which few agree. After long discussions with local Catholic school leaders in East Jerusalem and the West Bank, it was apparent that they themselves had a need. In fact, a substantial number said that they would like a study that could either (a) identify the challenges they collectively face as administrators of Catholic schools or (b) provide insight into how the Catholicity of their schools can be improved. Although they all face challenges as leaders of Catholic schools, few had any idea whether their particular issues were shared by the other administrators in the region or not. In addition, there was a general concern that the whole of Catholic education was in peril. A few school leaders said to me in private that they felt that Catholic education in the region would not survive unless it underwent a dramatic reassessment.

**Purpose of Study**

The administration of Catholic schools in East Jerusalem and the West Bank has become increasingly complex. Changing demographics, economic disparity, and political instability have adversely affected Catholic education in the region. School leaders often respond to the plethora of managerial challenges alone and with very little understanding or knowledge of what others in their same position are facing. Administrators of Catholic schools should not need to navigate these tumultuous waters alone. With recognition of their struggles and their concerns, the study sought:

1. To identify the managerial challenges facing administrators of Catholic schools in East Jerusalem and the West Bank;
2. To isolate those managerial challenges relating to and having an influence on school Catholicity;

Quite simply, this study was undertaken to show the collective managerial challenges facing Catholic school leaders in East Jerusalem and the West Bank and to provide insight into how these might affect local Catholic education in the future.

**Definition of Terms**

Many terms used in this thesis are emotionally charged. Personal experience has shown that conflicts can easily emerge when one group uses a word in ways that another finds unacceptable. A seminar held at the Colony Hotel in Jerusalem in May 2010 in fact demonstrated this point. An initially pleasant gathering of Israeli and Palestinian students digressed into angry shouts as the two groups argued about how to describe the dividing barrier between Israel and the West Bank. Most of the Palestinians called it either the separation fence or apartheid wall. By contrast, the Israelis argued that the concrete

portion is only a small part of the divide. Therefore, it should be called a security partition. This might seem like an insignificant distinction. However, both Israelis and Palestinians find terminology an important and often contentious issue. Recognizing that few terms are acceptable to all groups, key words used in this thesis are defined below.

- **Arab:** A member of a group bound together by the Arabic language as well as common cultural and social traditions. Arabs in Israel and the Palestinian territories are typically Muslim. Only about 4% of the Arabs in these regions are Christian (CIA, 2010; Klein, 2005; Lefkovits 2009).
- **Bethlehem, Beit Jala, Beit Sahour, and Taybeh:** Four towns in the West Bank that have historically had large Christian populations. The combined population of the first three towns is about 50% Christian and the fourth is almost entirely Christian (Pacini, 1998; Kalman, 2009).
- **Checkpoints:** Found in Israel and the Palestinian territories, they are either temporary or permanent blockades used by the Israeli military or police to stop vehicles in order to inspect documents and cargo.
- **Christian:** A member of any religion focused on the person of Jesus. The varieties of Christians who visit or work both in Israel and the Palestinian territories are diverse. The largest and oldest Christian communities in the entire region are the Greek Orthodox, Greek Catholic, and Roman Catholic (Barron, 1923; IMFA, 2009).
- **East Jerusalem:** The term used to describe the section of Jerusalem inhabited largely by Arab residents. This section was situated within Jordanian borders before 1967 but came under Israeli control during the Six Day War (Evans,



1997; Menachem, 2001).

- **Judaism:** A religion rooted in the Torah as well as the Talmud and focused on Jerusalem as its spiritual and political centre. An adherent to the religion is a Jew, but the reverse is not true. There are non-religious – even atheist – Jews living in Israel.
- **Intifada:** An Arabic term conventionally translated as *uprising*. First used by the Palestinian Liberation Organization, the term was adopted by Palestinians as a whole to describe their response to an Israeli presence in the region. Both the 1987 and the 2000 intifadas were characterized by social unrest, protests, and hostile activities directed against the Israeli military and Jewish citizens (McDowall, 1989; King, 2007).
- **Islam:** A religion established in the seventh century that identifies the prophet Muhammad as its founder and the Qur'an as its primary religious document. Followers of Islam are called Muslims; most consider Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem to be the three most holy cities in their tradition.
- **Israel:** The region under complete political and military control of the Israeli government. Aside from inclusion of East Jerusalem, the national boundaries of Israel are typically identified by the Armistice Agreement (the green line) that Israel established with neighbouring countries in 1949 (Eldar, 2006). A map of Israel can be found on page 56 of this thesis.
- **Israeli:** Anyone with an Israeli passport regardless of religious, political, linguistic, or cultural affiliation. A majority of the Arab residents of East Jerusalem and the West Bank do not have passports and are therefore not

considered Israelis (Halabi, 1997).

- **Palestinian:** Someone who is either a descendent of Arabs who lived within Mandate Palestine (modern Israel) prior to 1967 or is an Arab living in the Gaza Strip or the West Bank today.
- **Palestine, the Palestinian territories:** The two regions known as the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. The term *Palestine* does not include any part of East Jerusalem or any part of modern Israel. There are many Palestinians living in Israel and many Israelis living in the Palestinian territories.
- **Security Fence, the Wall:** A barrier that divides Israel from the West Bank; the partition was designed by the Israelis to prevent unauthorized movement between the two regions. Most references to either *the wall* or *the fence* refer specifically to this structure.
- **West Bank:** The geographic region from about the Jordan River to the 1949 green line that separated Jordan and Israel. The West Bank does not include either the Old City of Jerusalem or any part of East Jerusalem. A map of the West Bank can be found on page 56 of this thesis.

### **Context of the Study**

Before outlining both the wider significance of this study and the research methodology, Catholic education in Israel and the Palestinian territories must be situated into its proper context. It is best to begin by highlighting one of the most concise and recent summaries of Palestinian education. Written by Abu-Saad and Champagne in 2006, their work entitled *A Historical Context of Palestinian Arab Education* claimed that Palestinian education can be divided roughly into five distinct epochs. The first and

second are the Ottoman period – its expansion, stagnation, reform, and decline – from about 1516 to 1917 and the British Mandate period from 1917 to 1947 (Abu-Saad & Champagne, 2006, p. 1036).

The third epoch comprises the 19 years from the establishment of Israel in 1948 until the Six-Day War in 1967. The fourth is the post-1967 period from the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip until the Oslo Agreements in 1993. The fifth started with the Oslo Agreements in 1993 and continues until today. To contextualize their historical survey, Abu-Saad and Champagne stated that “formal public education in Palestine, from its very beginnings, was never under the control of the Palestinian people” (p. 1036). Although the Palestinians have control over their educational system today, the modern situation cannot be grasped without outlining its complex and circuitous history.

The two scholars thus made an initial claim that the Ottomans introduced formal education into Palestine only toward the end of the 19th century. Before this period, education was typically limited to the elementary level (Abu-Saad & Champagne, 2006, p. 1036). They additionally made note that an organized system of schools, modelled on the post-revolution system in France, emerged in 1869 only. Yet, even with a formal structure, they highlighted how “the Ottomans simply followed the French curriculum, which meant the French textbooks were translated into Turkish and that French standards were adopted” (p. 1036).

Because the Ottoman Empire allowed non-Muslim religious communities to maintain social, political, and religious autonomy, Christian schools (such as the Franciscan school in Bethlehem) typically functioned according to their own criteria.

Although the early Christian schools taught mostly in Arabic, which is still the case today, these non-Muslim schools often adopted as a second instructional language the national language of the religious order administering the school. During this period, most of the educational institutions were elementary schools. Students who wanted to attend high school often went to Damascus, while those who wanted to attend university ended up in military schools either in Istanbul or other parts of the Ottoman Empire.

This system of education changed only slightly under the British Mandate; either the government or religious communities continued to administer most schools. Despite the historical reputation of the British as a nation focused on education, Abu-Saad and Champagne claimed that “as late as 1946, only 22% of the school-age population was enrolled in public schools, as compared to 12% in 1914 during Ottoman rule” (p. 1038). Enrolment did not increase under the British Mandate, at least not until the Zionist influx into Palestine itself changed the social and religious dynamics of the region. It was only at the conclusion of Second World War that varieties of Jewish schools quickly began to emerge alongside the Islamic and the Christian schools.

Although the British Mandate claimed to provide full access to public education for all, Abu-Saad and Champagne (2006) suggested that the British fostered Jewish nationalism and favoured the Zionist movement over Arab interests. This essentially meant that the Palestinian schools “suffered from budget cuts; a lack of facilities, personnel, and local autonomy; and administrative limitations imposed by the colonial governing apparatus and its Department of Education” (p. 1040). This bias manifested itself in that the Jewish community in Palestine was granted charge of its own educational institutions by British authorities while the Arab population was denied any real control

over their schools. The authors's essential point was that a two-tiered, two-class educational system developed under British control: the Jewish community and their schools were favoured at the expense of the Arab population. This great dichotomy in educational organization, they argued implicitly, laid the foundations for a weak system of Palestinian education that lingers to this day.

When the British Mandate ended and the Jewish community established Israel as their political and spiritual homeland in May 1948, Arab interests were not a priority. According to Abu-Saad and Champagne, "more than 700,000 Palestinian Arabs fled ... or were expelled from the newly established state of Israel and only 160,000 remained within its boundaries" (p. 1041). At this point, neither the Gaza Strip nor East Jerusalem and the West Bank fell under Israeli jurisdiction: Egypt and Jordan respectively had political control these two regions. All the same, the administration of Palestinian schools changed radically as a result of the sudden shift from British control to Israeli control.

The majority of the Palestinians in Israel after the declaration of independence attended educational institutions run by Israel; those in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank attended schools administered by Egypt and Jordan respectively. In addition, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency played a role in the education of Palestinian youth immediately following 1948 insofar as they established a number of schools in refugee camps in the Gaza Strip, West Bank, and in neighbouring countries. Depending on the location of a Palestinian family in the region after 1948, Arab students might have followed academic curricula from Israel, Egypt, Jordan, or modifications of all three.

Although a major political shift occurred in 1967 when Israel seized the Gaza Strip and the West Bank during the Six-Day War, Palestinian education in the two regions did not change dramatically. As both Abu-Saad and Champagne maintained,

Palestinian education under the Israeli occupation was controlled and directed by the military administration. The Jordanian and Egyptian curriculums used for the provision of education in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, respectively, since 1948 were kept by Israeli authorities, with some modifications, after the occupation began. (p. 1043)

Over time, however, Palestinian schools became trigger points for violence between the Israeli Defence Force and Arab youth. In the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, any signs of Palestinian autonomy (such as national flags, songs, and dress) were forbidden by the Israeli military. Nevertheless, this suppression only raised the Palestinian desire to forge a national identity. The universities (where most students gathered on a regular basis) soon became the “centres of political struggle and national resistance” (p. 1044). The first major Palestinian uprising (intifada) that began in 1987 had a huge impact on Palestinian education, especially since the Palestinian schools were seen by the Israeli military as potential threats to national security.

### **The first intifada.**

Although the first intifada began as a minor uprising in one small Palestinian refugee camp established after the 1948 war, it soon grew to involve Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, Israel, and the West Bank. The uprising lasted from 1987 until 1993 and claimed the lives of at least 180 Israelis and more than 1400 Palestinians (JMCC, 2009). Despite its dramatic and far-reaching effects, very little attention was initially paid to its

influence on Palestinian education. In fact, only one small group within Palestine really made this connection. A human rights organization that called itself al-Haq emerged out of Birzeit University near Ramallah and published material on how schools were targeted by the Israeli military. Just as the events were unfolding in the late 1980s, the organization's briefs discussed education as a casualty in the uprising. One stark comment by al-Haq (1990) proclaimed that,

when soldiers or police stop students because they have books, invade buildings looking for classrooms or question teachers and warn them that they must not teach, there is no possible security rationale: it is education itself that is the criminal activity under scrutiny. (p. 12)

Palestinian schools were closely monitored and highly regulated; the revolution affected Arab education.

Yet, although Palestinian education suffered during the first intifada, most academics focused more on the physical or the psychological repercussions than on the academic repercussions. For example, researchers such as Lockman and Benin (1989, p. 317) recognized that almost 40% of the 390 Palestinians who died in the first year of the uprising were 18 years old or younger. Other academics such as Maker (1990) and Graff (1991) also noted the intimate connection between the first intifada and its psychological effect on children. Additionally, an expansive study conducted shortly after the end of the first intifada by Miller, El-Masri, Alodt, and Quota (1999) studied 669 school-aged Palestinian children in Gaza to determine the connection between trauma exposure and emotional or behavioural problems. These issues would naturally have a significant impact on Palestinian schools as administrators and teachers were left to deal with their

implications, yet most academics had not initially considered this. It is only recently that some (Ra'ad & Nafi, 2007; Nicolai, 2006) have recognized that, “when the first intifada erupted in December 1987, the impact on education was dramatic” (Nicolai, 2006, p. 1).

An article by Hussein (2005) highlighted this dramatic impact. Using several of the early al-Haq briefs, she showed how “Palestinian education – formal and informal – became illegal as Israel closed schools and universities indefinitely and Israeli soldiers harassed and arrested students and teachers for participating in underground classes or for even carrying books” (p. 17). She stated how Palestinian education was already in disarray by the time the first intifada emerged: school buildings were inadequate, classrooms were overcrowded, and some of the most basic tools for teaching were unavailable. Yet, with textbooks and curriculum in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank still administered by Egypt and Jordan respectively, the first intifada is now generally seen as having further compromised an already weak system. As she continued,

Palestinian students never knew when or whether they could go to school on any given day between 1988 and 1990.... During those years, Palestinian schools were allowed to convene for as little as 17% and no more than 50% of their school year. (p. 18)

The first intifada had an influence on Palestinian education; yet this was soon to be seen as only one of many challenges.

### **The Oslo accords.**

The secretive 1993 meetings conducted in Oslo and ratified in Washington ended the first intifada and dramatically changed the relationship between Palestine and Israel. In his memoirs, Bill Clinton wrote that “all the world was cheering” (Clinton, 2005, p.



544) after the famous handshake between Yassar Arafat and Yitzhak Rabin. The event suggested to many that the two states might finally have achieved a lasting amity. From a practical perspective, the Oslo Accords led to Israeli recognition of the PLO as the official Palestinian government and provided them control over a number of zones in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. The accords also gave Palestinians authority over their own educational system and allowed them to move it in a new direction. Although the accords had many diverse implications, they had a most remarkable impact on Palestinian education. In particular, the repercussions led to the establishment of a variety of new peace-education initiatives. With the many changes that took place, the years following the accords were filled with anticipation and optimism.

Those with an interest in peace education had a particular reason to be optimistic. Never before had Israeli and Palestinian leaders come together so publicly and cordially. Many in both the Middle East and abroad could not help but feel that peace was a real and lasting possibility. In that light, varieties of peace-education programs emerged almost immediately. Although they were facilitated by various organizations and used different approaches, most of the programs sought to bring Israeli and Palestinian youth together. Two of the most notable programs were the Seeds of Peace program and the peace education program implemented by the Israel-Palestine Centre for Research and Information. The two programs have been covered extensively in the media and journals because of their focus on building strong relationships between Israelis and Palestinians. Their legacy reveals a great deal about the educational climate that existed in Israel and the Palestinian territories following the Oslo Accords.

In the first instance, a journalist named John Wallach founded the Seeds of Peace program within months after the accords. As an article by van Woerkom (2004) stated, the initial aim of the program was to bring together Palestinian and Israeli youth for three weeks in a neutral location to work through prejudices, anger, and hurt in order to achieve mutual recognition of each other. Although academics such as Tidwell (2004) and Maddy-Weitzman (2006) have referenced his work, Wallach (2000) himself wrote that the Seeds of Peace Program was “about making real peace in the real world. It’s about changing attitudes, ending the fears and prejudices that have prevented entire generations from getting to know one another; in short, it is about rehumanizing, not dehumanizing, the enemy” (p. 13). The program believed that enemies could become friends once faces from the other side of the conflict could be connected to names. The Seeds of Peace program worked to establish interpersonal bonds by highlighting common ground between individuals. Participants learned that personal encounters could move individuals to think beyond *us versus them* and to achieve a *we-mentality*.

In the second instance, Dr. Marwan Darweish established the Israel-Palestine Centre for Research and Information (IPCRI) peace education program in 1996 under the direction of Dr. Gershon Baskin and Dr. Zakaria Qaq. Various academics, such as Maoz (2000) and Salomon (2004, 2006), wrote that the program provided participating schools in Jerusalem and the West Bank with a comprehensive peace-education curriculum. Indeed, it intended “to impart values of tolerance and acceptance . . . , recognition of the equal right to liberty . . . and an encounter between Palestinians and Jews” (IPCRI, 2003).

The IPCRI program brought trained facilitators directly into Israeli and Palestinian schools and worked with principals, teachers, and advisors within Grade 10

and 11 classrooms. Funding for this program initially came from organizations such as Yad HaNadiv, Keren Bracha, People-to-People, and the British Council as well as international governments such as the United States of America, Sweden, Norway, Switzerland, and Holland. Despite its success, it was discontinued in early 2004 due to financial constraints.

Although peace-education was a major focus for many once the Oslo Accords were signed, others such as Biton and Salomon (2006) were also interested in how Palestinian control over their own education provided new opportunities to forge a national identity. The years following the 1993 signing were a not only a time of great change but also of great effort as Palestinians sought to build a new society with their new freedoms. Related specifically to the development of both their educational system and their national identity, Sachs (1995) published an article in the *Ottawa Citizen* that identified Palestinians' major struggles. For the first time in history, as Sachs pointed out,

Palestinians of the Gaza Strip and the Israeli-occupied West Bank are running their education. Students and teachers salute the Palestinian flag, engrave the names of "martyrs" on the school entrance, sing the Palestinian anthem, and give history and ethics their own defiant spin. (D10)

The agreements provided Palestinians with a chance to establish themselves through their own educational system: identity, heritage, religion, culture, and language were now fully in the hands of a people who – for so long – had known no control over their own classrooms. It was an exciting time to be a Palestinian educator; academics around the world took note.

On August 24, 1994, a *Toronto Star* article described the change in control over Palestinian education. The short report by Reuters news agency explained how Palestinians would have complete control over certain areas by September 1, 1994 (in time for the start of school), even though “divergent views emerged during the meeting, notably regarding Jerusalem and settlements” (Reuters, 1994, A. 15). An article by Jon Immanuel, published in the *Jerusalem Post* just a few days before, echoed this sentiment. It read,

Earlier in Ramallah, an Israeli and a Palestinian educator signed documents, shook hands, and launched the second stage of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, which will extend some Palestinian authority to the rest of the territories. The transfer of administration over education in Ramallah is to be followed by a similar transfer in Nablus, Jenin, Bethlehem, and Hebron by Sunday. (1994, p. 02).

Within two years of the transfer of educational authority to Palestinians, al-Haj (1995) wrote a very comprehensive work on Palestinian education, its relationship to the Israeli occupation, and its role in facilitating a specifically Palestinian state. This work seemed to summarize the beliefs of Arab administrators and teachers by suggesting that education itself may be the primary way in which the Palestinian minority, who have historically lived under foreign regimes, might emancipate themselves fully from such control (p. 12). Many of the Israelis saw the Oslo Accords as providing the Palestinians an opportunity to change their future; the international community looked to the region with positive anticipation.

**The second intifada.**

Despite the positive energy surrounding the Oslo Accords, tensions continued to grow between Israelis and Palestinians during the following years; the second intifada (described often by Palestinians as the Al-Aqsa Intifada) exploded in September 2000. It is generally agreed that the trigger for the second uprising was one of at least two closely related events. Glick (2005) wrote that the intifada began on Wednesday, September 27, 2000, “when a Palestinian security officer on a joint patrol with Israeli forces turned his firearm on his Israeli counterpart and murdered him” (p. 32). Sharon (Sharon & Chanoff, 2001, p. 6) suggested that the uprising actually began when he paid a visit to the Temple Mount as part of his campaign for Prime Minister on Thursday, September 28, 2000.

Although the Jewish and Islamic traditions both consider the area sacred, the area is understood to be under the direct and sole control of Islamic authorities since the Dome of the Rock and the Al-Aqsa mosque rest on the site. All the same, Sharon asserted that great offence was taken to his visit because he made the comment that Jews have an eternal right to visit the spot. Whether triggered by the events of that Wednesday or the Thursday, passions were very high by the time Muslims gathered for Friday prayers.

A number of major clashes took place between Israeli soldiers and Arabs from the Gaza Strip and the Palestinian territories at the end of September 2000 and the beginning of October 2000. McNally (2002) reported that the Arabs in the region resorted to tactics such as rock-throwing and fire-bombing, while the Israelis used tear-gas, rubber bullets and – at times – live ammunition. A major flashpoint occurred when two Israeli reservists were detained on October 12, 2000 by Palestinian authorities for passing the Israeli checkpoint into Ramallah. After hearing that two soldiers were currently held, a mob

quickly gathered outside the police station. A BBC report (Asser, 2000) claimed the group was so angered by “the funerals of about 100 Arabs, nearly two dozen of them children,” over the previous two-week period that they stormed the building and lynched the soldiers. The bodies of the men were thrown from the windows before they were taken to Al-Manara Square and further dishonoured. Israeli soldiers responded to this incident swiftly, and tensions were further enflamed.

This, of course, was a dramatic turn of events and unexpected by most in the academic world. For example, an article by de Santisteban (2002) published in the *International Journal of Educational Development* revealed just how quickly the social and political situation in Israel and the Palestinian territories changed. He began his 2002 article, an exploration of the anticipated national curriculum in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, by stating,

While this paper was being written, newspapers and political commentators in Europe and in the United States were celebrating, together with their Israeli counterparts, the results of the last Israeli elections, which gave the victory to Mr Ehud Barak, now the new Prime Minister of Israel. (p. 146)

Like others, he thought that the election would usher in an era of peaceful negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians. Of course, Barak was only in office for about a year before the second intifada began. By the time that de Santisteban published his article, Barak had been replaced, and many Palestinians had embraced the second intifada. Events in the region moved very quickly – international observers could hardly follow.

From September 2000, it took about 15 months for articles that took note of the new reality in the region to emerge. Unlike the response to the first intifada, which did

not initially make the connection between the uprising and education, it was much more obvious the second time around. In the period between 2002 and 2005, a variety of articles saw that the intifada was having and would continue to have a negative impact on Palestinian education. For example, Zureik (2002)'s article in the *CAUT Bulletin* entitled "Palestinian Education in Disarray" stated that more than half the Palestinian population was under the age of 15 years of age. As such, education should play an important role in the struggle for a national identity. Despite this, she maintained:

For the last 35 years, Israel has embarked on confiscating land, building settler colonies and a network of bypass roads for exclusive Jewish use, slicing up the Palestinian localities into non-contiguous regions ... imposing tight control over movement of peoples in the territories, and exercising sole authority over water resources. (p. 2)

Although she did not reference the second intifada, mostly because it was not yet widely known as such, she noted that the military presence in the West Bank had prevented Palestinians from obtaining an education necessary for self-determination. This was because "navigating through the maze of checkpoints and road closures, a mere distance of 20–30 km, can take an hour or more in so-called normal times" (p. 3). When the struggle for livelihood is all consuming, she noted, there is simply no time to struggle for independence.

One focus for authors writing in the first years after the start of the second intifada was the wall that divided the West Bank from Israel. An article published by Turpen (2003) in the *Report on Middle East Affairs* addressed the issue of the separation barrier and its impact on education while it was still under construction. Focusing specifically on

Palestinian universities, he claimed that the geographic locations of some post-secondary institutions (in relation to the projected construction path of the wall) would make it impossible for students from around Israel and the Palestinian territories to attend. In particular, he referenced Al Quds University in Jerusalem to illustrate how the wall would limit Palestinian access to education. With great insight, Turpen saw that the wall would either separate the university from the West Bank or from Jerusalem. Regardless of the outcome, he claimed that the wall itself would limit Arab access to the university forever.

Similar insightful recognitions were made by academics within a short period after the official start of construction on the barrier. Academics such as Chomsky (2004) and Falk (2005) wrote about the legality of the wall and its possible impact on the West Bank, while organizations such as B'Tselem (2004) and the United Nations (2005) questioned its long-term impact on Palestinian society. In recent years, many academics have echoed the same insights articulated in these early publications.

### **Implications of the Study**

This study was undertaken to show the collective managerial challenges facing Catholic school leaders in East Jerusalem and the West Bank and to provide insight into how these might affect local Catholic education in the future. Although this may seem to have a religious focus, the thesis was not written for the benefit of Catholics alone. Some possible implications could be more far-reaching. For example, this thesis could:

- Provide a glimpse into the nature of Catholic education in a context where neither the region nor the student population is predominately Catholic;
- Contest common perceptions about the nature of Catholic education in the



Middle East and confirm or refute such beliefs;

- Add to a body of literature about managerial leadership by identifying the functions, tasks, and behaviours that administrators of Catholic schools find most pressing and isolate the ones that consume the majority of their time;
- Afford to Catholics in the region and abroad a starting point from which a collective response to the educational challenges can be undertaken;
- Demonstrate the positive impact of Catholic schools on the larger Jewish and Islamic cultures in which they exist;
- Reveal to educators outside the region some solutions to universal problems that might be both novel and otherwise not yet considered.

Few studies have focused on Catholic education in East Jerusalem or the West Bank.

Although schools run by the Catholic Church have a long legacy, they are not usually known outside of the Middle East. As such, they have typically not been the subjects of any international research. With other regional issues taking the centre stage, Catholic education is typically a much less significant concern. Regrettably, this should not be the case. Students of all sorts have in fact benefitted from Catholic education in the region. Palestinians generally recognize the schools as having defined parts of their cultural and the social landscape.

### **Methodological Overview**

The first part of this study involved the identification of the managerial challenges facing Catholic school leaders in East Jerusalem and the West Bank. Data collection for this took place between February and April 2011 and involved 14 schools. The process involved conversations with staff members and teachers as well as observations of the

school operations. These strategies revealed the many diverse functions, tasks, and behaviours that Catholic school leaders regularly carry out. For the sake of simplicity, they are collectively referred to as the managerial challenges. Each of the identified managerial challenges was corroborated or refuted by one-hour interviews with the administrators. After collecting data from a cross-section of schools in East Jerusalem and the West Bank, common themes emerged. Ten managerial challenges were in fact identified.

The second part of this study involved the isolation of the managerial challenges relating to and having an influence on school Catholicity. This task took place between May and August 2011. The working definition of school Catholicity was adapted from Thomas Groome's extensive work (1996, 1999, 2001, 2003a, 2003b, 2011) on the topic. He suggested in a variety of books that Catholic schools ideally embody eight unique elements. Because each of these elements is observable, their presence or absence could be noted easily in any school. The many functions, tasks, and behaviours that school leaders regularly carry out should ideally reflect – at least in part – these elements. An institution with an administrator who considers school Catholicity important would presumably dedicate regular time to the challenges. As such, school Catholicity can be determined by looking at the types of managerial challenges that administrators claim to regularly face.

### **Research Questions**

Most of the qualitative data for this study came from individual interviews with the 14 Catholic school leaders. Although the administrators had ample opportunity to move the conversation in any direction and to highlight issues of personal importance,

four questions focused (but did not limit) the discussion. The questions emerged out of my preliminary conversations with school leaders in April 2010. As such, the questions posted to the administrators asked:

1. What are you doing in your institution to foster a positive and sustainable relationship between Israelis and Palestinians?
2. How have protocols related to Israeli national security affected your Catholic school, and how are you addressing the related challenges?
3. What are some of the strictly administrative challenges that affect your Catholic school, and how are you responding to them?
4. What sort of challenges do you envision might emerge in the future, and how are you trying to anticipate them?

The questions sought to identify the functions, tasks, and behaviours that Catholic school leaders in East Jerusalem and the West Bank carry out. It was presupposed that every administrator spends portions of his or her day responding to challenges related directly to school Catholicity. Not doing so could signal either an inability to respond to such challenges or a lack of interest. In either case, it was believed that an omission such as this might affect local Catholic education in the future.

## **Chapter 2:**

### **A Review of the Literature**

#### **Leadership theory**

Most formal organizations and social groups develop around an organizational hierarchy. Typically, regardless of their structures, each has either an individual or a group appointed to lead. Leadership theory is thus important since it has a necessary function in every social, political, and religious association. Positions of leadership in educational institutions can range from the chair of the school board to the president of the parent guild. This thesis nevertheless focuses on the individual known commonly as the principal or the headmaster. The terms used in this study to describe this person are either *administrator* or *school leader*.

It is understood that although this individual may report to a school director or school board, the operations of a school typically depend fully on his or her leadership. This study focused on the managerial challenges facing school leaders in East Jerusalem and the West Bank. To this end, this section first focuses on the styles and models of educational leadership. It then describes managerial leadership and outlines relevant and recent literature on the topic. It concludes by highlighting the relationship between this study and managerial leadership.

#### **Styles of leadership.**

The great American football coach Vince Lombardi is claimed to have said, “leaders are made, they are not born. They are made by hard effort, which is the price which all of us must pay to achieve any goal that is worthwhile” (Heathfield, n.d.). The

esteemed Nobel peace prize recipient Nelson Mandela stated, “it is better to lead from behind and to put others in front, especially when you celebrate victory when nice things occur. You can take the front line when there is danger. Then people will appreciate your leadership” (CNN, 2008). Lombardi and Mandela, as two examples, both saw leadership in slightly different ways. There are as many different styles of leadership as there are leaders themselves. Each expresses in a unique way what leadership is and how it could be embodied. Each style has its strengths and limitations and each is chosen because it is presumably the best way to maintain a successful and effective institution.

### **Educational leadership.**

There is no one right or wrong way to be an educational leader; leadership styles often depend on the situation. A job posting in April 2011 for the position of principal of a Catholic school in Winnipeg stated that all applicants should understand and embody servant leadership. This style of leadership, formulated by Greenleaf, begins with the premise that “the servant-leader is servant first.... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead” (Greenleaf, 1982, p. 13). Servant leadership is not the only style of leadership that an administrator could embrace. Some others are transformational leadership (Leong & Fischer, 2010), participative leadership (Hennestad, 2000), and situational leadership (Blanchard, Zigarmi, & Nelson, 1993). Recognizing the diversity in leadership styles, Leithwood and Duke (1999) provided a comprehensive overview of the ones most frequently used by administrators. Drawing on their work, this review will highlight managerial leadership – the style most relevant to this thesis.

**Managerial leadership.**

Managerial leadership is focused on the “the functions, tasks, or behaviors of the leader and assumes that if these functions are carried out competently the work of others in the organization will be facilitated” (Leithwood and Duke, 1999, p. 53). On any given day, a school leader is charged with many responsibilities. One of the most important is to move the institution toward its articulated goals and vision. This naturally demands leadership for change. All the same, school leaders are also often expected to ensure organizational stability. This involves the management of a *status quo*. Moving schools toward their goals makes administrators leaders; maintaining organizational stability makes them managers. Although there is an ongoing debate (Achilles, 1992; Bolman & Deal, 1992) about whether administrators are *leaders* or *managers*, they are identified as both in this thesis.

As leaders and managers, school leaders have functions, tasks, and behaviours that they must regularly carry out. Leithwood and Duke (1999, pp. 53–54) in fact claimed that managerial leaders in American schools regularly execute 10 very common tasks. Among them, they include:

- Providing adequate financial and material resources;
- Anticipating predictable problems and developing effective and efficient means for responding to them;
- Mediating conflict and differences in expectations;
- Attending to the internal and external political demands of school;
- Accommodating policies and initiatives undertaken by a district office in ways that assist with school improvement goals.

These managerial tasks – as mundane as they might seem – have a direct influence on the future of school. A school does not function in arbitrary ways, and the choices that school leaders make affect the present and future operations. Managerial leadership therefore recognizes that administrative choices do have institutional consequences.

### **Recent studies.**

Literature relating to managerial leadership could be divided into three distinct categories. The first grouping from scholars such as Cusack (1993), Hallinger (1992), and Reilly (1993) defines what managerial leadership is and how it might be distinguished from other types of school leadership. The second grouping from scholars such as Valentine and Prater (2010) and Jazzar (2004) explores the effectiveness of managerial leadership when compared with other leadership styles. The third grouping from scholars such as Rossmiller (1992) and Myers and Murphy (1995) as well as Seashore Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, and Anderson (2010) seeks to show how managerial leadership is connected to other school facets such as student achievement or teacher motivation. This thesis, as the next section explains, focuses most on the third grouping.

### **The study as managerial.**

This study first identified the broad challenges facing administrators of Catholic schools in East Jerusalem and the West Bank. Very little research on school leadership had ever been done in these institutions. This study outlined the functions, tasks, and behaviours that Catholic school leaders regularly carry out. It was presumed that the challenges school leaders identify and the responses they make affect institutional operation. Managerial leaders are charged with the important task of responding to

challenges correctly so that the missions and mandates of their institutions might be fulfilled and sustained.

Schools identifying themselves as Catholic have certain constitutive elements that define their missions and mandates. As such, managerial leaders in Catholic schools are charged with carrying out certain specific tasks. The greater the success with which an administrator can do this, the more likely the mission and mandate of his or her school will be achieved. Catholic schools are by their nature Catholic; school leaders must thus work to ensure that school Catholicity is an ongoing concern. If an administrator wants to ensure that the mission of his or her Catholic school is maintained, then certain functions, tasks, and behaviours must be carried out. Recognizing this, it is maintained that there is an intimate connection between managerial leadership in Catholic schools and their Catholicity.

### **Research Design**

Managerial leadership in the Catholic schools in East Jerusalem and the West Bank could have been explored in many ways; a non-experimental, descriptive design was nevertheless chosen. To provide the context, this section outlines data collection strategies most often used in the field of education today. In particular, it provides the necessary distinction between qualitative and quantitative research. It then nuances the difference between experimental and non-experimental research and situates this study within the realm of non-experimental research. This section concludes by showing how educational researchers have both increasingly embraced descriptive analysis in the last decade and how this study falls within that category. There are many different types of



research design, and this section is necessary insofar as it provides an overview and a necessary context.

### **Data collection strategies.**

The three most standard data collection strategies are quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-method. The research questions asked and the types of data sought determine the data collection strategy used. As a result, researchers typically do not consider one design to be better than another.

Qualitative research is “a form of social inquiry that focuses on the way that people interpret and make sense of their experiences and the world in which they live” (Holloway, 1997, p. 1). Qualitative data collection might focus on anything from the historical narratives of individuals who grew up during the depression to personal narratives of the hardships facing potato farmers in Iowa today. Qualitative studies often explore the contextual experiences of individuals and groups.

Quantitative research, by contrast, “is essentially about collecting numerical data to explain a particular phenomenon” (Muijs, 2004, p. 2). Quantitative data collection might concern itself with topics such as the number of workers in an institution who claim complete job satisfaction in relation to their respective number of years of experience. Any topic that reveals numerically expressed data could be studied with a quantitative design.

Mixed-method research, by way of brief overview, is essentially comprised of various configurations of qualitative and quantitative strategies – although not necessarily in equal parts. In his book on educational research, Creswell (2008, p. 208) wrote that mixed-method designs could be changed by manipulating the timing, weight, mixing, and

theorizing of the quantitative and qualitative strategies. As one example, a variation in the designs might be achieved by using concurrent strategies instead of sequential strategies. Mixed-method designs are useful in situations where phenomena have been studied previously since they provide new ways of looking at a well-observed topic.

### **Experimental versus non-experimental research.**

Although quantitative research is often seen as involving precise instrumentation such as surveys and statistical programs, this is not always the case. Quantitative data collection – which was used in this study – can in fact involve what is deemed either experimental or non-experimental research. McMillan (2008) claimed, that while “experimental research seeks to understand causal relationships by manipulating an intervention, non-experimental research ... describes participants, traits, scores, and other characteristics without an intervention” (p. 186). Experimental research, which often involves a manipulation of variables, is often found within the realm of science – physics, biology, and chemistry. Non-experimental research, which often focuses on human relationships, is often found within the realm of the humanities – sociology, psychology, and education. Because this work sought to identify the managerial challenges facing administrators of Catholic schools in East Jerusalem and the West Bank, it was deemed prudent to use a non-experimental design.

### **Types of non-experimental designs.**

There are varieties of non-experimental designs, and each is typically chosen based on the purpose of the study. Four very common non-experimental designs are comparative, correlational, causal-comparative, and descriptive. Although each has a particular strength, all are not all useful for all types of studies. Comparative studies

describe the relationship between one or more variables and two or more groups.

Correlational studies determine the relationship between two or more quantitative variables obtained from the same group of subjects. Causal-comparative studies also attempt to highlight what sort of relationship exists between variables; however, it does so primarily by focusing on either the possible differing causes or consequences.

Descriptive analysis, which is used in this study, describes a phenomenon; this description is typically rendered in “the form of statistics, such as frequencies or percentages, averages, and sometimes variability” (McMillan, 2008, p. 186).

### **The use of descriptive analysis.**

Descriptive analysis has often been used within the field of education and the social sciences because it offers a quantitative overview of the *status quo* at time of investigation. This study, for example, sought to describe managerial challenges facing administrators of Catholic schools in East Jerusalem and the West Bank without trying to influence or change them. By looking at the frequencies of a phenomenon, descriptive analysis provides insight into situations as they are. It is an appropriate starting point for studies that explore topics with a small body of literature. Descriptive analysis provides a foundation on a particular topic so that other academics can build upon it in the future. Descriptive analysis has been used within the fields of anthropology, psychology, political science, and education. It is not limited to one specific realm; descriptive analysis has real benefits within a large cross section of disciplines.

Focusing on education, Johnson (2004) established the role descriptive analysis has played. In fact, his work revealed how authors such as Best and Kahn (1998), Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996), Gay and Alrasian (2000), as well as Vockell and Asher (1995)

have each helped to establish descriptive analysis as part of a credible research design within education. In recent years, use of descriptive analysis has only increased. Authors such as Lawrence-Lightfoot (1983), Jackson (1990), and Goodlad (2004) have also shown that descriptive analysis can be used in a variety of valuable ways that contribute to the dynamic body of educational literature.

It has been used so often and in such diverse ways that Hallinger and Heck (2010) even observed that, within shared leadership, their academic expertise, “the bulk of ... research has been descriptive” (p. i).

### **Catholic Education**

This study did not focus on the managerial challenges facing all school leaders in East Jerusalem and the West Bank, but only Catholic school leaders. As such, it is important to situate the thesis within the realm of Catholic education. To this end, this section first deals first with an important distinction between the terms Catholic and Christian. Catholics generally do not have any problems with the terms and self-identity as both. Many non-Catholic denominations are nevertheless quite unsure as to the difference; this is particularly true since Catholics often seem to do things in a rather unique (sometimes peculiar) way. This section then articulates how Catholic education is understood by the magisterium – the teaching authority – of the Roman Catholic Church. It concludes with an overview of Catholic schools in East Jerusalem and the Middle East as important and necessary works of the Roman Catholic Church. Altogether, this section outlines how this study related to Catholic education and how works from within this context have influenced it.

**Religious distinctions.**

A question non-Catholics often ask of Catholics is whether or not they are Christian. The question may occur because the Church is extremely large and has a very established way of administration. To an outsider, it can seem more like a business than an organization of faith-filled individuals seeking to follow the simple teachings of Jesus. Although every Catholic is also a member of the global Christian community, the size and unique bureaucratic structure of Catholicism have not always been of great benefit. It is easy to see the Church only as an impersonal organization that is concerned with maintaining a religious and political *status quo*. All the same, religion is not a game of numbers; the Church itself has learned that *bigger is not always better*. Nevertheless, it is acknowledged that the Catholic Church has many advantages because it is large and global. One of these advantages emerges in the field of education. Because of both its long commitment to the education of youth and its many adherents who are trained as educators, the Church and Catholics themselves have much to contribute to the field.

The Roman Catholic Church has a philosophical and theological tradition that sets it apart from many other Christian churches. Its anthropology of the human person is in fact very well developed. According to this theory, every individual, no matter who he or she is, should be given every reasonable opportunity to grow into a happy, productive, and moral individual. According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, which defaults to male pronouns but intends to reference both men and women,

The dignity of the human person is rooted in his creation in the image and likeness of God; it is fulfilled in his vocation to divine beatitude. It is essential to a human being freely to direct himself to this fulfillment. By his deliberate

actions, the human person does, or does not, conform to the good promised by God and attested by moral conscience. Human beings make their own contribution to their interior growth; they make their whole sentient and spiritual lives into means of this growth. With the help of grace, they grow in virtue. (John Paul, 1995, para. 1700)

Because of the great importance the Church ascribes to the development of the human person, education necessarily has an important function. In that light, Benedict XVI declared that “education is not and must never be considered as purely utilitarian. It is about forming the human person, equipping him or her to live life to the full – in short it is about imparting wisdom” (Leydon, 2010).

Every experience in school, whether intellectual or spiritual, should contribute to the end purpose for which all individuals are created. As the chief administrators of Catholic schools, principals cannot simply allow different worldviews to compete until one wins out over another. If this were to occur, they would find themselves administering schools that might be Catholic in name but not at all in practice. A school may be called Catholic, but this essentially means very little; neither its name nor history should define it. Rather, a school that calls itself Catholic is one where the administrators lead in ways that continually references the specific vision of Catholic education. Each of their daily choices is ideally rooted in the teachings of the Church and leads the school toward a deeper fulfilment of that mission. The mandate of education proposed by the Church is embodied in specific ways; Catholic school administrators are generally encouraged to work diligently to have their schools identifiable as such.

In order to facilitate an understanding of what it means to be a Catholic school, the Church continues to articulate its vision of education in published works. This vision is then transmitted to local bishops and other religious leaders who are given the charge to implement it in the hundreds of dioceses around the world. Wherever Roman Catholics are and in many places where they are not, schools are rooted in a long litany of documents such as *Gravissimum Educationis* (1965), *Catechesi Tradendae* (1979), *Lay Catholics in Schools* (1982), *Educational Guidance in Human Love* (1983), as well as the *General Directory for Catechesis* (1997). Each of these provides insight into the global vision of Catholic education around the world; when implemented by religious leaders and embraced by school leaders, they define Catholic education.

#### **Ecclesial documents.**

The two foundational documents concerning Catholic education in the modern age came first from Pope Leo XIII in 1885 with a work entitled *Spectata Fides: On Christian Education*, followed by Pope Pius XI and *Divini Illius Magistri: On Christian Education*. Both documents were written precisely because the Church felt it necessary to articulate its own understanding how Catholic education could best exist within an increasingly religiously pluralistic and – at times – secular framework. In this same context, the Sacred Congregation for Catholic education released the 1977 document entitled *The Catholic School*. It claimed,

the school must begin from the principle that its educational program is intentionally directed to the growth of the whole person ... since in Christ ... all human values find their fulfillment and unity. Herein lies the specifically Catholic character of the school. (para. 29)

Like many recent documents on Catholic education, it focused less on education as a tool for religious propagation and more on education as a way to help all students grow into healthy and holistic individuals.

All the same, the Church insists that Catholic schools are more than just variations of secular schools. The Congregation for Catholic Education released a document in early 1988 entitled *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*. It claimed that all individuals are comprised of minds, bodies, as well as souls; Catholic education generally seeks to avoid focusing on any one aspect while ignoring the others. Catholic education presumes a faith-based dimension, even if the students are not necessarily of the Christian faith.

This sentiment is echoed in another document released by the congregation in 1997, entitled *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*. It states that, “the school cannot be ... administered as an entity apart, but must be related to the world of politics, economy, culture and society as a whole” (para. 16). Aware of subjectivism and moral relativism becoming accepted throughout the world, the Church (with its continued focus on the *New Evangelization*) insists without compromise that all its outreach programs offer an alternative vision of the human experience in the midst of every society (Dulles, 1992; Dopp, 2009; Rymarz, 2011).

### **Catholic education in non-Christian contexts.**

Because of Catholic education’s focus on relevance to local contexts, it should not be seen as an isolated phenomenon limited to either Catholics or Christians alone. In fact, Catholic schools are best understood as an option for every person in every place. As the Congregation for Catholic Education recognized, it has been freely offered to



the girls from poor families that were taught by the Ursuline nuns in the 15th Century, the boys that Saint Joseph of Calasanz saw running and shouting through the streets of Rome, those that De la Salle came across in the villages of France, and those that were offered shelter by Don Bosco. (1997, p. 15)

Wherever a need exists for individuals to learn and to grow, there is a place for Catholic education. It is a service offered by the Church to individuals of every race, religion, and way of life so that a better world might be built. Consequently, the Catholic schools in East Jerusalem and the West Bank are to be seen as a work of social justice open to and affecting not only the Christians but also the Jews and Muslims alike.

### *Types of schools.*

The Catholic schools in East Jerusalem and the West Bank typically fall into one of three categories. Although different in many ways, they manifest a great similarity with each other in terms of educational mission and mandate. The school themselves can be identified as those both owned and administered by the Franciscans, the largest religious congregation of men in the region; those either owned or administered by other, smaller religious congregations of men or women; and, finally, those owned by the Roman Catholic bishop and administered by his office.

Schools from each of these three categories have unique histories, procedures, and challenges. In addition, some schools are for girls or boys separately while others are designed for both genders; the urban schools tend to draw on a wealthier clientele, while the smaller schools in the towns often struggle financially; schools operated by larger religious communities can draw on a wide network of resources, while other institutions

have very few external support networks. It is difficult to group these schools together since they are so vastly different in many ways.

The schools in the region operated by the Franciscans have the longest history. The missionaries first arrived in Jerusalem in 1217 (Maier, 1998, p. 21) and founded a community in Bethlehem in 1309. Because of both their notable and stable influence, Pope Clement VI declared the Franciscans to be the official custodians of the Holy Places for the Roman Catholic Church in 1342. Since this date, the Franciscans have wielded religious, political, and educational authority in the region. Their school in Bethlehem, for example, celebrated 700 years of service during the 2009 academic year. Very few educational institutions can make such a claim. These schools, typically single-sex institutions, tend to be the most established Catholic schools in the region. The Web site for the Franciscan schools states,

Christ asked His disciples to go and teach all the nations. Since the Church's mission is not only directed towards Christians, it is also directed towards non-Christians such as Moslems and Jews.... The school acquaints the student with the values of both family life and of society so as to benefit from both. (Terra Sancta, 2004)

The schools operated by other religious communities such as the Brothers of the Christian Schools, the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Sisters of St. Joseph, and the Salesians often have less influence, a lower profile, and greater financial need. Unlike the Franciscan schools, which are usually subsidized by local parishes and found in large urban areas, those operated by other religious communities rely almost entirely on both tuition and donations to keep them financially stable. Although the religious communities

each do good work within the realm of education, the De La Salle brothers run schools of note. This group of religious men came to Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Nazareth, and Jaffa in 1893 in order to open their first schools. Although they are comparatively recent arrivals, they and their schools have excellent reputations. Their two most well known schools are in East Jerusalem and Bethlehem; both have provided education to Catholic and non-Catholic students for generations.

In a February 2011 conference on Catholic education in Bethlehem, Brother Peter Bray FSC (the Vice Chancellor of Bethlehem University) suggested that a fundamental part of Catholic education rests in that the ability of a good teacher to awaken within a student both the mind and the soul. He claimed that, when Jean Baptist de la Salle, the founder of their religious community, first gathered Catholic men together to be teachers of the poor boys in his region in France, “he told them that ‘you must be brothers to one another: older brothers to the young people entrusted to you....’” This is because he “didn’t want a master-servant relationship,” as was usual in many schools, “he wanted an older brother relationship” (Bray, 2011). Bray continued by stating that, in this model, teachers relate to students to touch not only the minds but also the hearts and souls of the students. Although he advocated just one model of Catholic education out of many in the region, he described how educators must work to foster the development of the mind and soul of every student.

The third group of schools found in Israel and the Palestinian territories is known as Latin Patriarchate schools, owned and controlled by the Middle Eastern equivalent of the Catholic bishop. Until about 15 years ago, the local priest (under the jurisdiction of the bishop) was almost entirely responsible for the administration of these schools. He

was often the chair of the school board, the chief fundraiser, and sometimes even the principal. In recent years, the Latin patriarchs have sought to organize the Latin schools so that they are a united group instead of a cluster of individual entities. There is now a director of Catholic education (Father Majdi Sirani) with a staff located in Beit Jala. They assist the local Latin school principals with issues related to employment, finances, and property. Although this change in structure did not come without its own set of growing pains, it has allowed the local parish priest to return to his job as pastor while providing a support network for all principals of Latin schools in the wider region.

During a personal conversation between Father Sirani and me in May 2010, he claimed that the Latin schools have an important function in the region for two reasons. First, they provide a Christian education to the Catholic and Orthodox families in areas where such educational opportunities are generally limited. The schools operated by the patriarchate are typically attached to a parish and are mostly found in small villages and towns. They are therefore designed to receive students from a lower socio-economic status, which (in most parts of the West Bank) are the Christians. Second, the schools provide opportunity for all students – regardless of religion – to receive an education that focuses on tolerance, respect, and care for the other.

Accordingly, he claimed that the Latin patriarchate “takes pride in ensuring that Christian and Muslim students learn to live together and understand their common humanity and shared struggles” (personal communication, May 6, 2010). He claimed, for example, that – even with an increase in Islamic fundamentalism around the world – Muslims in the region are incredibly tolerant of most expressions of Christian piety and

prayer. This reality only exists because Catholic schools have transformed the region; students have learned values that have created a peaceful and sustainable culture.

**The ongoing debate.**

Depending on influences such as their location or style of administration, Catholic schools can seem markedly different from one another. A school in Boston that claims a student population greater than 95% Catholic can have vastly different educational goals than one in New Delhi that claims a student population less than 5% Catholic. My initial research in both East Jerusalem and the West Bank revealed that administrators generally feel their institutions reflect the mandate of Catholic education insofar as values such as tolerance, mutual respect, and care for others are explicitly and implicitly taught. Although these values are important, I was immediately aware that this would not be an adequate definition of a Catholic school in my own Western context.

In many North American schools – religious and secular alike – the teaching of these values is normative; few would define them as uniquely Catholic. This vast incongruity in definition therefore led to a belief that the essence of school Catholicity in East Jerusalem and the West Bank must include something more than the mere promotion of these values. Schools in the region are presumably doing something quite unique that sets them apart from the many non-Catholic institutions in the region. Because they are established Catholic schools, they must be doing something else (beyond teaching values) that intimately unites them to other Catholic institutions throughout the world.

Determining what Catholic schools do that are unique and that unites them can be a challenge. Indeed, it is not a task over which agreement is easily reached – even from

within the ranks of the Church's own leadership. The auxiliary Bishop of Buenos Aires, Antonio Marino, spoke about school Catholicity by warning Catholics "not to fall into a relativistic mentality... [since] the imposition of such a mentality makes it impossible to speak of absolute truths and rights such as the right to life and the institution of marriage" (CNA, 2010). His view is that a school's Catholicity should focus on the propagation of the faith and the development of a uniquely Catholic vision.

Bishop Marino's views are not uncommon; increasing numbers are claiming that Catholic schools have become unfocused and lost their ability to form students who graduate with a unique Catholic worldview. Care must nevertheless be taken to ensure that Catholic schools do not become elitist or self-referential. Rather, their mandate must be one that is open to all people and all contexts. It needs to allow for the transcendence of geographic, linguistic, and cultural boundaries. The Primate of Ireland, Cardinal Sean Brady, spoke to this when he openly stated that Catholic schools "have always been active in developing cross community and international links. They welcome people from all national backgrounds and people from various faith traditions or none" (Commission for Catholic Education, October 2007).

Catholic schools are meant to be Catholic without being exclusive. How this can be done in practice is today a topic of great debate. If the many Catholic schools around the world admitted Catholic students only, they might presumably foster a mentality of separation or seclusion; this does not prepare the students to be a part of the global community. If these same schools simply opened their doors to everyone and accepted every opinion as equally valid, the schools would very quickly run the risk of endorsing some sort of moral and religious relativism. This period in history has proven to be a

great challenge to Catholic school administrators around the world. They are called to be uniquely Catholic without being narrow-minded or elitist; they are encouraged to be inclusive without becoming either wholly relativistic or overly accepting of a vast array of competing viewpoints. Administrators of Catholic schools are charged with the responsibility of walking a very fine line.

### **Thomas Groome and the Fine Line**

Very few educational theorists have provided a map of this fine line as well as Thomas Groome. A graduate of Columbia University and a member of the Faculty of Theology at Boston College, he has written some of the most widely read and influential works related to the nature of school Catholicity. Titles such as *Christian Religious Education* (1999) and *Hopes and Horizons* (2003a) have distinguished him as an expert in Catholic pedagogy. A large part of his academic work demonstrates how Catholic schools can maintain a unified mandate even when they exist in vastly different contexts and admit students of many different faith traditions.

According to Groome, schools identified as Catholic embody a definable Catholic identity. Although there are thousands of schools around the world that label themselves as Catholic, the core elements of Catholic education do not need to be modified or eliminated because of either the culture or context in which they exist. Countless numbers of students from around the world have been formed in Catholic schools. Nevertheless, as Groome alludes to in his (2003b) book *What Makes us Catholic*, conversations between graduates of Catholic institutions often reveal similarities in experience – even when the contexts and locations of the schools are vastly different.

At its core, Groome claims that “the distinctiveness of Catholic education is prompted by the distinctive characteristics of Catholicism itself, and these characteristics should be reflected in the whole curriculum of Catholic schools” (Groome, 1996, p. 107). He asserts that a school presenting itself as Catholic ideally reflects certain observable elements. These include a positive anthropology and a deep sense of the sacred, a focus on community and tradition, a reliance on faith and reason, as well as a commitment to social justice and a universal inclusivity. What follows is a brief overview of these eight elements. Each is presented because they provide the template against which the school Catholicity of the 14 observed institutions is compared and understood.

### **Positive anthropology.**

The essence of humanity has been a subject of discussion for centuries. However, as Groome claims, the Judeo-Christian tradition has always recognized that humanity is essentially good. In that light, educators are encouraged to affirm their students while helping each to grow. There are no unredeemable students or bad pupils, and within every person resides something sacred. Indeed, the Catholic attitude toward the human person sees “humanness as a gift, to celebrate it as essentially good, to relish its joys, to be tolerant of its imperfections and merciful when it sins” (2001, p. 75). Catholic schools ought to promote an anthropology that recognizes each child as an important and value-filled creation.

### **Sacramentality and transcendent awareness.**

The tradition of the Church recognizes that all creation reveals something about the creator and many experiences can lead to an awareness of the transcendent. Catholic schools should lead students to an awareness of the transcendent in every moment and



every place – even when many others do not see it. Groom claims that successful educators work to open the eyes of their students to see the handiwork of God in all things. Indeed, as Groome writes, “no greater claim can be made for the world than that it is the ordinary medium of God’s outreach to humankind and of human response to God” (2001, p. 125). The transcendent can be found continually within the world. Students in Catholic schools ought to be provided the tools to do so.

### **Community.**

Individuals do not exist in isolation, and every person is a member of a wider community. In that light, Groome states that Catholic schools are called to promote care toward all those with whom a relationship is had. This is even true when political, social, or religious agreement may not exist. As such, he claims, “intertwining personal and social good is in contrast to the philosophy of modernism, which champions the ideal of the autonomous self...” (2001, p. 288). Nobody exists independently of others, and the building of solid communities has many positive implications. Catholic schools ideally help students recognize that everyone benefits when relationships are nurtured.

### **Tradition.**

The world is continually in flux, and no person or thing remains the same for long. In view of this, the human person can seem caught between a supposedly irrelevant past and a future of continuous innovation and news. Both the past and the future are best held in tension. To this, Groome points out,

Two diametrically opposed social attitudes coalesce around tradition – often, though, misleadingly called ‘liberal’ and ‘conservative.’ The first reflects a

modernist bias against tradition ... the second attitude ... romanticizes tradition as if the old ways and days were always best. (2001, p. 217)

A dynamic Catholicity is neither liberal nor conservative; it is not bound by what was nor is it preoccupied by what will be. As such, Catholic schools should seek to form students who can hold the traditions of the past in tension with the many novelties of the present and future.

### **Reason.**

Although the Catholic Church has a large and centralized teaching authority, it has never been anti-intellectual. For example, the university system in Europe is rooted in the history and tradition of the Church. The very oldest of these institutions – such as those found in Bologna, Padua, Oxford, and Paris – were once under the patronage of the Church. Intellectual reflection and the pursuit of reason are not contrary to the Catholic mandate. Catholicism (at its very best) encourages the development of reason. Groome therefore suggests, “learners think for themselves as they become agents in the knowing process, as they use all their capacities of mind and heart and think critically in and about their own lives and social context” (2001, p. 309). Catholic schools should promote a pursuit of knowledge engaging the mind, the heart, and the soul – the quest for truth must be seen as having intellectual, affective, moral, and spiritual dimensions.

### **Faith.**

A study presented by CNN once claimed that every individual’s brain has an area that promotes religious expression (Gajilan, 2007). The human person, regardless of faith tradition, is deeply religious by nature. The big questions of life, such as those related to

the purpose of existence, are transcendental – they are inherent within every person. Groome thus maintains, “every culture finds its own distinct way of expressing and nurturing the spirit of its people... No one description of spirituality could be sufficiently comprehensive to embrace all possibilities” (2001, p. 327). Catholic schools should promote the idea that all religious traditions have a response to the deep questions of life. Every person of faith has something important add to our shared experiences.

### **Social justice.**

Written by Pope Leo XIII to draw attention to the social and monetary inequalities that were developing in Europe, *Rerum Novarum* (1891) articulated the Church’s position on secular injustices. Catholics today generally recognize how justice is a fundamental component of Catholicism. To this, Groome affirms, “the whole environment of a school... every aspect of their explicit and implicit curriculum – should educate for justice and form people’s character in living justly....” (2001, p. 390). Catholic schools must therefore provide an opportunity for students to learn about the intrinsic dignity of the person, the importance of community, the common good, and the public order.

### **Universal inclusivity.**

In his Spiritual Exercises, Saint Ignatius of Loyola recommended that an individual take time to imagine what humanity looks like from distant heaven. In this contemplation, as Ruff (2008) described it, God might look down from above and see, men and women being born and being laid to rest, some getting married and others getting divorced, the old and the young, the rich and the poor, the happy

and the sad ... people laughing and crying, some shouting and screaming, some praying, others cursing. (p. 114)

The whole of the human race, as Groome reiterates, is connected together by a common humanity. Each is bound together with others – no matter the religion, race, political, or social delimitations. Groome therefore maintains:

Catholic schools ideally develop a global consciousness where everyone is invited to recognize oneself as a citizen of the global village; to feel bonded with diversity and be open to learn from other cultures and wisdoms; to cherish one's roots and yet to transcend parochialism; to exclude no one and to offer hospitality to all. (2001, p. 415)

Catholic schools are invited to teach the importance of being open to alternative voices; students must recognize that God is indeed bigger than any one person.

### **A Community Divided**

Although Groome tries to walk a fine line between rigid orthodoxy and relativistic liberalism, his views on the nature of Catholic education are not universally accepted. In fact, he has repeatedly found himself at the receiving end of harsh criticism (Keane, 2002; MacDonald, 2003; Manning, 2003). For a certain cross-section of Catholics, his ideas are perceived as heterodox. One reproach of Groome's work is that it can lead to a hierarchy of truths where Catholics pick and choose the beliefs that most suit them (Groome, 2003b, p. 15; Groome, 2011, p. 167-168). Another criticism concerns the way that he seems to question the jurisdiction of the Pope as the centralized political and religious authority in the Church (Groome, 1998, p. 240). Eamonn Keane, one vocal critic, wrote, "that throughout the English-speaking world, Catholic religious education

has been heavily influenced by the ideas of Thomas Groome. His method of religious education ... is a blueprint for the destruction of Catholic faith” (Keane, 2003).

For this outspoken group, Groome’s work is a direct threat to the ongoing mission of the Catholic Church. Yet, if such criticisms could be generalized, they seem to emerge from a conviction that Catholic institutions must demonstrate tangibly their Catholicity. Boudreau (1999) suggests that proponents of this particular vision see Catholic schools as idyllically having “compulsory Mass attendance and confession and the observance of Catholic religious holidays” (p. 94) in addition to an “unmistakable Catholic ambience (crucifixes, symbols, etc.) throughout the school” (p. 95). All the same, Boudreau maintains that this is a limited understanding of what Catholic education truly is. He suggests instead—with an approach akin to that of Groome—that religious instruction, formation of a community, and service to others are the basic elements of Catholic education. In addition, he believes that “these essential elements of Catholic religious education have been offered in the past in some schools that were officially designated as Protestant” (p. 93).

In an increasingly number of countries, Catholics cannot presume to have the unconditional support of local governments to establish confessional schools. It is thus necessary for Catholic educators as a whole to learn how to survive within secular and even anti-religious contexts. Because he has provided a well-structured model to follow, Groome has received support from a range of individuals. For example, Lawrence S. Cunningham – professor of theology at the University of Notre Dame – has been quoted as having written that Groome’s (2003b) book *What Makes Us Catholic* “demonstrates why Tom Groome is considered one of our finest religious educators.” The weekly

magazine U.S. Catholic likewise claimed that Groome's (2011) work *Will There Be Faith* "is a valuable resource for reviving and refreshing the faith of Christians of all ages" (Schulte, 2011). Less formally, one blog claimed that Groome "is one of the signs of hope in the Catholic Church.... [And that] among Catholic educators he is lauded as a visionary and leader" (Villarrubia, 2010). Without doubt, there is a great division in opinion about Groome's work. Some feel strongly that it might destroy the Church; others nevertheless feel that it brings Catholic education into the 21st century.

Although there is polarized debate about some aspects of Groome's work, it is not relevant to this thesis. This thesis is instead concerned with how his model of education can cater to Catholics and non-Catholics in meaningful ways. To the Catholic students, he provides opportunity to grow in knowledge of the faith and in the person of Jesus. To the non-Catholic students, he provides a non-threatening representation of the teachings of the Church and shows how they could be of benefit. Groome believes that school Catholicity is comprised of eight elements. The more of these elements found in a given school, the more it presumably embodies its Catholic mandate. The operational elements of Catholic education proposed by Groome are thus incorporated into this study inasmuch as they provide a framework around which the data can be analysed.

### **Chapter 3:**

## **Methodology**

### **Introduction**

The Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba offered a course during the summer of 2004 that explored the challenges affecting Palestinian educators in the West Bank. In a bold move that was not without controversy, teachers and administrators from schools in the region were flown to Winnipeg to facilitate the sessions. Although my academic career has encompassed a variety of disciplines and topics, no other class has had such a profound impact on me as this one. I was captivated by the challenges that Palestinian educators faced and the resilience they seemed to demonstrate. This course sparked my interest in the role of education in the region and how it continues to affect the Palestinian relationship with Israel. Since that particular summer, I have visited Israel and the West Bank a half-dozen times and spoken with hundreds of people. All the same, these experiences provided me with very little concrete insight into Catholic education, a topic of specific interest. Even though I had visited the region often, I knew little about the impact of these schools or the struggles their leaders face.

### **Research Objectives**

This study was undertaken to show the collective managerial challenges facing Catholic school leaders in East Jerusalem and the West Bank and to provide insight into how these might affect local Catholic education in the future. This seemed an important question and a worthy topic of research, especially since very little literature about Catholic schools in East Jerusalem and the West Bank exists – particularly when

compared to the various government schools in the region. During initial data collection, most of the administrators expressed gratitude to me for undertaking the study. They stated repeatedly that nobody in recent memory had studied Catholic schools in region. They saw any research on the topic as beneficial to them and their work. Despite the small geographic distances between the schools, very little opportunity exists for the Catholic school leaders to speak regularly with each other. It is not uncommon for one school leader to have little knowledge of what another is doing just a few blocks away.

### **Foundational Experiences**

Before research for this study was formally undertaken, preparatory work was needed. It made little sense to go to Israel and the Palestinian territories to collect data without really knowing whether such an undertaking was possible. In particular, two questions needed to be answered definitively. The first was whether it was possible to move between Jerusalem and the West Bank with ease and regularity. Palestinians claim that the checkpoints in the region limit movement; I had no idea whether they would limit mine. The second was whether Catholic school leaders would be either interested in my proposed study or willing to speak with me. In addition, I had three concerns directly related to issues of language, culture, and power. Neither the questions nor the issues could be resolved from Canada. As such, an initial trip to Israel and the Palestinian territories was planned for April 2010. What follows is an overview of how these questions were answered and concerns were clarified during a first informal visit.

#### **From Jerusalem to the West Bank.**

Although my home base was at a Catholic monastery in Jerusalem, most of the schools to be observed were in the West Bank. I thus needed to find a way to travel



regularly between these two points. Although a bus ran from Jerusalem into the West Bank, a 25-kilometer trip to Ramallah – for example – could take up to three hours each way. It was, without any question, more practical to rent a car. At least two Arab-owned companies in East Jerusalem allowed renters to drive into the Palestinian-controlled towns such as Bethlehem, Beit Jala, and Ramallah; most Israeli-owned companies did not. All the same, every car rented from within Israel has a bright yellow license plate that identifies it as such and contrasts starkly with the green license plates used by the Arabs in the West Bank. Although, at times it could be dangerous to be identified as an Israeli in the West Bank, the social and political climate was not tense at that particular time. Movement throughout the region was quite unproblematic. Even at major checkpoints, Israeli soldiers are often sympathetic to foreigners and move them through within about 10 minutes.

#### **Access to administrators.**

Before arriving in Israel and the West Bank for the first time, my formal connections with administrators of Catholic schools in the region were limited. As a result, I needed to determine whether it was possible to gain access to them and their schools. Although I had one contact in the West Bank, a former principal who claimed that she could arrange any interview that I needed, I had no guarantees. The first informal visit in April 2010 was important insofar as it was needed to establish most (if not all) of the necessary professional connections. Within days of my arrival, my one contact in the West Bank indeed provided me with the dates and times for six initial meetings with Catholic school leaders. From this starting point, I used a snowballing technique; each principal recommended or introduced me to others. By the end of two months, I had met

over 14 Catholic school leaders and other individuals connected to Palestinian education. Additionally, each of them expressed a sincere willingness to meet with me again when I returned for the formal data collection. These initial encounters, which were all positive, demonstrated that I would have no problems meeting with Catholic school leaders in either East Jerusalem or the West Bank.

### **Language, culture, and power.**

Although the research ethics board (ENREB) at the University of Manitoba had approved the research proposal immediately, they voiced two concerns. They first asked how the interviews would be conducted within an Arabic context. Although this was a justifiable concern, I learned after my initial informal visit to the region that all the school leaders spoke English well. The research ethics board further inquired about the openness with which school leaders might speak to a foreigner about sensitive issues. It was suggested to me that, because they knew neither my mandate nor me well, they might be quite guarded. Although this was a valid concern, I felt that the administrators were in fact very willing to answer each of my questions. I never had a sense that they either withheld information or were hesitant to answer. Palestinians, in general, seemed very comfortable dealing with both non-Arabs as well as tourists from outside of the region. The interviews had a natural flow to them, and each administrator expressed himself or herself with ease – even though I was from a culture outside of their own.

### **Research Strategy**

This study was undertaken to show the collective managerial challenges facing Catholic school leaders in East Jerusalem and the West Bank and to provide insight into how these might affect local Catholic education in the future. An informal visit took

place in April 2010 to gain some of the foundational experiences. That said, all the data for the study were collected between February and April 2011 in a two-step research strategy involving administrators of 14 Catholic schools. I first identified the managerial challenges facing administrators of Catholic schools in East Jerusalem and the West Bank. I then isolated those managerial challenges relating to and having an influence on school Catholicity. The following paragraphs elaborate more fully on each of these two elements.

### **Identifying the managerial challenges.**

The first step of this research strategy was to identify the managerial challenges facing administrators of Catholic schools in East Jerusalem and the West Bank. A study of literature related to managerial leadership suggested to me that an analysis of the functions, tasks, and behaviours that administrators carry out could provide such data. How school leaders spend their time and energy reveals much about what challenges they consider to be the most important and pressing. There were many ways to gain an insight into the managerial challenges facing leaders of these schools. The most obvious way was to ask the administrators directly to speak about their challenges. However, it was also deemed quite appropriate to look beyond the school leaders themselves to other stakeholders in the institution. As such, conversations with both teachers and other support staff were undertaken insofar as they could highlight some of the present challenges facing school leaders. Lastly, it was determined that observations of the school operations could provide even more information. Each school was therefore visited for between one and three full days; classes and school gatherings as well as the school

operations were observed. This multifaceted approach revealed 10 unique functions, tasks, and behaviours that Catholic school leaders regularly carry out.

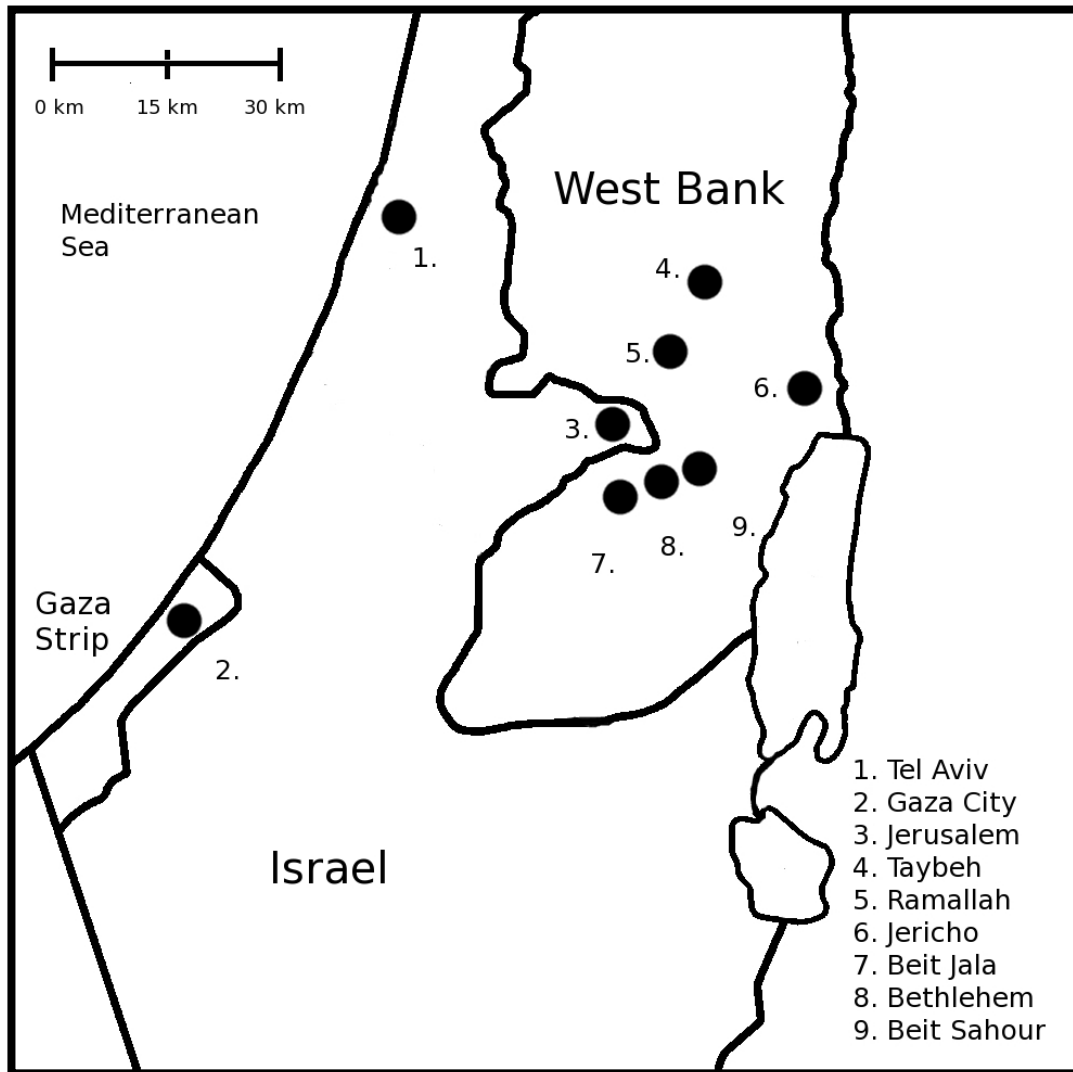
*Interviews with the administrators.*

Each of the 14 administrators was interviewed in his or her respective institution. A second interview was generally needed in order to clarify data obtained from the first. The interviews sometimes took place in the administration office while phones rang and individuals knocked at the door; they took place at other times in secluded rooms away from distractions and with a hot cup of Turkish coffee. The schools each appeared very busy; I was very grateful that each school leader took time to participate in my study. Each of the interviews lasted at least one hour, and many of them continued longer. Palestinians seemed very hospitable; although it seemed at times that the study was taking the administrators away from more pressing work, nobody complained. Rather, they responded to the questions with the utmost dignity and graciousness. No topic was deemed too unimportant for them to answer; it appeared to me that they sincerely sought to offer as much information as they could.

*Participants and school locations.*

The administrators themselves constituted a diverse group: there were 11 male and 3 female administrators; their ages ranged from about 35 years to 75 years. Among them, five were either priests, religious brothers, or nuns; nine were lay administrators who were married with families. Only one administrator, self-identified as a traditional Muslim, was not Catholic. The participants themselves had various levels of formal training: three had completed graduate degrees in educational administration, typically from outside of the region, while five had no more formal training than what they

received in their undergraduate degree. The rest had various levels of training and qualifications. Geographically, the schools (*Figure 1*) included two from Jerusalem,



*Figure 1.* Map of Israel and the West Bank.

three from Ramallah, three from Bethlehem, two from Beit Jala, one from Jericho, one from Beit Sahour, and two from Taybeh. Aside from their deep dedication to Catholic education and their relative geographic proximity, the participants were different from each other in aspects such as age, training, and administrative experience.

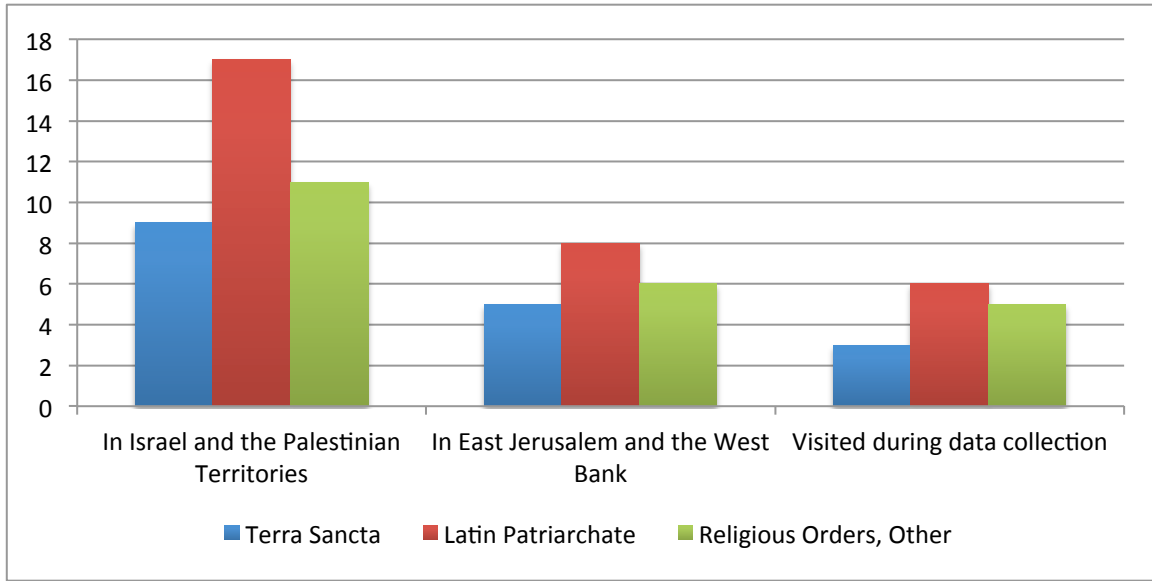


Figure 2. Total Number of Catholic Schools.

#### *Types of schools.*

The school leaders, as described in the review of the literature, each administered one of three distinct types (*Figure 2*) of schools: those operated by the Franciscans, also called the Terra Sancta schools, those operated by other religious communities, and those operated by the Latin patriarchate. Fourteen different schools were visited in total, which reflected about 74% of all the Catholic schools in East Jerusalem and the West Bank. In addition, the selected schools reflected a relative proportion across each of the three groups. For example, it included about 60% of the Terra Sancta schools, 83% of the schools operated by other religious communities, and 75% of the schools operated by the Latin patriarchate. Although other Catholic schools are located throughout Israel and the Palestinian territories, particularly in the Northern part of Israel, this study focused on both administrators and institutions in East Jerusalem and the West Bank.

*Informed consent.*

Before data were obtained from any of the administrators, consent was gained. In particular, a freedom and willingness to participate in the study were sought. Participants were provided with information relating to the purpose of the study and data collection, including the research tools and measures for confidentiality. The school leaders were also asked to grant me permission to use my own observations as well as conversations with teachers or staff members in the presentation of the data. I neither anticipated nor experienced any difficulties in obtaining such consent. The school leaders in fact each responded just as positively during my formal phase of data collection as they did during my first visit. In this thesis, as each school leader was promised, neither names of individuals nor the names of the schools are used. If data about a particular school or person were used to highlight a point, pseudonyms were adopted and distortions of identifiers were introduced. Each of the administrators and their respective staff were quite willing to participate; such protections were applied to allow their voices to be heard while maintaining the necessary confidentiality.

*Research questions.*

The research questions for the interviews with administrators were based on the data collected during the initial visit to East Jerusalem and the West Bank in April 2010. During this time, many experiences nuanced my perceptions of the region. In particular, it seemed that the complicated relationship between the Israelis and the Palestinians as well as the ubiquitous presence of Israeli soldiers affected greatly the schools. Also, it appeared that the relationship between Christian and Muslim students in the schools as well as in the wider communities had a direct influence on school Catholicity. These

realities and others observed during my first visit to the region were the foundation upon which the research questions were based. As such, the four research questions consist of topics related to Israeli-Palestinian relations, national security, the diverse administrative challenges, and the future of Catholic schools. Although the research questions set the tone, the interviews themselves were allowed to flow in natural directions based on the particular thoughts or desires of each school leader. Both the questions and subsequent prompts for the interviews follow:

1. What are administrators doing in their institutions to foster a positive and sustainable relationship between Israelis and Palestinians?
  - Peace education curricula; student exchanges within either Israel or the West Bank
  - Awareness of and attempts to minimize curriculum or textbook bias; use of programs from local organizations
  - Encounters between students from Israeli and Palestinian schools in global regions outside Palestine, such as the Seeds of Peace camp in the USA
  - Other
2. How does Israeli national security affect Catholic schools in the region, and how are administrators addressing the related challenges?
  - Checkpoints; encounters with the Israeli military; freedom of movement; teachers' and students' access to schools
  - Relationship of the school community with the wider Jewish and Islamic communities in the region; effects of the West Bank settlements



- Impact of the military on the psychological or social development of students
  - Other
3. What are some of the strictly Palestinian challenges that affect Catholic schools today, and how are administrators responding to them?
- School finances; physical resources; teacher and student retention; academic and extra-curricular programs
  - School governance; board structure; relationships with local religious leaders and other school administrators
  - Professed Catholic identity of the school and its connection to a predominantly Islamic student body
  - Other
4. What sort of challenges do administrators of Catholic schools envision might emerge in the future, and how are they trying to anticipate them?
- Mandate of Catholic education both now and in the future; ongoing exodus of Christians from Israel and Palestine
  - Teacher and administrator training; the decreasing number of Christian teachers and administrators in the region
  - Competition between schools, especially those in close proximity of each other; working relationships between Catholic school administrators

- External cultural, religious, and political pressures on Catholic schools; diminishing levels of involvement from religious communities of priests, nuns, or brothers
- Other

***Conversations with teachers and staff.***

The teachers and support staff at every school were advised of my intentions and purpose before my arrival. Those who wanted to meet with me were asked to contact the administrator to book an interview time and space. Most saw my presence in the school as an opportunity to share their perceptions about Catholic education in the region. Although the conversations were not structured, they were typically enjoyable and informative. Everyone offered either a new insight or alternative perspective to the managerial challenges that Catholic school leaders face. They generally recognized that school leaders spend much of their day dealing with one small issue after another. They also recognized that they were generally able to perform their own jobs because of the good work done by the administrator. The varieties of data provided by teachers and staff were used to enhance the information obtained by school leaders themselves.

***Observations of the daily school operations.***

Each of the administrators provided me with *carte blanche* access to their schools. I was allowed to wander through the school, participate in classes, and spend time in the staff room. No aspect of any school was off-limits; in some schools, the administrators even provided me with a guide who could open any door or cabinet that was of perceived interest. I was thus able to gain a tremendous amount of information about the operations of the school. Many of the articulated challenges stated by the administrators could not

have been fully understood without these observations. An administrator may claim that the school has little space for the large class sizes, as one example, but observation of an active class drives this point home without ambiguity. The school observations were of invaluable help as I sought to identify the managerial challenges facing administrators of Catholic schools in East Jerusalem and the West Bank face.

### **Isolating the Catholic elements.**

The second step in the data collection was to isolate those managerial challenges related to the elements of school Catholicity. These elements were defined by Thomas Groome in his work on Catholicity and outlined briefly in the literature review. By way of review, they involve a positive anthropology and a deep sense of the sacred, a focus on community and tradition, a reliance on faith as well as reason, and a commitment to social justice and universal inclusivity. Although the managerial challenges related to the administration of a Catholic school in East Jerusalem and the West Bank could have been difficult to correlate with these elements, clear relationships emerged immediately.

### **Methodological Assumption**

Because I relied almost entirely on the interviews with Catholic school leaders for this study, a few issues must be addressed. The first, of course, is that personal narratives are always open to heavy critique; this is particularly true in both Israel and the West Bank. Few Palestinian claims to truth, regardless of how general they may be, go unchallenged by Israelis. The same is true of the reverse. Such responses reflect each group's concern about their respective portrayal to and by others. Israelis have been represented as the unprovoked attackers of innocent Arabs; Palestinians have been described as religious terrorists. Although such universal generalizations are generally

false and stigmatize individuals unfairly, crude portrayals of both groups continue to emerge. As a result of such poor representation, Israelis and Palestinians are quick to challenge many foreign perceptions. My own personal experiences revealed that one group's truth-claims presented to the other are almost always challenged as biased or identified as wrong.

All the same, a basic methodological assumption that I made is that everyone spoke only what he or she understood to be the truth. Although it was possible to verify much of the data obtained from the interviews, it was not possible to verify all of it. This was especially true with claims that involve personal experiences and recollections. With much of this thesis relying on interview data obtained from Catholic school leaders in Israel and the Palestinian territories, it was necessary to trust their professional credibility. Doubting their interpretations would have been insincere, especially since they are practicing professionals with far more experience in the region. Although it is recognized that those who administer Catholic schools have vested political interests as well as religious and social biases, the assumption nevertheless remained the same: everyone was presumed to tell the truth unless I could prove otherwise. My job as researcher is to present the data as plainly and as honestly as possible, trusting that no administrator was intentionally trying to either mislead or deceive me.

### **Limitations of the Research**

All research has limitations, and three particular issues related to this thesis were considered: participant behaviour modification, researcher bias, and exploitation. In the first instance, I acknowledge that most administrators perceived me as a foreign observer; this might have precipitated behaviour modification. When collecting data from any

subject, the possibility always exists that the researcher will influence the behaviour of those human subjects from whom he or she wishes to collect data. In my own study, which sought to explore issues related to the administration of Catholic schools in East Jerusalem and the West Bank, care was taken to ensure that school leaders spoke honestly and that they did not say only what they thought I wanted to hear. Although I did not expect any of the leaders to mislead me, at times my position as a foreign researcher caused them to focus only on certain themes to the exclusion of others; this is typically difficult to avoid when performing qualitative research involving interviews.

Connected closely to issues of behaviour modification was the problem of researcher bias. Quite simply, it is acknowledged that every individual has his or her own unique worldview. Data collection, as Maxwell (2005, p. 108) has suggested, should always take into account the influence of personal bias. An old expression about not seeing the forest for the trees reminds researchers that the lenses through which they see the world often blind them to realities and truths that are in plain sight. Because I rely on data collected from outside of my own context – and includes social, linguistic, political, and religious differences – it was quite impossible to gain any insight or perspective that is not nuanced at least in some way by my own personal experiences. During the analysis of the data, care was therefore taken to ensure that truth-claims are nuanced by the facts and not by any preconceived notions. Although it was impossible to completely avoid researcher bias, a personal recognition that such biases exist and an honest awareness of personal prejudices were helpful ways to ensure an honest presentation.

Along with participant behaviour modification and researcher bias, care was taken to uphold my ethical responsibilities as a researcher in the Palestinian context.

Particularly with minority communities, as Smith (1999, pp. 1–3) wrote in her book on research with indigenous peoples, the premise of exploration has far too often led to an exploitation of individuals and communities. Sensitivity to delicate social, religious, and cultural issues is necessary when working with vulnerable populations. In fact, two questions that should be asked repeatedly are, first, who has the right to enter into a minority community and, second, how research studies are to protect groups who have been exploited often. Researchers should be careful that they do not enter into minority communities with a presumption that they can simply collect raw data and leave; as Elias (1995) suggested, the study should always be undertaken with an eye to how it might benefit the participant group. Since no study has explored the administrators' challenges in Catholic schools in the region, and Catholic school leaders in East Jerusalem and the West Bank do not meet regularly with each other to exchange ideas, I surmised that this study could be beneficial to those interested in the viability of Catholic schools in the West Bank and Israel insofar as it identified (in a single work) the managerial challenges facing those administrators and then isolated those managerial challenges relating to and having an influence on school Catholicity.

### **Timelines and Dissemination of Information**

An initial visit to Israel and the Palestinian territories took place in April 2010. This provided me with opportunity to answer some methodological questions, clarify some concerns, and meet formally with a variety of school leaders. Additionally, the experiences obtained from this first visit provided the foundation around which the interview questions were developed. The formal collection of data took place between February and April 2011. During these two months, more than 32 full days were spent in

either East Jerusalem or West Bank schools. The analysis of the large amounts of data took place between May and August 2011. This thesis was then written in the following months and its defence was scheduled for March 2012. The presentation of data will be made to each of the Catholic school leaders in East Jerusalem and the West Bank once the University of Manitoba has approved this thesis.

## **Chapter 4:**

### **Managerial Challenges**

#### **Introduction**

Data for this study were obtained from interviews with school leaders, conversations with teachers and staff members, observations of the school, and relevant documents. The data from each school were first analyzed in their entirety for general themes. From this point, an isolation of the top managerial challenges for each administrator was undertaken. This was done by mining the interview transcripts with school leaders for frequency of and emphasis on terms or ideas. The emergent managerial challenges were given varying levels of prominence depending on how often they were raised by an administrator and how much stress they placed on them.

Once a variety of managerial challenges were identified at each school, these were all compared against the interview transcripts with teachers and staff members as well as the field notes. By looking for a confirmation through redundancy, one top managerial challenge and two significant managerial challenges were identified for every school. Administrators were then asked by Email whether they approved of the assessment and considered it reflective of their particular context. Once confirmation was obtained, these were inserted into a chart (*Table 1*) for easier viewing.

Ten distinct administrative tasks, functions, and behaviours emerged from this process. The four top challenges facing administrators of Catholic schools in East Jerusalem and the West Bank relate to the financial stability of their schools, student discipline, internal office work, and the wider Christian community in the region. A variety of the administrators face significant managerial challenges related to the



Catholicity of their schools and staff formation. Other significant managerial challenges that they face include interfaith relationships between students or staff, the staff culture, administrators' professional connections with others, and issues related to the presence of the Israeli Defence Force.

*Table 1.* Top Managerial Challenges from Each School.

School	Top Challenge	Significant Challenge	Significant Challenge
School 1: East Jerusalem	Internal Office Work	Catholic Identity	Financial Stability
School 2: East Jerusalem	Student Discipline	Israeli Defence Force	Staff Formation
School 3: East Jerusalem	Student Discipline	Financial Stability	Interfaith Relationships
School 1: West Bank	Financial Stability	Catholic Identity	Interfaith Relationships
School 2: West Bank	Internal Office Work	Professional Connections	Student Discipline
School 3: West Bank	Christian Community	Staff Formation	Financial Stability
School 4: West Bank	Internal Office Work	Student Discipline	Staff Culture
School 5: West Bank	Financial Stability	Professional Connections	Internal Office Work
School 6: West Bank	Financial Stability	Staff Formation	Christian Community
School 7: West Bank	Internal Office Work	Professional Connections	Catholic Identity
School 8: West Bank	Christian Community	Internal Office Work	Staff Formation
School 9: West Bank	Financial Stability	Catholic Identity	Student Discipline
School 10: West Bank	Financial Stability	Student Discipline	Christian Community
School 11: West Bank	Internal Office Work	Financial Stability	Israeli Defence Force

### **Managerial Challenges Across the Spectrum**

Although the chart above highlights the managerial challenges for each school, this way of presenting the data does not present their frequencies particularly well. To help with this, the following chart (*Table 2*) is useful because it provides an identification of the top managerial challenge and the two significant challenges by frequency. By

looking at the table, it can be seen that student discipline – for example – was a challenge for 6 out of 14 administrators: in fact, it was the top challenge for two school leaders and a significant challenge for four school leaders. This can be contrasted with interfaith relationships, considered a significant – but not top – challenge for only 2 out of 14 school leaders. Beginning with the least frequently identified challenge and concluding with the most frequently identified challenge, the following section expands upon each using data from the all the interviews as well as the field notes.

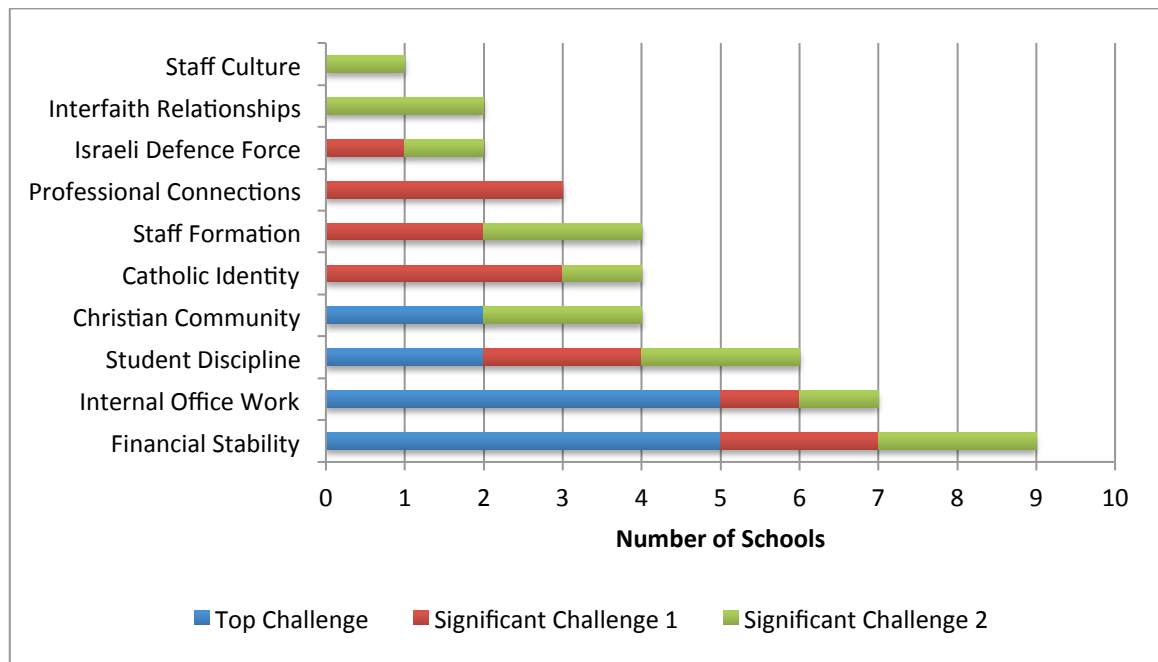


Figure 3. Managerial Challenges.

### Challenge 10: Staff culture.

The environment in which a staff member works can be very enjoyable and positive or it can be something quite different. Only one administrator identified the need to develop a positive staff culture as a managerial challenge. For the leader of WB-4

alone, this is a job task to be taken very seriously. In his institution, large amounts of both time and energy were spent to ensure that teachers and support staff felt nurtured and cared for. It was recognized that the school leader cared well for the entire staff; emphasis was placed on the celebration of important events in the lives of the staff, and the physical environment reflected the administrator's great personal concern. Consequently, the school leader spent a great deal of time outside of school looking for the perfect card of congratulations or the nicest bouquet of flowers available. This single administrator considered keeping the staff feeling happy and well appreciated as time very well spent.

*Interviews with the administrators.*

The interview with the administrator took place in the staff room as preparations were made to celebrate a staff birthday party. The administrator stated immediately, "the staff have few complaints about working at the school because I try so hard to take care of them and to let them know that they are important." It was claimed that a happy staff is a productive staff by the one school leader who identified this as an ongoing managerial challenge. "Every day for lunch, I provide the staff with soup, coffee, and tea," he stated, "most other schools make staff bring their own lunches and beverages, but buying them lunch is a small price to pay for a staff that enjoys coming to work." This administrator saw his job as caring for the staff so that they would, in turn, be able to care for the students. Indeed, a repeatedly made comment dealt with how important it is to make the school environment pleasant and positive: if the teachers were positive and the support staff workers were happy, the institution functioned with minimal interruption.

In addition to making the teachers and staff feel appreciated, the administrator felt it was very important to keep the lines of communication open. It was thus maintained,

“If teachers feel that they can approach me and talk to me about anything, they will.” The school leader, even when dealing with parents or visitors from outside of the school, kept the office door open. Access to the office was continuous, even when important meetings were taking place. Teachers or staff members were expected not to interrupt such gatherings, but visually the principal was never shut off from the school community. “My responsibility is to them,” he claimed, “and they must feel that everything I do is for their benefit.” The point was that an open and free exchange of information and ideas lets everyone feel a part of an important team – with the school leader as the one charged with ensuring that it functions well. A great deal of the administrative day was spent on developing and fostering these relationships between individuals.

***Conversations with teachers and staff members.***

“We work in the best school in Palestine,” was a common refrain heard among those who worked at this particular school. Without any question, the teachers and support staff members were aware that a great deal of effort went into creating a positive staff culture. Everyone seemed to feel that the administrator was deeply concerned for each of them; the teachers and staff members felt – without exception – appreciated and looked after. One teacher in particular claimed that morale at the school had been very poor before the arrival of the new administrator. The old school purportedly never came out of the office, knew very little about teacher and staff struggles, and often made very important administrative decisions without concern for the individual person. Now, according to the same teacher, “nobody questions whether a decision is good or bad. We all feel that everyone is working on the same team and any tough issue is responded to out of a sense of what is best for everyone concerned.” The school leader deals with the

staff in a very positive, respectful way; this has improved their attitudes and created a more enjoyable working atmosphere for everyone at WB-4.

One secretary in the school noted that parents generally feel that the administrator will support the teachers over them in almost every instance. This has proven to cause difficulties with parents who have concerns about individual teachers. For example, whether the issue has to do with teaching style or classroom management, it is almost altogether futile for a parent to talk to the school leader about these issues. The administrator's first response is that any issues between a parent and a teacher should be worked out between the two first. Many parents are unwilling to deal with a teacher they perceive as problematic. If the issue is of such concern that the parent needs to meet with the administrator of the school, the teacher is almost unequivocally supported; parents who wish to complain about the teachers often meet with an unsympathetic attitude from the administrator. Indeed, as one support worker at the school noted,

parents used to come into the school and complain many times, and the last principal would listen to them and support them in their complaints. Many teachers felt afraid when the principal called them into a meeting, and parents often bullied the teachers. Now, teachers are not afraid of the principal but parents who like to complain are angry that their concerns are not always addressed in such a clear way.

***Observations of the schools.***

One of the first observations made in the school is that it felt immediately like a warm and happy place to work and to study. The school itself was clean, and the walls in the hallways were filled with artwork from the students and beautiful murals done by, as I

would later learn, a professional artist. Additionally, these displays did not seem to be put up in haste for the sake of having something on the walls. Each seemed presented with great care; a universal sense of organization permeated the whole of the school. In each of the classes, the desks were in straight lines and lacking the sorts of graffiti found on many other school desks in the region; there was an absence of unnecessary clutter; and the walls were painted in soft pastel colours. Even without having spoken to a single person, the school felt as though it was well cared for by teachers, staff members, and students alike. This school was the seventh visited during my data collection, and none before or after offered such a sense of warmth; there was certainly something very special about the institutional climate.

After speaking with the teachers and other members of the staff, it was clear that the approach embodied by the school leader had a trickle-down effect. With all of the teachers and staff members feeling as though they were important and contributing members of the school community, they treated the students with the same great care. Each one was considered special; just as the administrator cared for those on his team, the teachers sought to dedicate time and energy into making the students feel equally special. Nobody's job was considered unimportant: from the employee who cleaned the classrooms to the staff member who answered the telephone calls, everyone was working for the good of the school and for the students.

Similarly, when teachers placed artwork on the wall – as noted earlier – it was done in a way that recognized the hard work of the student; it was done with care and with deep respect. The principal had very little interaction with the students during a regular school day, but his work to create a positive staff culture had very tangible effects

on the lives of the students. The teachers and staff felt cared for and respected; they sought to share that feeling with the students and with each other.

***Summary reflection.***

It had never occurred to me that one of the tasks, functions, or behaviours that might occupy much of an administrator's time would be care for the staff. School leaders generally have schedules chock-full with many demands; taking time to go out and buy flowers or a birthday card for a staff member would seem least important. Nevertheless, the administrator of this one school believed that it is simply impossible to run a successful school without having a positive staff culture.

To this end, a great deal of time and energy was spent on developing relationships with teachers and staff members. It certainly seems to have paid off in multiple ways: students seem happier; the parents call less frequently about classroom-related issues; teachers and staff members report working harder because they feel supported; and the overall atmosphere of the school was qualitatively much more positive than many other of the schools that were visited. Although most administrators want to establish a positive staff culture, this administrator was the only one to articulate this clearly.

**Challenge 9: Interfaith relationships.**

My initial belief was that Catholic schools in East Jerusalem would be spending quite an extraordinary amount of time trying to foster working relationships between Jews, Christians, and Muslims. However, the research revealed that only two administrators considered this to be a task worthy of their focus or their energy. The two administrators – one in East Jerusalem and one in the West Bank – specifically

mentioned with some detail how they believe that their schools might work to develop lasting relationships between groups that are deeply divided by religious differences.

They identified the groups as often being at odds with each other, yet believed that their leadership and the schools are useful in developing bonds of friendship. Although most school leaders were quick to claim that Christians and Muslims in the region are called to live in friendship together, only EJ-3 and WB-1 gave a second thought to the Jewish community and their place. It was them alone who decided that it is necessary to take proactive and concrete steps to foster a relationship between all three major religious groups in the region.

*Interviews with the administrators.*

“The reality of the situation is that we live within a Jewish state; they need to learn how to accept our presence here and we must learn how to live peacefully with them,” said the administrator of EJ-3 after the question about interfaith relationships was raised. Most of the Catholic schools in the region have participated in either the Seeds of Peace or the Israel Palestine Center for Research and Information (IPCRII) peace education programs. However, most administrators expressed plainly that trying to foster any sort of civil relationship among Jews, Christians, and Muslims is pointless. Indeed, as WB-1 contended,

Most administrators have given up trying to build bridges with the Jews. They see it as a waste of their energy because they feel nothing has and nothing will change. I disagree. I feel that we must not give up hope that someday Muslims, Christians, and Jews can live together peacefully.



The comment made by the administrator of WB-1 is indeed astute: most administrators have long ago given up any hope that the social, religious, or political situation is going to change. Their involvement with peace-education programs, especially the ones that try to build bonds between the different groups, has gradually diminished over the last many years.

Many of the administrators would not, in fact, deal with the topic directly. When asked about what the school was doing to create bonds between the groups, they were often very dismissive or avoided the topic. It was only administrators of EJ-3 and WB-1 who spoke at length about the challenges that they face when dealing with this issue. While trying to respond to this challenge, the administrator of EJ-3 claimed that parents and members of the local community are his greatest critics:

Most see me as attempting to undermine the Palestinian struggle for independence.... They think that I am overly sympathetic to the Jewish community and that I ignore the suffering of the Arabs in the region. Of course, this is not true.

The peace programs have been a divisive issue with the Palestinian schools; every administrator was able to cite an incident or two when the local school leader had his or her position terminated because they were perceived as overly sympathetic to the Jewish cause. Indeed, as the administrator of WB-1 recognized,

Everyone knows someone who has been killed, hurt, or insulted by the Israeli military. When I try and distinguish between the military and Israeli civilians – people are easily moved to passion. It is a difficult, uphill road that I journey.

*Conversations with teachers and staff members.*

The staff members, like parents and the local community, are often divided about the issue. Some teachers at EJ-3 and WB-1 are quite supportive of the administration's intention to build deeper relationships between Jews, Muslims, and Christians – others are not. In these schools, some teachers and other staff members spoke out critically against the administrator's choice to openly seek to foster such relationships. One teacher from EJ-3 claimed that the Jewish population in Jerusalem really had no desire to live peacefully with the Muslims and the Christians; therefore, they claimed, "it is utter stupidity to think that we should try and live well with them." Some teachers and staff members certainly harbour a great deal of resentment regarding administrators' positive approaches toward the Jewish community. They were quick to take the opportunity to criticize this mandate and quite vocal; yet not all teachers and staff members think it is a bad idea to develop bonds with the Israelis. In almost every school, in fact, conversations revealed that many teachers are working at such a mandate in quiet, subtle ways.

A visit to WB-11 revealed a number of teachers who volunteer at a program that brings Israeli and Palestinian students together for sporting events. They have encouraged many of their students to participate in the program. However, the teachers stated that these activities are quite separate from the school and disapproved of by the school leader. As one teacher said,

We are permitted to work with this program because we cannot really be stopped.

The principal asked us not to speak about it in connection with the school because many people do not feel it is right to spend time working on this program.

In the Catholic schools throughout East Jerusalem and the West Bank, significant numbers of teachers and staff members work with such programs outside of school, away from the observing eye of their administrators. Although these leaders may not essentially disapprove of such programs, they are hard-pressed to approve of them openly. The hurts are too deep for many Palestinians; if administrators begin to advocate for reconciliation as lone voices, they risk alienating themselves from their community

***Observations of the schools.***

While visiting EJ-3, one of the teachers invited me into her classroom to show me the book that she was teaching to the students. On every one of the desks was a copy of *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*. The story is about how the young son of a Nazi officer, who administered a concentration camp, befriends a Jewish boy of the same age from the camp. The relationship between the two of them develops as they share their lives with each other on both sides of the fence. As the teacher from EJ-3 claimed, “The theme of the story says that children are all the same, regardless of the walls or boundaries or labels that adults place between them.”

A close observation of a single lesson on this book revealed that students could recognize that Israeli children were no different from Palestinian children and that people from both groups have suffered greatly. Students spoke with sincerity about being open to developing friendships with Israelis, despite what parents and other adults may suggest as appropriate or right. Choosing this book and developing such meaningful lessons around it was just one example of many about how relationships were being built in both EJ-3 and WP-1.

Such positive overtures were not always found in Catholic schools throughout the region. At one school in East Jerusalem, while I was given a tour by the administrator, a small group of students were passing through the hallway when one dropped a large textbook onto the ground. The whole group stopped as the student stooped down to pick up the book. I casually noticed that the textbook was written in Hebrew, and I asked how much Hebrew they (as Arabs) could speak. Their answer surprised me. One student responded that they do not care about the Hebrew language because the Israelis are *the enemies*. Another made a comment that *eventually only Arabic would be spoken* in the region. The exchange reflected a moment of Palestinian pride, but it was both anti-Jewish and anti-Israeli. I cast a glance at the administrator to see if such comments would be reprimanded, but they were tacitly accepted.

One interesting phenomenon in a few schools is that tensions have emerged between students from the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church. Both groups of students claim that their tradition is the *real* tradition and that the other is the group in schism. At one school, the administrator went so far as to bring both Catholic and Eastern Orthodox clergy into the region to discuss the unity of their traditions. The conversation at this particular school revolved around the need for Christians – who are a minority in the region – to be united. If there are disputes between the various groups that identify themselves as Christian, then they are much more likely to fall into conflict with their Jewish and Muslim neighbours.

Although this particular issue was not identified as wide-spread – it was apparent that the students themselves knew to which church they belonged; nobody was simply a Christian: everyone knew whether they were – for example – Coptic, Greek Orthodox, or

Roman Catholic. At times the tempers would flare up, especially when the Orthodox were expected to attend the Roman Catholic liturgies, but most administrators were proactive in dealing with this minor (but potentially explosive) issue between the Christians themselves.

***Summary reflection.***

Every administrator spoke quickly about how their institutions are working to foster good relationships between Christians and Muslims. They are obviously doing a great deal to build strong bridges between the two groups. That said, these same administrators are generally doing very little to foster relationships between their students and the Jewish community in Israel. Most have given up on any sort of peace-education program; the vast majority has little interest in or desire to speak about the Israelis in general. All the same, the administrator of WB-3 asked me how it could ever be possible for Palestinians to live with Israelis if these attitudes are not first developed in schools – the question is very important. Although all Catholic school leaders seemed to consider the development of relationships between all individuals an important endeavour, only administrators from EJ-3 and WB-1 see the issue as important enough that they dedicate large chunks of time and energy to it. This was a real surprise in the data-collection; the Israelis are simply not on the minds of the majority of Catholic school leaders in either East Jerusalem or the West Bank.

**Challenge 8: Israeli Defence Force.**

There was an initial sense that the relationship between the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) and Catholic school administrators would be very tense. A number of the interview questions in fact dealt with the influence that the IDF has on the operations of the

schools. Data collection revealed that very few Catholic school administrators considered the IDF an ongoing administrative challenge. Although – as recently as 2010 – checkpoints were observed on 74% of major West Bank roads (Palestine Monitor, 2010), only the administrators from EJ-2 and WB-11 considered this an ongoing concern.

This was unexpected since the first visit to the region seemed to suggest that because Palestinians in general deal very often with the Israeli military, the schools would be constantly working to respond to related issues. Although the IDF certainly has an impact on Palestinian life, it is not considered to be one of the most pressing administrative issues. Most of the Catholic school leaders actually manage their schools with relatively little concern about what the IDF are doing. The military no longer has the same impact as it did during the periods of the first and second intifadas. Schools in most parts of East Jerusalem and the West Bank are generally quite removed from direct effects of the military.

*Interviews with the administrators.*

This separation between Israeli national security and the daily routines of most Palestinians was illustrated after one Jewish acquaintance asked me to stand outside the New Gate – of the Old City of Jerusalem – and watch soldiers stop Palestinians to check their identification. I followed the request and did in fact notice that the young Israeli soldiers randomly stopped young Arab men on their way into the city. After observing this scene both that day and on many other occasions, it seemed that the checkpoint was an inconvenience but not an issue that school administrators needed to deal with.

Indeed, the question I asked school leaders was not whether the IDF should have checkpoints in East Jerusalem or the West Bank. The question was whether the Israeli

military is considered a managerial challenge for the school leader, whether their presence demands that school leaders place a regular emphasis on solving problems directly related to the presence of the IDF. When both EJ-2 and WB-11 were asked to clarify precisely what the IDF does that creates managerial challenges, these two school leaders found it difficult to provide concrete answers. Nevertheless, it was very important to distinguish whether it is a mere supposition that the IDF affects school leadership and the actual reality of the situation.

To this end, the administrator in WB-11 stated that the school bus from Ramallah to the towns of the students should take less than 30 minutes. However, because the military has totally encircled the city, leaving only one major road into and out of the city, the student commute time is now over 2 hours. With hundreds of cars all trying to move down an extremely narrow road, it is utter chaos; yet, as the school leader from WB-11 rightly pointed out – this is a direct result of IDF activity. They have closed off most of the access points around the city; people daily struggle to move around a city that should have a dozen other entry and exit points. Of course, this affects the administrators. Many times the school busses do not arrive on time, teachers are often delayed because of traffic or Israeli checkpoints, school trips out of Ramallah do not exist because it is simply impossible to do anything when 4 hours of the trip are spent in traffic. Also, as WB-11 pointed out,

When it takes 2 hours to drop your child off, most of the parents look around for a closer school – even if they are Catholic, they are not going to send their sons and daughters here. The IDF are crushing us with their checkpoints.

Although these two school leaders maintained that the IDF create ongoing challenges for them, the effects are not direct. At one point, especially during the first and second intifadas, the IDF would often enter the schools and deal directly with school leaders. There were tensions between school leaders and the Israeli military; the uprisings were closely linked to Palestinian education and were thus very suspect. Today, the military has withdrawn its presence from the schools; to this end, most school leaders consider the occupation more problematic than the IDF.

For example, when asked whether the IDF created ongoing challenges for school leaders, one administrator in East Jerusalem responded with a sigh, “What can we do? It simply is our reality as Palestinians. It is not easy for anyone, but everyone faces the same problems. We go about our lives, but as a school the IDF doesn’t bother us.” Many school leaders face obstacles relating to the Arab-Israeli conflict, but only two consider the IDF to be the source of ongoing managerial challenges.

***Conversations with teachers and staff members.***

When speaking with teachers and other staff members at the school, it seemed apparent that the school administrators have each had very negative experiences with the Israeli military in the past. One was arrested and imprisoned for a short period in the 1980s, while a family member of the other was killed during the second intifada. Their obvious frustration with the IDF was more deeply understood after having spoken with the staff members. One staff member from WB-11 argued, “For those who live near the school, our lives are almost completely separate from the Jewish [sic] and their soldiers. They mostly do not come into our town since the [Oslo] accords, and our life goes on without them.” The administrative claim that school operations were heavily influenced



by the IDF seemed not entirely true; although the IDF create many obstacles that make life difficult for Palestinians, the military has very infrequent dealings with schools. Most of the issues that can be claimed to result from the influence of the IDF seem to have more to do with checkpoints and security delays than anything else.

For example, the secretary at EJ-2 confided, “I live in a small room on the school property because I cannot come from my home in Bethlehem to Jerusalem every day. The director allows me to stay for free.” Access to the city from the West Bank is difficult for many people; although many make the passage on a daily basis, it is often easier to spend large chunks of time in one region or another. A teacher in EJ-1 stated,

I am a Jerusalemite who married a man from Beit Jala. He is not allowed to visit Jerusalem because [he has] no permit. I live here [Jerusalem] part of the time because it is difficult to go through checkpoints in the evening and the morning. This means I do not see him for many days at a time.

The checkpoints certainly have an effect on how quickly and easily both staff and students can get to work; this naturally affects the behaviour of every person. One teacher from the West Bank claimed that he needed to get up daily at 3:30 a.m. in order to ensure that he arrives at EJ-2 by 7:00 a.m. with time to prepare for the day. Although travel time usually takes 90 minutes, it can sometimes extend to up to three hours. Still, he refuses to allow the situation to hinder his commitment: as he said, “I would much rather be two hours early for the class than a few minutes late.”

### ***Observations of the schools.***

Little distinguished EJ-2 and WB-11 from other schools in terms of issues with the Israeli Defence Force. The two schools were large and with student populations

exceeding 400 boys and girls. They were located in zones that were very easily accessed by students in the area. The school in East Jerusalem was situated in a region where Arabs mixed with Israelis on a regular basis; in addition, Israeli soldiers were continually present around the school. By contrast, the school in the West Bank was in a strictly Palestinian region where both the Israeli military and Israelis in general are (by Israeli law) barred. Thus the staff and students at WB-11 had almost no contact with either the Israelis or their military while at school. Despite all this, both schools displayed a similarity in the ways that they highlighted a pro-Palestinian mentality: in both schools, posters depicting the former PLO leader Yasser Arafat were prominently displayed. In addition, both schools had the Palestinian flag presented in various ways in different parts of the school, such as in drawings on the bulletin boards, on posters, or within classrooms.

Both these schools displayed a very strong Palestinian identity; they presented themselves as deeply proud of their heritage and connected to the struggles facing all Arabs in the region. Those who both worked and attended the school seemed much more aware of themselves as very different from the Israelis. In addition, there was a *feel* to both the schools that distinguished them from others – they were more expressively Palestinian, quicker to talk about their experiences with the Israelis, and much more vocal about who they perceive themselves to be in the face of Israeli occupation. In these two schools, everyone was very kind and welcoming; when they spoke, they knew the topic very well and had narrated their experiences many times before. Growing up Palestinian is not without its challenges; the issues that teachers, staff members, and students face become part of their educational experience.

***Summary reflection.***

The administrators of EJ-2 and WB-11 considered the Israeli military to be the cause of continual managerial challenges in the region. Although the schools did not reflect any greater struggles than other schools, a greater sense of frustration regarding their situation was displayed by the school's staff and teachers. From a practical perspective, neither administrator was able to provide concrete examples of how the Israeli military affected the school. They spoke of checkpoints and incursions as well as violence and oppression.

The examples that were provided often had little to do with the school directly but related more to the challenges facing each of the Palestinians in the region. For most of the students, in fact, the schools seemed to be the most normal parts of their day. This, of course, could be the point that school leaders were trying to make: when the lives of the staff and students are turned upside down, the staff spends large amounts of time trying to normalize life within the schools. When I walked into the institutions and things seemed peaceful and normal, this perhaps spoke volumes of the work that the school leaders have done to respond to challenges directly related to the Israeli-Arab conflict.

**Challenge 7: Professional connections.**

Three of the school leaders claimed that they now spend large parts of their day trying to foster connections between their schools and other Catholic as well as non-Catholic schools in the region. Historically, because the schools were owned and administered by different groups, the different institutions cooperated very little. For example, one school owned by the Latin patriarchate has very little need or obligation to

collaborate with another school operated by the Sisters of St. Joseph – even though the two institutions may only be three blocks away from each other.

Today, a small number of administrators are beginning to feel that the future of Catholic schools in the region depends on their collaboration with each other. No longer can they exist as isolated entities without regular dialogue with other Catholic school leaders. The face of Catholic education in the region is changing rapidly; administrators of three schools have realized that they need to build relationships with others if their mandates as Catholic schools will be sustained into the future.

*Interviews with the administrators.*

The administrator of WB-2 began the interview by saying, “I am happy that you are doing this project. I know nothing about the other [Catholic] schools around me. We do not work well with each other; we meet very infrequently and do not discuss important issues.” Catholic school leaders in East Jerusalem and the West Bank find it difficult to work together since they have never been obliged to engage with each other. School timetables, staff policy, and even issues of tuition were often decided locally or among schools operated by the same group.

School leaders often looked at each other as competitors; school policies were both closely guarded and rarely shared. As the administrator of WB-7 expressed, “Many of us still feel that if we work together, we will lose the upper-hand and the other school would out-do us.” With limited resources and a very small Christian community from which students and staff are selected, it is hard not to feel as though the exchanges need to be very tightly controlled. It is a huge risk for one school leader to share his ponderings

of a fundraising campaign with others since everyone is trying to stay afloat; anyone who seems to have an advantage is watched very closely.

The administrator from WB-5 maintained,

At one time, the richer Catholic schools would approach our Christian students at sport or social gatherings and promise them scholarships if they transferred schools. We lost many students this way. Eventually, we stopped going to such events because they were doing more harm than good.

For most of the Catholic schools in the West Bank, the Christian student populations are less than 50% of the entire student body; however, most of the schools would be very happy to promote their schools as having a larger Christian population. A great deal of competition exists to attract as many of these students as possible – even when it means resorting to negative tactics. As such, WB-5 saw that such competition was harmful:

We recognized that this was not the way to go. Rather than isolate our students, I decided to call up their headmaster and talk with him. We met for lunch and spoke very honestly. Today, he and I speak with much less tension than there once was.

For many of the school leaders, any personal conversation between administrators is perceived as a betrayal of loyalties: conversations occur, but they are often superficial and unproductive.

***Conversations with teachers and staff members.***

Teachers generally felt across the spectrum that the administrators did not do enough to foster relationships between their schools and other Catholic or non-Catholic

schools in the region. Quite simply, most seemed to suggest, collaboration between institutions was not a very high administrative priority. When discussing what other Catholic schools in the region were doing when faced with common issues such as curriculum or pedagogy, most teachers knew very little. Yet in the three schools where the administrators identified cooperation with other administrators as a managerial challenge, the teachers were able to speak about incidents of collaboration between institutions. While visiting WB-2, for example, the English teachers were hosting a lunch for other English teachers of the neighbouring schools; the purpose of the gathering was to discuss the various ways of teaching the curriculum and to explore different pedagogies. As a result of the administrator's encouragement, such events have been increasing over the last few years; they naturally benefit the teachers, the school, and the students.

Such collaboration is increasingly important given the decreasing influence of religious communities on the schools. One teacher from WB-2 astutely noted, "When the sisters ran the school, they could interact with each other between schools very easily. As they decreased, the interactions also became fewer. Eventually we found ourselves isolated from the other institutions." Despite an increasing amount of collaboration between Catholic schools and other institutions in the neighbourhood, hardly enough is done – even from those schools where the administrator considers this a managerial challenge.

The teachers often made comments that they would be appreciate if all the Catholic schools came together on a regular basis; however, this has been done a negligible number of times. A regular practice would, as they pointed out, require not

only willingness on behalf of the school leaders but also on the part of the heads of the Latin patriarchate, the Franciscan schools, and the other religious orders. No single entity can organize them; hence very little unified work occurs, and the opportunities for honest exchanges between teachers are quite limited.

***Observations with the schools.***

One interesting experience revealed how helpful collaboration between schools could be, but how rarely it actually happens, at least in the office of one administrator. Hanging on the wall of a West Bank school was a very large, detailed staff schedule of classes and subjects. It was organized with coloured magnets on a complex, seemingly impossible-to-reproduce grid. The point of interest was not the schedule itself but that an identical copy of its style was previously observed in another school.

When I asked the administrator how he came to use such a complex system, he replied that the nuns used it when they arrived at the school over 60 years ago; the lay-administrators had been using the same system since the German nuns left almost 20 years ago. After some discussion, it was established that the same religious order had administered both schools. They obviously either brought the system over with them from Europe or collaborated on a standardized system between the schools.

This revealed to me in an instant that if the Catholic school leaders in the region could speak to each other more often, as this monastic order had obviously done many decades ago, they could share knowledge between them that would be beneficial for everyone.

***Summary reflection.***

Collaboration certainly has benefits for Catholic schools in the region, especially since many of them find themselves isolated. The administrator of WB-2 made an important comment:

There are four Catholic schools in a four-block area. We are all competing against each other for the same resources. Our lack of conversation is not making one school better than another; it is bringing down all the schools.

Although at least three administrators considered collaboration a major challenge to which they were trying to respond, such an effort takes time and energy. The relationships between administrators are not at all established; although they are friendly to each other in public, there is a great sense of competition and, at times, mistrust. It is certainly a worthy desire to collaborate with others; yet this challenge cannot be adequately solved in days or even months. The relationships that need to exist between Catholic schools can only be fostered over the course of years. Some administrators are beginning to see this; these are the ones who are beginning to reach out to others.

**Challenge 6: Staff formation.**

Administrators of Catholic schools in East Jerusalem and the West Bank are beginning to understand that teacher and administrator formation is important. Until recently, many teachers had basic university degrees in subjects such as Math, English, or Science and nothing more. Teaching was not viewed as a profession with skills to be learned; men and women could either teach or they could not. Teachers learned what they needed to know on the job by trial and error. Administrators often undertook their specific roles with the same lack of preparation: an administrator was often appointed



because he or she had seniority – there was no sense that administrators could or should have professional training. These mentalities are changing as training programs for teachers and administrators develop. Younger administrators seem to be paying closer attention to how teachers are trained and develop professionally. In addition, these same administrators often recognize the importance of their own professional development. They see formation of their teachers and themselves as a significant managerial challenge; accordingly, they now dedicate increasingly large amounts of their time to this task.

*Interviews with the administrators.*

It was either the youngest of the school leaders or those trained in either Europe or North America who made the majority of references to teacher and administrator formation. Although it is common in the west to acknowledge that teachers and school leadership benefit from academic formation, this was not necessarily the case in East Jerusalem and the West Bank. Most teachers entered into the classroom and were expected to make it on their own. Those who could not cope with the stresses of teaching were seen as not suited for the profession. The same held true for school leaders: they received little academic preparation and hardly any form of ongoing training. The administrator of EJ-2 obtained this insight from a unique experience in his own school. He stated,

Teachers were not accustomed to the principal observing them in the classroom. When I first told them that I want to come and observe their performance and then discuss any issues they may have with them, they thought I was going to terminate somebody's position.

Of course, the administrator had no intention to terminate any positions. Neither teacher observation nor mentoring was common in the school; it is certainly not common in most of the schools in the region. It is perhaps for this reason that those administrators who have considered it an ongoing managerial challenge dedicate so much time to it. Indeed, the administrator of WB-3 claimed,

More than two hours of my days are related to this issue – one full hour of observation and another for one-on-one meetings with a teacher. Over the course of a week, this means I'm spending one full day on their ongoing formation.

Given the many issues that a school leader could spend his or her time on, an entire day every week given to the issue reveals how important it is perceived. Each of the administrators who identified teacher formation felt that they have had to let go of many other issues in order to focus on such challenges. Since this issue is a new concept within these schools, it has not come without a reorientation of priorities; nevertheless, each of the leaders fully recognized that the schools themselves could be improved greatly by focusing on teacher development.

In conjunction with teacher formation, each of these four administrators spoke about the need for ongoing leadership for school leaders. Specifically the administrators at WB-6 and WB-8 were engaged in professional development programs geared directly toward leadership and administration. One was in the process of taking three short summer classes on educational leadership at an American university; the other was taking an online reading course through a European school. The two each claimed that very few school leaders have any formal administrative training, and those who did often did not consider ongoing formation as important. The administrator of WB-8 in fact suggested,

Educational methods in Palestine are changing quickly and leadership techniques also. School leaders need to be reading and studying more on the topic. Some very important works from America, such as this one I'm reading by [Robert] Starratt, could benefit us here, but most never read them.

Administrators of Catholic schools in the region generally do not take advantages of the resources available to them both in the region and abroad.

*Conversations with teachers and staff members.*

The teachers in those schools where administrators consider staff formation to be of great importance have certainly noticed the change of focus. Teachers in each of these schools spoke of professional development programs, classroom observations, and annual reviews. In most cases, opinions were mixed whether these programs were useful or altogether unnecessary. The senior teaching staff in each of the schools generally seemed to find them tiresome; they saw such activities as additional projects that ultimately do not benefit them or the school. The younger staff saw them as important and typically understood the connection between their own university training and the programs that the administrators were working to put in place. In the first instance, one teacher with 20 years experience at EJ-2 asserted, "I am a teacher. That's what I do. There is a lot of talk about educational approaches and curricular theory. I'm not interested in it; I think it takes us away from the classroom and the students." Other senior staff in each of the four schools echoed similar sentiments; these sorts of opinions were not at all unique.

All the same, teachers at Palestinian schools are trained in vastly different ways today than they were even 10 years ago. Topics such as the establishment of short-range goals as well as professional development are simply normal parts of vocabulary for the

new staff. The training that young teachers obtain at Arab universities, such as those in Bethlehem and Birzeit, have adopted many of the techniques that already exist in western universities. Future teachers are taught topics such as classroom management and contemporary pedagogical techniques. Consequently, when they enter into the workforce and find themselves in schools where the administrators are interested in ongoing formation, they are generally amicable to such issues. One teacher at WB-6 stated that the administrator

has taken an interest in how I'm doing. He spent time in my class and we met regularly when I was first hired. He insists that I self-review my performance and he asks each of the new teachers to meet with a mentor and him every month for the first three years.

Teaching is slowly becoming a profession that involves acquiring a certain skill-set; those coming out of teacher-training programs are open to growing in the profession.

Of course, many teachers enter schools with administrators who are not at all interested in such concepts. In many schools, young administrators spoke about feeling very unsupported in their profession. One teacher at WB-11 stated,

We are taught to use the latest techniques in pedagogy and technology – we leave school and we're very excited. Then we come into the reality and find ourselves with 45 students in a classroom, no media resources, and no support from anybody. Many teachers quit after their first or second year.

For some of the more senior school leaders, teaching can sometimes be seen as the sort of profession where you *sink or swim*. If an individual is able to manage their classes and teach the curriculum, they are suited for the job. Many potentially good teachers seem to

leave because they simply lack the expected or necessary supports. Those who do stay in situations where the administrator is not interested in their growth may quickly grow to see teaching as a job where they show up in the morning and leave in the afternoon.

Often no great love for the profession is demonstrated in these cases because the teachers see themselves more as resources and less as integral parts of the institution.

*Observations of the schools.*

One of the clearest expressions of how deeply involved or removed a school leader can be in terms of teacher formation came during a school tour. While walking the hallways of WB-4 with the administrator, we stopped at a classroom where the teacher was at her wits' end. She was screaming loudly at the students, and the classroom was in total disarray. When I asked the administrator what the issue was, he responded that she was a new teacher without any ability to teach. Very matter-of-factly he claimed that she was a new employee who found herself unable to control the classroom. He suggested that her voice was not very soothing for the students, and this was the source of her problems. To my surprise, the school leader simply said that he expected her to quit any day now. In this particular school, absolutely no teacher formation or teacher observation took place. This was not altogether uncommon throughout the schools. Teachers relied on each other for advice and support; they very rarely went to the administrator for any reason. Inversely, often very little was done by the administration when teachers were seen to be having problems.

In the schools where the administrators took a proactive approach, teachers seemed to feel much more empowered to raise issues of potential concern. They also

spoke much more openly, and without fear of being judged as inadequate teachers, about their struggles in the classroom. A teacher from WB-6 in fact confided,

I had a lot of problems in the classroom my first year, but ... [the administrator] helped me set goals; he helped me develop my discipline and we're working on my technique this year. He's very concerned about me, and it's much better this year.

In the schools where administrators are focusing on teacher training, the profession of teaching is understood as involving skills that can be developed and grow. There is no shame in having problems. Teachers are provided with many professional and personal resources. The staff generally seemed much happier and united in their common profession in these schools. In schools where teacher formation was a managerial challenge identified by administrators, the staff generally seemed much happier and confident.

***Summary reflection.***

Until about 15 years ago, teachers could secure a large variety of teaching positions in the region with just an undergraduate degree. In addition, administrators were appointed to their positions based more on seniority than on formal academic training. Today, it is increasingly expected that new teachers will have some training in education before entering the classroom; administrators are also expected to have some background in school leadership. Nevertheless, very little exists in terms of professional formation for either teachers or administrators. For many schools, little to no support or ongoing training is offered once individuals have obtained their positions, though this is not the case in all schools. In at least one school in East Jerusalem and three institutions in the

West Bank, the school leaders have made it a particular focus to ensure that both they and their staff are equipped with the necessary supports to perform their tasks well and with ease. All the same, it takes effort and change; administrators in these schools have faced resistance as they try to bring about their vision for more focused ongoing formation. Nevertheless, they are slowly able to change attitudes about the necessity for such formation – everyone ultimately benefits.

### **Challenge 5: Catholic identity.**

Administrators of Catholic schools in both East Jerusalem and the West Bank are facing a variety of managerial challenges related to the Catholicity of their schools. One of their biggest challenges is related to the rapid diminishment of the Christian community due to emigration. For example, the Christian population of Jerusalem dropped from around 29,000 or 20% of the population in 1948 to about 15,000 or 2% of the population in 2009 (Gerstenfeld, 2009; Lefkovits, 2009). An examination of enrolment documents in the observed schools revealed in fact that most student populations are between 50–90% non-Christian. In light of these changes, many school leaders have realized that they need to do something to preserve the Catholic identities of their schools. These responses have been unique and have encompassed a variety of approaches and methodologies. What is problematic, however, is that the four administrators who have made this a focus are not seeking to solve the problem in conjunction with others – their efforts seem to be very isolated and almost haphazard. Nevertheless, this issue seems to have emerged by surprise; nobody expected that schools that were once so obviously Catholic would need to have that identity protected and preserved with such intentionality.

*Interviews with the administrators.*

The administrators who specifically mentioned the Catholic identities of their schools see that Catholic education in the region is in peril. They are trying to implement some approaches to maintaining the specifically Catholic identity of their schools, but, for some, it is too late. The administrator at WB-9 admitted,

We have only 25% [students] that are Christians. Most of our teachers are Muslims. Nobody remembers when there were a lot of [religious] brothers. You just can't make it a Catholic school as it once was – those days are gone.

This school leader saw that, although they have mandatory chapel-time for all grades and a variety of Christian images throughout the school, nobody pays much attention to them. The remaining Christian quarter of the student population is broken down into Latin Catholic, Eastern Catholic, and Greek Orthodox. Hence traditional Latin Catholic prayers, such as the rosary or adoration, are without meaning even to most of the Christian students. The administrator continued, “If you can figure out how to make this school any more Catholic, then I’m willing to take your advice.” For those who see the Catholic identity as an important issue, the proper approach is unclear.

The school leader for WB-7 is a member of a religious congregation of sisters. When asked what was currently done to ensure that the school would maintain a Catholic identity, her response was not expected: “We are praying fervently for vocations so that someone will replace us [the sisters] at the school,” she said, “if the school is to remain Catholic, it’s up to the Lord to send replacements.” Obviously, she wanted the identity of the school to remain firmly Catholic, but her tactics relied on ensuring that she wore daily her religious habit, placed the appropriate images of the saints for each particular feast



day in the chapel, and prayed for new vocations. When the sister was asked what would happen to the Catholic identity of the school if something were to happen to her and she could no longer act as school leader, her response was sobering: “If tomorrow I couldn’t come to work, we would no longer have a Catholic school. I suppose that we would have to make this our last year here.” Although the sisters had administered the school for decades, they never anticipated that one day, they would not have sisters and only a very few Christians.

In many schools, the diminishment in the size of the religious congregations operating the institution is a major concern. However, this sentiment is not universal. In some schools, the Catholic identity is perceived as strong because they are located in predominantly Christian neighbourhoods or they still have large numbers of priests, or monastic brothers or sisters working in the schools. Although few in these institutions seemed concerned that the Catholic identity of their schools could dramatically change, the recent experiences of many of the other Catholic schools in the region suggest that they likely will – and that it is only a matter of time. To this end, administrators of all Catholic schools in the region could reflect upon how they will maintain their specific missions and identities once the Christian populations drop in numbers and the non-Catholic teaching staff grows. Catholic education in the region initially developed rapidly because large numbers of Christians were present in the region. In this period of great demographic change, ongoing evaluation of educational mandates might allow administrators to determine what they could offer that non-Catholic schools cannot.

*Conversations with teachers and staff members.*

The most interesting and passionate discussions with teachers and staff members took place concerning the topic of the Catholic identity of the schools. Depending on the individuals and their respective religious backgrounds, the sentiments ranged from a belief that the school is doing more than enough to one staff member who felt that the administrator has not even considered the issue. What was very apparent was that the Christian teachers and staff members in many schools felt increasingly like a minority who spend their time at an institution that becomes less visibly Christian every day. In addition, a substantial number of the Christians are starting to look at their Islamic co-workers with suspicion and contempt. One teacher at WB-7, who self-identified as a Christian, stated in a very hushed voice,

the Muslim teachers here are slowly taking power away from the Christians. The former principal never let them pray – he said this is not a mosque and they are paid to teach. Now they gather on a regular basis in the classroom to pray. It's now impossible to stop them; there would be a revolt.

The Christian teachers in all the schools generally have very mixed feelings about the increasing numbers of Muslim teachers. In most schools the two groups get along well; yet the private conversations with staff members revealed the deep, underlying tensions.

For the most part, the Islamic teachers are also aware that the Muslim population is growing in both the staff and the student body. Although they have no intention to make the school Islamic, they also have very little interest in keeping it overtly Catholic. In fact, a teacher at EJ-2 stated,

Why do we care if it is Christian or government run? For us, we just want a job. They can make it Christian, but none of the Muslims care that much – as long as we're not expected to be Christian or agree with their religion, they can do whatever they want.

All of the Islamic teachers who consented to be interviewed were dedicated to their jobs as teachers or staff members; they were generally very kind, genuine individuals who only wanted what was best for their students. The reality of the situation, nevertheless, is that Catholic schools in East Jerusalem and the West Bank are located in areas where the Christians are becoming the minority – if they are not already. Although all administrators claimed that they would very much like to have increased numbers of Christian teachers and students, the demographic shift has now made this impossible.

***Observations of the schools.***

It is difficult to describe how the four schools where administrators are focusing on building a Catholic identity differ from any of the other Catholic schools in the region. They seemed to be as outwardly Catholic as they could possibly be: crucifixes or religious paintings in the classroom; regular Christian prayer in a chapel or designated space; the frequent presence of either priests, religious brothers, or sisters; and references to the Catholic faith in either their mission statements or professed academic mandates. All the same, this did not distinguish them from most of the other schools in the region. Some were still *outwardly Catholic by default* because they had a significant number of Christian teachers and students; the ones who did not were finding that they had to work to maintain such a focus. Nonetheless, outward identification at the schools did not always reflect an internalized practice in the same institutions. For example, although

WB-7 had crucifixes on the classroom walls – the students never began or ended any of their lessons with prayer. In those schools where prayer did begin or end the class, the teachers typically asked the students to be quiet for a few moments.

The administrators of the four schools where the Catholic identity was deemed a definite managerial challenge are undoubtedly facing an uncertain future. A sense prevails that the Catholic identity of their schools is fully relying on external identity; walking through the halls is much like walking through a Catholic museum – nice pieces of artwork hang on the walls, but they do not elicit much of a response from anyone. In addition, these schools have student populations and teachers who are quite disinterested in the Christian religion. Although most of the non-Christians are as respectful as possible toward the Christian staff members, it seems that the values and ethics that these teachers are trying to instil in all of their students are not taking root. Many basic Christian perspectives tacitly accepted in western culture as normative (for example, the mandate to love your neighbour) are considered irrelevant in an Islamic society. In addition, the four school leaders each expressed fears that they would be perceived as evangelizing the Muslim students if they focused too much on the Catholic identities of their schools.

***Summary reflection.***

Of all the managerial challenges raised by administrators of the Catholic schools in East Jerusalem and the West Bank, this was the most vague. The four school leaders who professed to be working to maintain Catholic identities in their schools seemed willing to try any approach, without having a real methodology in place. With approximately 35% of the Christian population in the West Bank having emigrated since

1967 (CNEWA, 2002), they see that their schools are becoming increasingly non-Catholic. Even since the second intifada, thousands of Christians have left the region; it is thus very hard to find Christian teachers, and the Christian student population has likewise dwindled dramatically. Today, the 3.9 million population of the West Bank includes only about 50,000 Christians (Reuters UK, 2009). Although many of the Muslims either working or studying in these institutions are respectful to the professed Catholic identity, they are often not willing to do more than necessary to build it up. Because they are the religious majority in the region, no motivation drives them to cooperate with administrators who seek to respond to the loss of Catholic identity: many from within the Islamic community wait passively for what they see to be the inevitable loss of Catholic schools.

#### **Challenge 4: Christian community.**

Catholic schools in East Jerusalem and the West Bank are one of the few services that solely benefit the Christians in the region. The many churches and other sites of pilgrimage in the region have attracted pilgrims and tourists for thousands of years; the schools, however, were established for and are dedicated to the local Christian community. Consequently, they are looked upon as beacons of the Christian presence in a region that is becoming less Christian and – in some cases – much less accepting of Christian ideals. The priests from the Latin Catholic, Eastern Catholic, or Greek Orthodox churches have influence on their own parish communities; the local Catholic school leaders have influence on each of these different communities. All Christians, no matter their particular denomination, look to the local school administrator for spiritual, political, and social leadership. Because of this, school leaders have become important

community leaders. Most locals ascribe to them a leadership responsibility toward all the Christians in the vicinity of the school. In line with that sentiment, four of the school leaders see their roles as outreach to the local Christian community.

*Interviews with the administrators.*

When the administrators walk through the neighbourhood around their schools, everybody knows who they are and what sort of influence they have. Even the local parish priests defer to the school administrators because they have unique connections. A variety of the school leaders recognize the power of their position and have intentionally decided to use it to promote issues of specific importance to the Christians in the region. “One concern that I have is that a lot of the Christian families feel its easier to leave the country than to stay and fight for a Palestinian state,” claimed the administrator of WB-6. This theme was echoed very plainly among all of the school leaders who identified the potential for the school to help all Christians in the region. In fact, they knew that they typically considered their primary role as related largely to the great exodus of Christians from the region. The administrators of WB-3 and WB-8 spoke at length about their hopes for a Palestinian state but felt that very few Christians may remain in the region once it occurs. Therefore, encouraging them to remain in East Jerusalem and the West Bank is a major focus.

In fact, the administrator of WB-3 claimed, “We have Christians here since the time of Jesus – we have suffered greatly in many ways: we must not leave just now.” Thus, the schools are not necessarily seen as isolated institutions whose primary function is education; they are symbols that tell all Christians that their presence is indeed deeply rooted in the region. “If we closed the school, it says that there is nothing Christian left.

We must not close; we show that no matter what is done to us, we will not abandon our heritage,” claimed the administrator of WB-8. These four administrators see the purpose of the schools to be less about education of the youth and more about the empowerment of all the Christian faithful. As long as the schools remain fixed in the region, a sense of hope prevails; with every school that closes, more Christians become discouraged about their uncertain futures. In the face of growing persecution from individuals within both the Israeli and Islamic traditions, many Christians feel that the schools are their last real social connection.

In addition to working with the Christians directly, the four administrators spoke at length about how they had influence within the Islamic community: they were able to help Christians in ways that the local priests could not. Since many Islamic leaders will not speak directly with Christian leaders, the school administrators become representatives of the Christians. The community listens to them because their Catholic schools typically have large numbers of Islamic students as well. To this end, school leaders are respected within both communities – they are able to build bridges between the two groups. The administrator of WB-8 explained, “I meet on a regular basis with Islamic leaders; when there is a concern that affects the Christians and Muslims, we work together closely. He trusts me and I [trust] him.” The administrators claimed, each in their own way, that the peaceful relationships between Christians and Muslims in West Bank towns is a direct result of the work that goes on between the Catholic school leaders and Islamic leaders.

*Conversations with teachers and staff members.*

Speaking directly to the issue of building tolerance between Muslims and Christians, a staff member at WB-10 keenly observed that the administrator was able to speak with local [Islamic] leaders about the use of the [Islamic] headscarf at school and in the community. He showed that head-coverings are not Islamic and they only create division between the Muslims and Christians: thanks to the principal, the [Muslim] girls do not cover their heads and separate themselves from the Christian girls.

Increasingly, the Muslim girls in East Jerusalem and the West Bank do cover their heads in high schools. Since the Christians do not hold such a tradition, the observance of this tradition divides Muslims and Christians. This has not always been the case. Only within the last 10 of 15 years, the tradition has increased in strength, but it causes many problems for the Christian women, since they are easily singled out. The principal took the position that high school girls should not wear head-coverings; many Islamic leaders accepted the position and spoke out in favour of this one principal. Although some families insist that the girls wear the garment, many have permitted them to go without coverings.

This may seem like a very small issue, but it shows how the administrators of Catholic schools in the region have the ability to change cultural norms. In many instances, they seek such changes because they feel that they are in a unique position to help the Christian community. In addition to working locally, administrators use their reputation to educate both the wider Israeli and Palestinian populations. The leaders of WB-3 and WB-8 publish regularly in local journals, newspapers, and online forums about



the issues facing Christians in the region – both the very good and the very bad. One teacher at WB-3 explained, “I’m reading something [the school leader has] written almost every other day. Nothing can happen to the Christians here without the whole town knowing.” By taking an advocacy role, the school leaders ensure that the increasingly small number of Christians in East Jerusalem and the West Bank are not treated unfairly or with any sort of religious discrimination. Violence against Christians takes place frequently all over the region (Watts, 1997; Anwar, 2002; Radin, 2002; Wolfe, 2003; Abu Toameh, 2005). However, these two school administrators are exceptionally vocal when it happens locally. As the same teacher at WB-3 claimed, “People know that if they hurt a Christian, the story will be known by all. They think twice and a third time in most cases.”

*Observations of the schools.*

At three of the four schools where the administrators identified outreach to the local Christian community as a managerial challenge, they took the time to highlight the many activities in the neighbourhood. I was introduced to tailors, bakers, restaurant owners, and other individuals of importance around the school. These three school leaders sought to demonstrate that the Catholic school was an integral part of the wider community; even though not reflective of the predominant Islamic faith in the region, the school was considered by all to be an important and necessary institution. Islamic parents spoke with very high praise for the school as well as all the teachers’ and administrators’ work to educate the youth. Each of these four administrators knew that with a positive relationship with the Muslims in the region they could do more to benefit the Christians. One administrator saw the issue with clarity:

There are not enough of us to have a totally Christian school, so we need them. Of course, our school is one of the best so they need us. We both know that we are taking something from the other – but that’s the way the system works here in the Middle East.

***Summary reflection.***

Christian schools in East Jerusalem and the West Bank have become beacons of hope for a Christian community facing an increasingly uncertain future. In recent years, according to most administrators, the Christians have simply given up on finding their place within a seemingly irresolvable conflict. Many have left the region for other countries; other Christians have become complacent with their situation. The administrators of these four schools each see that they can do much to work with the Christians in the region, to offer them support, and to provide a unified voice. By working with leaders of all faiths, school administrators have shown themselves able to prevent violence against Christians. In times when local priests are divided among themselves along denominational lines or cannot speak with Islamic leaders, the school administrators can still speak on behalf of and to all Christians. Their voices are heard when they are used well and have the power to transform the situation for all Christians.

**Challenge 3: Student discipline.**

Student discipline was identified by a large number of Catholic school leaders as a real managerial challenge. Many of these leaders claimed that they spend extraordinarily large amounts of their time dealing with students’ negative behaviours. This included the monitoring of the hallways, meeting with students in the administrative office, dialoguing with parents both on the phone and in person, and supervising student

detentions. These related tasks are noted to have increased in recent years; every administrator has in fact suggested that general student behaviour has changed for the worse since the second intifada and that attitudes have become increasingly negative. Although some schools have a disciplinarian or other staff member who deals primarily with issues of student behaviour, most schools are unable to pay for such a position. Consequently, it typically falls to the school leader to respond to issues related to student discipline. In an already very hectic day, these were one of the most time-consuming managerial challenges identified in this study.

*Interviews with the administrators.*

When asked about the administrative tasks that occupy most of the school day, the school leader at EJ-2 stated,

I spend 90% of my day dealing with disruptions of students. Look at me – always students in the office, I always correct them when they stand outside their classes in the hallway: keeping them in order is my biggest issue.

The administrator is the default student disciplinarian in most Catholic schools in East Jerusalem and the West Bank. The school leader of WB-2 in fact stated,

I wonder if anyone can solve a problem without me? Every time there is a fight or a disagreement, it comes to my office. I get a headache with it all. Teachers no longer even try to punish students – they send the disruptive ones to my desk.

Six of the fourteen school leaders expressed concern that student discipline has taken up increasingly large amounts of their day. The administrator of WB-4 stated, “I come in the morning yelling and leave at night yelling. It’s sometimes at the same group of students.

They have no respect. What to do with them?” Although there is little consensus about what to do with the students, most school leaders believe that they know the cause of the behavioural issues. “The second intifada changed them,” claimed the school leader of WB-10. He continued,

I don't know if they feel hopeless or afraid or angry or sad. Whatever they are feeling, it emerges with violent and disrespectful behaviour. They are quick to fight; they speak very boldly with teachers; they are not afraid of punishment.

Many of the administrators recollected recent and distant memories of times when students were respectful, and teachers as well as school leaders possessed great authority.

As the administrator of WB-4 noted,

When I was a student, we were very afraid of our teachers; we listened to them. Today, they are not afraid; they don't care. I think the intifada has made them give up hope – they have lost their dignity. They behave like animals now.

Many administrators have no idea how to curb negative behaviour such as intentional disruptions in the classes, fighting, disrespectful comments, and general lack of kindness. At least four of the administrators revealed a great sense of frustration. When asked how student behaviour affects education in the region, the administrator of WB-4 continued, “It has become a battle between order and complete chaos in most of our schools. The school is losing.”

A few of the administrators recognized that students imitate the sorts of behaviour they see pervasively in their culture. When they are forced to come to school through checkpoints where the Israeli soldiers speak to them in derogatory ways or humiliate them, they internalize the feelings. When something at school frustrates them, all the

negative sentiments emerge in a rush of emotion. This is an astute realization, especially since the administrators of EJ-2 and EJ-3 both saw student behaviour as their major challenge: it is in East Jerusalem where the students would be most exposed to Israeli soldiers on a regular basis. There is thus a strong argument to be made that the continual exposure to Israeli soldiers affects the students emotionally. Indeed, as the administrator of EJ-2 stated,

My students walk by soldiers only a few years older than them. The soldiers have guns; my students have nothing. They are powerless and emasculated in front of the Israelis. They cannot take out these feelings on the soldiers, so they take it out on each other. The attitudes are a result of the occupation.

It is, in fact, important to note that the behaviour issues are almost entirely confined to the male student population. Administrators of schools comprised entirely of girls did not report any change in behaviour. Such radical changes in attitudes seem to be limited to the groups of boys. The administrator of EJ-3 maintained, "The girls are okay. When they do something wrong, it is often because they were influenced by a boy. Always the boys! Generally, the girls are quiet and still respectful. I have no issues with them." Even in the West Bank schools, where the students are not exposed to Israeli soldiers on a regular basis, the attitude changes in the boys are noticeable. Again, the administrator of WB-9 said, "They make my head hurt. How can they be so mindless day-after-day? Always fighting; not paying attention; arriving late. This job has made me an old man before I should be." With very little resources, such as counsellors or psychologists, to deal with the attitudes of the students, most school administrators have

had to respond to issues related to student discipline in any way they can. Sometimes they address the ongoing issues very well; sometimes they do not.

One of the big issues identified by each of the administrators is that parents themselves are much less supportive of the school in terms of discipline: “There is a great lack of respect for authority from the part of the parents; they will support their children over the words of me or the teachers almost every time,” stated the administrator of WB-4. In recent years, parents have been perceived as less sympathetic to the efforts of the school staff. When a phone-call is made to the parents about a behavioural issue, both teachers and administrators feel that they now are now viewed as the ones at fault. In fact, as WB-4 continued,

When we have an issue with a student, the parents accuse the school for doing something wrong. There is no support for our discipline by them – their sons are perfect in their eyes. How can we correct bad behaviour when we have no parental support? When did this happen?

A sense prevails that many parents do not want to discipline their children; it is felt by the school leaders that the parents are trying to protect them. Therefore, students can behave badly because they know that their mothers and fathers will protect them. The lack of parental support on issues of discipline is a new phenomenon; administrators have no idea how to deal with it.

### *Conversations with teachers and staff members.*

Without any question, the teachers and staff members are aware of the school leaders’ struggles regarding student discipline. They typically agree with the claim that the attitudes of the students have become much worse in the last number of years. Many

of the teachers are not able to deal with their large classes or continued student disruptions; hence, they are quick to send them out of the classroom or to the administrative office. A new teacher from WB-2 stated,

You saw my class. 46 students – in such a small room. How can I deal with the subject when they are talking, fighting, and throwing things? Every day the same students get sent out of the room. It's not fair to them, but it's also not fair to me.

Many teachers reach their breaking points when forced to deal continually with both large classes and disruptive students. The staff-room at WB-2 revealed such stresses. Teachers typically came into the small room when they had a chance to relax. The men lit cigarettes; the women boiled water for a cup of tea – nobody said anything. The room was an unofficial quiet zone where the teachers could retreat to gain some level of sanity before emerging once again into the chaos of the school.

One new teacher at WB-4 confided that he is embarrassed about how little control he has over the class. He explained,

It feels wrong to send the students to the office – sometimes two or three from every class all day long. They just do not listen; they do not behave. I have tried all the techniques they taught at [the university of] Birzeit but practically they don't work – so he [the administrator] is left to deal with them.

Although most schools have some sort of disciplinary system, the change in attitudes, which many attribute both to the second intifada and the ongoing presence of Israeli soldiers, have left most schools unequipped. Teachers struggle to minimize the numbers of times that they need to discipline students by either reprimanding them in class or sending them out of the room. But the greatest of their problems are often sent to the

school administrator so he or she can solve them. Classroom teachers are already stretched to their limits; they are simply unable to deal with disruptive student behaviour. As a teacher at EJ-2 said with an ironic tone, “If students want to express themselves here at school, they should to find a way to do it that doesn’t always involve drawing blood.”

*Observations of the schools.*

The teacher of religion at WB-4 invited me to observe the religion classroom. In both East Jerusalem and the West Bank, teachers do not typically have their own classrooms. Rather, the students remain while the teachers circulate in and out of the rooms. This means, generally no particular teacher is in charge of the aesthetic atmosphere of the classrooms. This is, nevertheless, not the case for subjects such as religion and music – students typically come to these rooms. While discussing student behaviour, the religion teacher made an insightful comment:

The students’ classrooms are like jail cells. They’re not painted bright colours; they lack photos or paintings on the wall; they’re crowded and not very stimulating. Not so with my classroom. Look how warm it is – students find beauty here.

The classroom environment affects the students; students, it was claimed, are going to be calmer if their classrooms are organized and decorated with care. The religion teacher continued,

If students feel that the classrooms are temporary – which is how they feel now – it gives them a sense that they can’t relax. Everything in their life is uncertain: their school should feel permanent, and they must feel safe here.



An observation of a lesson offered by the religion teacher revealed less negative energy than was found in many other classes and schools, the students were visibly calmer and more focused on the lesson. A great deal of energy had been invested in the organization and decoration of the classroom – pictures were hung on the wall, the desks were unmarked with the standard graffiti found on most, and students interacted with each other with dignity as well as respect. The students seemed to be a completely different group in the religion class than they were seen to be in other situations. Again, the religion teacher from WB-4 stated,

They come into my room and they feel like they're invited into my home. They are good students at heart – nobody would be rude in another's home. They respect my classroom because they know I care for it well. It is very meaningful to me, and so they find meaning in it also.

The teacher saw that student management does not work when it is based on punishment. Instead, it was understood that students who feel safe and part of a beautiful environment are less anxious and afraid. This naturally translates into less aggressive outbursts and better behaviour in general.

Although the religion teacher at WB-4 may have found the key to establishing positive student behaviour, this particular class was the anomaly. In each of the schools where discipline was identified as a managerial challenge, students demonstrated poor behaviour to greater or lesser degrees. However, it almost seemed as though a battle of wits was taking place between the students and the staff. Three boys at EJ-3 were lined up against the wall outside of their class after having been asked to leave due to disruptive behaviour. As teachers walked by, they stopped to either yell at the boys or

give them a firm blow on the upper torso. When the teachers walked away, the boys would giggle uncontrollably until the next teacher came by to chastise them. This situation was symptomatic of most of the schools where discipline was identified as a challenge. Administrators, as it was seen, really did spend incredibly large chunks of their day responding to the various behavioural issues. Sometimes they would meet with students in the office; other times they walked the hallways and went into classrooms where a teacher had lost control. In each of these schools, the screaming of teachers and the administrator were regularly heard.

***Summary reflection.***

The administrators at a number of schools in East Jerusalem and the West Bank understand fully that something needs to change in order to gain control of their students. Discipline, as it exists now, involves responding to issues when they emerge – it is a very reactive strategy. In addition, the administrators are finding that they have increasingly less support from parents in terms of student discipline. No longer can administrators be assured that parents will have the necessary conversation with their children when a phone-call goes home. Rather, the current situation suggests that students not only refuse to listen to teachers and administrators but parents also question their authority. School staff and leaders are losing control on both fronts; as a result, the school leaders are forsaking a whole variety of other tasks in order to maintain control of their schools. Although most recognize this change in behaviour as connected to the second intifada, few have insights into what needs to be done.

**Challenge 2: Internal office work.**

Although the majority of the Catholic school leaders would prefer not to spend a lot of time behind a desk, the reality is that they do. Seven of the administrators claimed that one of the biggest managerial challenges they face is ordinary office work – spending large parts of their days filling out forms, correlating data, writing proposals as well as reports, and generally sorting through paper. Many of the school leaders claimed that they have no option but to work alone in an office during school hours and well into the evening if the school is to function. Although such work may be normative for many school leaders, those who administer Catholic schools in the region speak about the continual increase of such work year after year. Whether it involves filling out a required report for the government or working to determine which of the students are eligible for promotion to the next grade, much of the paperwork falls directly on the school leader's desk. When much of the school day is spent in an office, many of the administrators have little time to deal with the many other tasks that may emerge.

***Interviews with the administrators.***

According to the administrator of WB-11, most of the Catholic school leaders in the region are “drowning in a sea of paperwork.” Indeed, the governments of both Israel and Palestine annually demand more forms, reports, and reflections. For example, the Palestinian government insists on regular statistical updates about a variety of topics including student demographics, grades, and school budget. This means that administrators work long hours to compile the data, even though it is not always immediately relevant to their own institutions. In addition to this major and ongoing task, a number of the administrators spoke about the many hours spent on working out details

related to the final standardized exam that all Palestinian students must write. This exam, which has developed in recent years, determines which graduates can attend post-secondary institutions in Palestine and which will not.

In the first instance, the development of a Palestinian educational system within the last decade has also necessitated quantitative data to assess its successes and limitations. The ministry of education in Palestine, much to its credit, has incredibly detailed statistics about the numbers of students in every schools, their backgrounds, their socio-economic statuses, and other relevant statistics. According to the leader of WB-7, “the statistics are important, but they are required many times a year. This means that I work on reports for more than 8 weeks a year.” Although an office assistant could easily handle such correlation of data at most schools in North America, their counterparts in Palestine are organized quite differently. As the administrator of WB-2 pointed out,

We don't rely on computers; everything must be done by hand. My secretary is very busy with internal problems, so the government requirements fall to me. I copy out all the data letter by letter for weeks at a time.

For the most part, the office staff in Catholic schools is comprised of one or two employees; since much of the work is not processed electronically, most tasks are completed slowly.

Aside from the quantitative data that the government requires from every school, the other major government-imposed task concerns student preparedness for the final Palestinian qualifying exam – known by all as the Tawjihi exam. Even if students can successfully complete all the required high school courses, they are expected to pass this final comprehensive exam. It is a major, and necessary, step for any student who wants to

study at any Palestinian university or at most Arab universities. As a result, a tremendous amount of administrative energy is dedicated toward preparing students for this exam. School leaders are to ensure that their students have obtained the required grades and passed the necessary classes; in addition, their entire histories need to be in order. Because most schools do not have a large staff, the school leaders themselves pour over grades and course transcripts for their students. Essentially, they are solely responsible for ensuring that everything is in order for the students to prepare for, write, and pass the Tawjihi exam.

The administrator of WB-11 stated bluntly,

At the end of the year, the Tawjihi is not just something important. It is everything. You could not imagine how many issues emerge around this. With 120 graduating students, I am dealing with issues from parents and the government.

The exam is indeed an important and necessary concern. It not only enables students to claim their status as a graduate of the Palestinian educational system, but the exam itself is the essential benchmark by which schools measure their success or failure. When asked to describe their school, most Palestinian school leaders first comment on the percentage of their students who have passed the Tawjihi exam. This exam is such a major issue for administrators because the success of a school guarantees a long contract. Those with a lower-than-average success rate are unlikely to have long careers as school administrators. Because their careers depend on student success, most school leaders spend extraordinarily large amounts of time focusing on the Tawjihi. Preparation for the exam is naturally stressful for students; however, it is also stressful for the school leaders.

For Catholic schools in East Jerusalem, many of the office-related managerial challenges are compounded. Not only do they adhere to the Palestinian curriculum and respond to the same government requirements, but they are also expected to manage their school in accord with the laws of Israel. To this issue, the leader of WB-1 was quick to add, “There is never a day I am not spending time working on paperwork. Although the requirements of one ministry [of education] are quite enough for me, I need to deal with two.” Because of school funding from the Israeli government, the administrators of Catholic schools in East Jerusalem typically have larger staffs that can help alleviate the burdens of such office-work. However, they also often have more work to do.

The Catholic schools in East Jerusalem, because they are dealing simultaneously with both the Israeli and the Palestinian governments, do their work in the Hebrew and Arabic languages. This need for a staff that functions in both languages is an added demand placed on the administrators of Catholic schools in East Jerusalem, one that Jewish schools in Israel and Palestinian schools in the West Bank do not have to worry about.

Aside from paperwork relating to the ministry of education, many of the administrators are bogged down with tasks that they alone are capable of doing. At the start of each year, the administrators typically spend weeks trying to organize students into the proper classes while ensuring that the teachers themselves are slotted to teach full course loads within the proper subject areas. This initial task can take a full week or more, especially since the placement of students is still done one student at a time. Once the academic year begins, the slotting of students into new classes and the movement of teachers becomes an additional but typical task. In addition, many administrators take it

upon themselves to both read over and approve every exam that is offered in the schools. The administrator at WB-8 in fact claimed, “I collect the exams to be given and review them Thursday mornings. It typically takes an hour or two but it must be done.” The administrators alone can do these tasks; as small as they may be, they bind the school leaders to their office.

In addition to paperwork, one interesting aspect of school leadership keeps administrators bound to their offices, a leadership task beyond the formal job description but, nevertheless, important. With the Arabic culture placing a major emphasis on the need to be in a relationship with others, school leaders place a huge priority on being open to interruption. This means that as school leaders try to spend a few minutes at their desks, they are open to receiving visitors. Many times someone will appear at the door to chat about nothing in particular.

Although a school leader may be very busy in the office, it is not at all culturally acceptable to send a guest away. Therefore, very few of the interviews for this study took place without interruption. When the phones would ring, the administrators would answer; when someone had a question, they simply poked their head in the door and spoke freely. One astute leader at WB-4 observed, “My job is to talk to people. About what? About whatever they want. I am in charge; when they call or stop in, they are most welcome – as are you.” Even when school leaders go to their offices to do work, they may end up chatting for an hour or more with an unannounced guest – always over a cup of coffee – who has only come to visit.

*Conversations with teachers and staff members.*

Undoubtedly, school leaders spend large amounts of their day working at their desks. The school secretary at WB-5 observed, “He [the administrator] is in the office before students or teachers arrive; he is in the office into the evening. He has much to do.” A major issue is, however, not how much time these school leaders spend in their offices, but how the staff interprets this behaviour. Two administrators who claimed that office work takes up large amounts of their time also had staff members who spoke about them as unreachable and out of touch. Although these administrators did not seem to spend more time behind the desk than those at other schools, their particular offices were in fact hidden away in the back parts of the main office so that teachers and students very rarely saw the administrators.

In contrast, other school leaders whose staff spoke highly about their dedication to office work had offices with a door to a main hallway or a window. One teacher noted, “Although we do not talk, I see him hard at work a dozen times a day through the glass. I respect his dedication.” Although this group of administrators was also seen behind their desks, they were perceived as involved in the school and accessible to the teachers.

One big insight provided about the stresses facing school leaders as they undertake work in their offices related to peer support. One poignant comment came from a teacher at WB-8: “At the end of the day we go home, whether the work is done or not. If there are deadlines that need to be met, it always falls on his desk.” This reality was almost universal in every school. Teachers and office staff are generally underpaid and often do not stay at the school longer than required once the final bell rings. Indeed, very few are willing to sacrifice time away from their family to catch up on necessary school-



related work. Issues such as reports, grant proposals, parental concerns, and curricular organization often cannot be ignored. They need to be dealt with appropriately and in due time. For the administrator, this sort of work often takes place once everyone has gone home. Being a school leader can thus be a very lonely, isolating experience. Although school leaders themselves did not comment on this point, their staff readily noted the long hours and the isolation that they face as administrators.

*Observations of the schools.*

The time-consuming office work is difficult to determine based on school observation. What can be stated with certainty is that the offices of most school leaders are generally jam-packed with forms and official documents. Schools in East Jerusalem and the West Bank still do much of their work by hand. Although computers are used increasingly, they do not get used in much of the daily business. Instead, files are kept in big binders, which are stored meticulously on shelves. Naturally, despite the incredible systems of organization, it means that data are very slowly processed. Even when some of the most modest of technological assistance would help a school leader, such as databases or email correspondence, these are typically not employed. A pen and pad of paper are, in fact, the standard ways of creating and transmitting data at Catholic schools in the region. The possibility of a paperless office is certainly a long way off for such school leaders.

A good example of this was observed when a former student of WB-2 came to the school in order to request a copy of transcripts. The secretary pulled out a very thick book approximately 18 in. by 42 in. with the handwritten names of every student, their academic choices, and their final grades. She claimed that every student who has attended

the school in its long history has their entire academic data hand-recorded in either that particular book or one of the others like it. When the school year ends, all the data are copied – again by hand – onto the appropriate forms; this is then sent to the Palestinian Ministry of Education. Although such data could be computerized with one of dozens of modern programs, the authorities at the Ministry of Education prefer to have data recorded by hand. The administrator of WB-8 stated with a smile, “I took some leadership classes in America; everything I learned was about 20 years too advanced for the situation here.” As time progresses, new developments in school management techniques will perhaps streamline many of the most ordinary administrative tasks.

*Summary reflection.*

The school leaders spend large amounts of time in their offices dealing with all sorts of office-related issues. This is compounded with visitors who tend to disrupt them as soon as they spend any time in the office. Dealing with the Ministry of Education, scheduling teacher and student timetables, filling out paperwork for grants or donations, and keeping up with general correspondence usually all fall directly on the desks of school leaders. This issue is compounded by the fact that typically school offices are poorly staffed; most school leaders do not have assistant principals. In addition, most of the Catholic schools have one secretary who typically acts as receptionist for the school and as liaison to the staff. Anything that needs to be completed for out-of-school use or involves issues such as the curriculum generally falls to the school leader. This means that, although they wish they could work on many issues, Catholic school leaders in East Jerusalem and the West Bank they are often obliged to work behind a desk with a pen in hand.

**Challenge 1: Financial stability.**

More than any other managerial challenge, administrators of Catholic schools claim that they spend time and energy on institutional finances. Whether it involves bringing parents to pay the proper tuition, bargaining with staff and school employees for reductions or changes in the pay schedule, the writing of proposals for local or international grants, or simply trying to find the best bargains on local school supplies, nine out of the 14 school leaders claimed that ensuring financial stability of their institutions is one of their top administrative concerns. Catholic schools in East Jerusalem and the West Bank are generally at a financial crossroads. Most school leaders are barely keeping their institutions financially solvent; they are continually working to ensure that the schools survive. Often it is not a question of year-to-year but of month-to-month survival.

***Interviews with the administrators.***

The three biggest issues that the administrators themselves seemed to be dealing with are how finances affect the physical structure of the school, how finances affect the pedagogical goals, and finances affect the staff. Without money, a school is quite limited in what it can do. As the administrator of EJ-3 suggested, “It seems bad to be thinking about money each and every day, but there is nothing more important than getting enough. Without this as my primary focus, there is no school.” Accordingly, it should not be surprising that most administrators consider issues related to finances and the financial stability of their schools to be their biggest administrative challenge. At the schools in both East Jerusalem and the West Bank, most administrators spend most of their time on

this issue; hours and hours are spent just to provide the institutions with the minimal resources needed to keep them open: electricity, water, and a paid staff.

Walking through the halls of WB-10, the school leader pointed out problem after problem with the physical plant. The desks were old, the windows cracked, the classrooms unpainted, the walls in disrepair, and the flooring unpolished. He commented,

So much to do; it is just sad. My students should come and be proud of their school, but we have no money. What do we fix first isn't a question to worry about. We can't afford to fix anything.

In this school, and many others, a drastic need for repair was evident. Catholic schools in the West Bank survive entirely on tuition and fundraising efforts. Unlike the government schools run by the Palestinian authority, they have very little excess capital for physical repairs. As a result, they are showing their age and their wear of decades of use; most are reaching their limit and need an exceptional amount of renovation.

Indeed, unlike some of the newer schools in the West Bank that have been built by international organizations supporting the Palestinian cause, the Catholic schools have existed for decades, if not for centuries. Very few international organizations (including the Church) regularly contribute to all the Catholic schools as a corporate whole. If foreign donations do come to the school, they are typically given to one school or another because the administrator has fostered a special, particular connection. This has led to a few schools with savvy school leaders doing very well when it comes to fundraising for capital repairs. But the vast majority simply have neither the skill nor the time to do such work. Indeed, the administrator of WB-10 stated, "I became principal to lead the school. I

am not good at raising money and feel bad asking people. My one limitation leads the school to suffer. It is a lose-lose situation.”

Most of the school leaders entered the realm of education because they wanted to teach, and those who accepted the role of school leader did so because they considered themselves able to offer their skills to the school community. They typically never expected to spend hours every week sending e-mails out to Europe and North America requesting money for new desks or filling out grant applications to get the roof fixed. The administrator of EJ-1 made the following astute comment:

We talk with pity about poor baby Jesus who was born in a cave. At least there his family had no worry that the roof would come down on them. It was much more solid and safe than this old building.

The physical plant of the schools in East Jerusalem are typically much better since they receive some funding from the Israeli government, but, when compared to Jewish schools, they reflect a certain tiredness and wear.

Yet the physical plant is only one issue related to the lack of financial resources. The lack of money has a direct influence on the academic development of the students. The school leader of WB-5 recognized, “Young teachers come out of university prepared to use computers and multimedia and are usually shocked to find that we have two televisions and very little else in terms of multimedia.” A few of the schools in East Jerusalem and the West Bank have overhead projectors available in the classrooms, but these were an obvious exception. Nearly every school has instead an old blackboard; the teachers all typically teach with various colours of chalk. Many of the administrators recognized that white boards with erasable markers would be much nicer and easier to

use but that these cost money. In most schools, nobody has been able to make a case that a new type of board is better than the current. Because of this, they remain unchanged. The administrator of WB-6 observed, “When you are poor, you realize that teachers and students need very little to do their jobs. Thank God.”

The lack of financial resources means that some very normal elements of school life in North American schools simply do not exist in East Jerusalem and the West Bank. Textbooks are a luxury for many schools, photocopying for classroom use is extremely rare, and students as well as teachers guard their pens or pencils like priceless treasures. In addition to financial affect on the classrooms, such constraints also impact many other programs in the school. Money cannot, and typically is not, spent on expensive extracurricular programs such as art or music; the few sports teams that do exist rely on old equipment; and field trips are reserved to students in the higher grades.

The administrator of WB-1 pointed out the reasons: “To rent a bus for 40 students for just one day costs the same as what one student pays for a year of tuition. It is not something we do every day, of course.” This administrator additionally suggested that it is almost unjustifiable to spend one-fortieth of the school budget on transportation to an event that is not absolutely necessary. Because of this, fieldtrips, particularly at the schools in the West Bank, are exceptionally rare.

The financial difficulties that face many schools ultimately have the greatest impact on the teachers. Every administrator suggested that the teaching is typically considered a transitional profession due to low teacher salaries. During an interview with WB-3, a question was asked about what happens if the school cannot keep itself financially stable. The response was unambiguous: “We need to pay the teachers on a

rotating schedule until tuition is paid and grants come through. If it continues, next year we have fewer teachers and bigger classes.” Most schools in East Jerusalem exist simply from one month to the next, and teachers are frequently told that they will receive less than their full salary until more funds can be obtained. This is simply considered a standard and expected part of the teaching profession in many schools, especially toward the end of the year when tuitions have still not been paid and the capital resources of the school are depleted. The school leader of EJ-2 also noted that teachers pay the price for financial struggles. It was stated, “I only have 75% of students pay their tuition. So, I fill the classes up to 150% to break even. My teachers pay the price with classes of more than 50 students.”

***Conversations with teachers and staff members.***

The teachers typically speak directly to how the financial struggles of their schools affect a whole variety of issues. All the same, a majority of the teachers are most concerned with how the lack of money affects them in the classroom. Many expressed frustrations with how little they are able to be innovative or dynamic because they are using outdated resources or have over-sized classes. A teacher at EJ-3 spoke with great frustration, “In my biology class, I am having to draw formulae on the board in every class. There is no projector to use. We have no computers. I spend much time drawing and not so much teaching.” This particular teacher was trained at Bethlehem University to use many of the most modern pedagogical tools and was relatively new to teaching. In many of the government schools in both East Jerusalem and the West Bank, teachers have access to these materials. The many Catholic schools, which do not receive the same government funding, are unable to purchase such tools. As a result, another teacher from

EJ-3 noted, “We claim to be a top-rate school, but our tools are limited to the things that existed here in the 1970s.”

Another new teacher at WB-10 recognized that the class sizes are simply unmanageable for many of the teachers; this is a direct result of issues related to tuition collection. It was claimed,

The students come from poor families. They cannot pay tuition. They say they can at the start but always something happens. They [the school administrator] know this here and make the classes very big. It is just not possible to teach so many students. Very hard.

Especially in the West Bank, many of the families are large and regular employment is rare. Catholic parents in the West Bank are often forced to choose between sending their children to the government schools (Islamic by default) or to claim that they could pay tuition at a Catholic school when they cannot. Although some Islamic families default on the tuition payments, the vast majority of these problems cases are from the Catholic families. Indeed, a teacher from WB-11 pointed out, “Christians are the poorest, and they do not pay their fees. They think they have a right to be here and that we are to cover for them.” Naturally, this particular issue raises a whole variety of complicated problems.

A teacher at WB-3 in fact claimed very discretely that, “He [the school leader] sometimes does not take Christians if he feels they cannot pay. Whoever can pay gets his spot at the school. Because of this, many Christians go to public schools instead of here.” Although no Catholic school leader would admit it publicly, the interviews revealed that more than half would take Islamic students who could pay the tuition over the Christian students who could not. Although it seemed to be a justifiable choice for many of the



Islamic teachers, many of the Christian teachers considered this a significant betrayal of the school identity. One particular teacher claimed in hushed tones, “Imagine! They send the Christians away from here and take Muslims. I would rather the school close than we become a school for rich Muslims.” Such sentiments, which are present among many of the Christian staff, are always articulated very quietly. Nobody would publicly claim that this is an injustice to the Christians, but it is certainly the case. Christians on staff want to serve Christian students; it is a source of frustration to see them turned away due to finances.

A final issue related to finances that the teachers themselves spoke about, but that many administrators also addressed, was how a teaching income cannot support a family. Although the teachers themselves were, without question, grateful for their positions, many of the men spoke about how they needed to work additional jobs in order to support their wives and children. As one teacher noted, “It is impossible for a married man to live on the salary of a teacher. Most of us have second jobs.” Although this was typically the case more in the West Bank than in East Jerusalem, the reality of the situation did mean that teaching was considered by many to be a job for either women or unmarried men; the majority of the staff population at the schools in the region reflected this reality. Naturally, issues arise from teachers having a second job. First, it means that many are not at all interested in doing anything directly related to the school after the day has ended. Second, it means that they are out in the community doing a variety of jobs that are, historically or socially, not considered acceptable for teachers to do.

One teacher at WB-10 claimed,

When I am not working here, I drive a taxi. I am not very proud when I must stop and pick up a student of mine. It changes me from master into servant. It affects my relationship with students at the school. I cannot have authority when I am seen as a driver.

A number of the male teachers recognized that they have lost cultural status because of their second job. Indeed, as a teacher at WB-6 recognized, “Teachers in my day were respected. They were seen as important members of the community. I cannot be important when my students know I work in a restaurant in the evenings.” With such a dichotomy, the men who do choose to become teachers often leave before marriage. With such low wages, most seek out professions to which they can dedicate longer hours and which have less demands. The schools are – in many cases – disproportionately filled with female teachers. Even in schools where the staff consisted mostly of priests, religious brothers, or nuns, a mostly female staff is the typical situation today. As one teacher at WB-3 explained, “I work and my wife does too, but it would be wrong if my salary was less than hers. I must work another job because of this.”

***Observations of the schools.***

It was clear from an observation of most of the schools that they were all in various stages of disrepair. The reason for this, according to the comments made by teachers and administrators, is that capital is simply insufficient to make the necessary repairs. Depending on the school, an administrator may have the ability to raise funds both locally and internationally – in this case, the schools are typically a little more modern. This would include newer desks, more multimedia resources, and updated office facilities. However, the vast majority of the classrooms in all the schools were

remarkably similar. Their walls were faded, the floors were unpolished, and the desks were marked by years of graffiti, reflective not of a lack of care but of years of disrepair. A few of the Catholic schools in East Jerusalem and the West Bank were financially stable, and – naturally – these administrators did not consider school finances to be one of their major managerial challenges. Those that did, however, had good reason to do so – the Catholic schools in the region are generally all in need of an updating.

One of the clearest reflections of the schools' financial difficulty was actually observed during my initial visits in May and June 2010. During this period, as the year was coming to an end, in every administrative office at least one stack of papers was noted. After inquiry, it was understood that these stacks consisted of the report cards for those students who had not paid their tuition. In every Catholic school in East Jerusalem and the West Bank, administrators were trying to collect the fees from those who had not yet paid. In order to pay bills and salaries, the tuition was needed. Administrators went after the students with every punitive measure they could. However, in the end, as the administrator of WB-9 stated,

We can withhold the grades, but we cannot fail them. Next year we could choose not to admit them, but they may have money next year. Those who paid this year may not have any next year. It is all a game of chance.

It is difficult to administrate any school with financial challenges; it is certainly a very difficult to administrator one where the survival of the school has become nothing less than a financial game of roulette.

***Summary reflection.***

No other managerial problem was identified as often by Catholic school administrators in East Jerusalem and the West Bank as the financial stability of the school. School leaders spend large amounts of their time trying to raise money and allocate it in appropriate ways. The issue is essentially two-fold: Catholic schools do not receive the same funding as government-run schools, and the parents of students often default on tuition payments. These two concerns mean that the administrators are in a continual struggle to make up for deficits by seeking funds locally and abroad. The lack of financial stability means that the vast majority of Catholic schools in the region are in various states of disrepair. In addition, the schools are unable to adapt to changing pedagogies or adopt modern technologies due to prohibitive costs. This means that teachers suffer with out-dated teaching materials, large class sizes, and a general inability to teach as they would like. Their struggles are compounded by low wages. Teachers, quite simply, bear the brunt of the financial issues that the schools face. School leaders work with great dedication to put the schools on a firm financial footing – everything depends on raising the appropriate funds.

**Conclusion**

Interviews with school administrators, conversations with teachers as well as other staff members, and observations of the school revealed ten managerial challenges facing leaders of Catholic schools in East Jerusalem and the West Bank. In the course of any given day, a school administrator has a finite number of working hours. As a result, they must give careful consideration to the sorts of issues they will dedicate themselves. Their choices affect the direction in which the school will ultimately move. By exploring

the managerial challenges that these leaders face, it is possible to gain a sense of what they find most important and most pressing. This section identified ten managerial challenges facing the administrators of Catholic schools in the region. Among the most commonly mentioned were issues related directly to the Catholic identity of the school, staff or teacher formation, the role of the school within the wider Christian community, school discipline, internal office work, and school finances. These are seen as the most time-and energy-consuming managerial challenges.

## **Chapter 5:**

### **Discussion**

#### **Introduction**

Ten managerial challenges were identified in Chapter 4. These reflected the administrative functions, tasks, and behaviours that Catholic school leaders regularly carry out. They also largely reflected the attitudes and the issues administrators consider as important for the fulfilment of the institutional mission and mandate. The choice a school leader makes to focus on one project rather than another could shift the entire direction in which a school moves. It was learned that student discipline, office work, and finances are the top managerial challenges facing school leaders. It is now important to consider to what extent the managerial challenges specifically relate to the school Catholicity. Thomas Groome suggests that eight basic elements should ideally be present in a Catholic school: positive anthropology, sacramentality and transcendent awareness, community, tradition, reason, faith, social justice, and universal inclusivity.

It was presumed from the start of this study that the many functions, tasks, and behaviours carried out at the 14 schools would have a relationship with some of these identified elements and a lack of relationship with others. A strong relationship could suggest that school leaders are spending their time maintaining the Catholicity of the schools. A lack of relationship could suggest that administrators need to strengthen the Catholicity of their schools. It was shown that school leaders in the region generally do care about the Catholicity of their institutions and that their commitments to the Catholic education are strong. Yet, there are some areas to which administrators could devote

increased time and energy. What follows in this section is a discussion about what could be sustained and what could change within the realm of Catholic education in the region.

### **Area of Excellence – Reason**

The administrators of the Catholic schools in East Jerusalem and the West Bank seemed to perceive their institutions as among the most academically rigorous in the region. Like many Catholic schools around the world, the intellectual formation of the students goes beyond the norm; the expectations are much higher. To this end, the administrators are continually working to ensure that such levels of academic training do not diminish; they place a major focus on ensuring that the students are able to walk away with the tools they need to become productive citizens in the region. Indeed, an education from the Catholic schools in the region has been shown to change students' ideologies and paradigms across the social and religious spectrum. Even as the Palestinians struggle to achieve a national identity for themselves, graduates of Catholic schools are playing an important role. These individuals are able to move beyond the base tendency to respond with violence and other shallow solutions. Instead they seek change both intellectually and methodologically.

One of the major challenges for many administrators of Catholic schools in the region every year is the final standardized exam that Palestinian graduates must pass in order to attend universities in the region. All of a student's academic activities in their four years of high school come down to the successful passing of the exam known as the Tawjihi. Much to the administrators' credit, they are quick to note how many students pass this final exam. The students in almost every Catholic school are academically prepared; they have very little to worry about in terms of this final exam. Yet, in addition

to this concrete witness to their academic training, teachers generally noted that their students had an above-average ability to engage in social analysis. Students and teachers learn this ability and desire to engage in conversations relating to culture, politics, and national identity from the administrators – they themselves are intellectually competent, deeply committed to academic growth, and very aware of their own place within the local and global context.

In fact, the administrators themselves often spoke about how education is the only way to achieve a Palestinian nation – violence is not useful nor is it appropriate. Providing creative ways to challenge unjust structures is a key element of a school's Catholicity. Unlike many government-run schools in the West Bank, which, administrators themselves suggest, focus very little on creative solutions to what they see as an Israeli occupation, the Catholic schools focus on creativity as a way of responding. Rooting their approach in a practical reality, many of the school leaders recognize that Israelis and Palestinians must learn to live together. An understanding prevails that both groups are connected to the land and region. The students are not taught to embrace solutions that are ideological or unobtainable. Instead, they learn pragmatic lessons that are rooted deeply in Christian values. The school leaders, by working to enhance the Catholic identity of the school and to develop relationships with others in the community, are doing much to bring sustainable solutions to long-standing issues in the region.

With all the positive elements connected to the intellectual development of students at the Catholic schools, administrators in both East Jerusalem and the West Bank spoke about the increasing religious conservatism that is developing among a section of the Islamic community. Although this should not theoretically be of concern to Catholic



schools, it has affected the way that they engage students academically and intellectually. Catholic schools have a long history of academic reflection; Catholics have always considered faith and reason to be intimately related. With the increase of Islamic conservatism, some administrators are now finding that a variety of questions and academic pursuits are increasingly becoming issues of deep divide. No longer can teachers speak freely about certain issues since a small (but vocal) group of parents simply disapprove of the possible anti-Islamic implications. The academic freedom and intellectual creativity that have defined Catholic schools in the region for decades is being redefined; school leaders are now considering how they can maintain the academic rigor without offending or alienating those who may adopt increasingly conservative religious and political ideologies.

Recognizing that the academic standards of every school are affected deeply by the diligent work of the teachers, administrators in general could certainly consider how they care for their teaching staff. In a few schools, the teachers felt appreciated and respected by the school leaders. In these institutions, the staff worked hard because they felt as part of a team. In other schools, however, the teachers often felt overworked and very unsupported. A *sink or swim* mentality prevails in the teaching profession in East Jerusalem and the West Bank – teachers can either do the job on their own or they burn out quickly. Ideally, the teachers should feel supported and nurtured by the school administrators; if a school leader takes care to provide the resources teachers need, it is likely that the whole school will benefit. This naturally includes ongoing staff formation, regular meetings with mentors and administrators, as well as time for professional

growth. As the system is now, teachers in most schools are generally left to establish themselves in the profession without a great deal of administrative support.

According to Groome, “a wisdom epistemology recommends that teachers and parents [as well as administrators] be catalysts who mentor learners (a) to think for themselves, (b) in dialogue with others, (c) about meaning for life” (2001, p. 308). My own perception is that Catholic schools in both East Jerusalem and the West Bank do an excellent job in preparing students to grow in knowledge and in critical reflection – this, it seems, is a direct result of principal leadership. A gap in the process exists in two particular regards: the first pertains to religious conservatism limiting the sorts of questions that students as well as teachers can ask and the second concerns how the political situation prevents Palestinians and Israelis from dialoguing. Administrators could look more closely at these two issues since they ultimately limit the growth of the students; if students cannot enter freely into relationships and discussions with others, they miss out on perspectives that are of importance to their futures. Various changes have affected Palestinians in recent years; this could lead school leaders think creatively about how they can adapt. Rigid thinking or a fear of the unknown is of little benefit.

All the same, the majority of the Catholic schools in East Jerusalem and the West Bank have very high academic standards. Ensuring that the teachers are happy, students are disciplined, and the necessary office work is done are all contributing factors to such success. Most of the school leaders saw the academic mandate of their schools to be of the utmost importance, a challenge that they were not willing to sacrifice for anything else. To this end, they had made a conscious effort to do whatever it takes to keep the schools well rooted in an intellectual legacy that spans (in many instances) more than

hundreds of years. Although a few school leaders expressed dissatisfaction at the way in which some teachers handled themselves in the classroom and other teachers themselves often claimed to feel a lack of support from administrators, these factors typically did not diminish the general goal of graduating students who are intellectually competent and able to think critically and deeply about the important issues of their age.

Of the many challenges that administrators of Catholic schools in East Jerusalem and the West Bank face, the intellectual formation of their students is one of the most pressing. Many of what administrators identified as managerial challenges have a direct impact on the academic success of their students – such training simply does not happen by accident. However, the school administrators themselves were generally unaware of how much their own thirst for knowledge influenced the schools. The administrators were generally very insightful, reasonable, human individuals who saw that knowledge could transform not only individuals but also entire cultures. Their approaches to the process of education influence their institutions. Religious communities and school boards who hire the school leaders might therefore not only look for individuals who possess the right academic credentials. Rather, they might look seek to select those administrators who reflect a reasonable wisdom and desire to transmit this to their students.

### **Areas of Growth**

Most Catholic schools have shown themselves to be very capable in terms of intellectual formation of the youth. However, there are elements of school Catholicity on which an increased focus could be made. Included in this list are tradition, community, positive anthropology, and a universal inclusivity. Each has been shown to be of concern

to administrators of Catholic schools in the region, but typically only to few and to inadequate degrees. All the same, these elements were in fact spoken about by the administrators when they addressed the managerial challenges they face – a connection exists between the following: a rootedness in tradition and formation of the staff; building community and collaboration with and support of Christians throughout the region; a positive anthropology and the development of relationships between different religious groups; and the witness to universal inclusivity and collaboration with those at other schools. By looking at the managerial challenges that the administrators claimed to face, it is clear that at least some are working to secure the Catholic identities and mandate of their schools, but such work exists only at a few schools and on a very small level. For this reason, these elements are considered areas of potential growth.

### **Tradition.**

A classical Catholic education has traditionally focused on the humanities with courses in philosophy, theology, literature, languages, and history. The great thinkers of the past can teach us a great deal about the present. As an old expression suggests, we must know where we come from in order to know where we are going. Recognizing this, an understanding the historical tradition of a culture, a faith, and a community is integral to fostering a Catholic ethos. School leaders therefore might be encouraged to create an academic and social space where students can become rooted in their specific narratives. Students need to be formed in their own traditions. Interestingly, administrators of many Catholic schools in East Jerusalem and the West Bank often seem to overlook this. The schools have changed so dramatically in the last 25 years that it is difficult to know what a Catholic school really does. Most of the Catholic institutions today have student bodies

that are predominantly Muslim; most struggle financially; they have a new Palestinian curriculum. These are three new realities did not exist until recently; as a result, many of the administrators have found it difficult to adapt.

In terms of the current religious diversity in the schools, most school leaders had quickly claimed that they are happy and that Christian and Muslim students blend well in the school. To their credit, the tensions do seem quite minimal; most schools appear to be doing an excellent job of creating a positive relationship between the two groups. All the same, this focus on religious plurality might have come at the expense of really focusing on the Catholic tradition of the school and its historical legacy. The vast majority of the administrators avoid speaking openly about religion or Catholicism to the students of Islamic descent. They seem to feel that Muslims might interpret it as a form of missionary activity. To this end, most Islamic students do not learn about the many treasures found in the Catholic tradition – its art, literature, and music are often glossed over in favour of religious neutrality. A Catholic school should have the freedom to focus on its rich history; it would not only benefit Catholic students but would also expand the horizons of the Islamic students.

In one school, to the administrator's credit, this was a reality. The senior student choir performed for their peers a number of songs from western culture. Their repertoire began with Gregorian chant and progressed through the Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, and Romantic eras. The students – most of whom were Muslims – sang some of the most famous of Christian classical songs. Everyone appeared impressed by the performance; the students sang it with as much passion and depth of spirit as could be found anywhere. This was one obvious example of how Islamic students could be exposed to the traditions

of the Catholic Church in a safe way without any mixed messages. To sing European music means that students will necessarily sing Christian songs. The choir director pointed out that to know European culture makes it necessary to understand its musical legacy. Presumably, the same instructor would invite Christian students sing Islamic songs if they were studying the musical heritage of the Middle East.

Although it seems important for Christian and Islamic students to learn about each other's faith traditions, the curriculum displays gaps in that regard. As suggested, most administrators appeared hesitant to expose Islamic students to the Christian faith because they do not want to be seen as evangelizing them. Alternatively, the Christian students in Catholic schools are often only exposed to the Islamic religion in the Arabic language classes – which focus on passages from the Qu'ran. The religious instruction classes, which are a mandated part of the Palestinian curriculum, often divide both the Christian and Islamic into separate classes – they learn about their own faith traditions but not about the other. Unfortunately, such a division denies all students opportunity to expand their knowledge about religious differences and similarities. Administrators might be encouraged to explore this limitation in the curriculum, especially since Christian and Islamic students need to coexist with each other as Palestinians.

Partly because of this lack of connection to each other's diverse traditions, students and staff from the two faiths struggle to identify what it means precisely to be Palestinian. Until the last decade, the vast majority of textbooks used in Palestinian schools were printed in either Egypt or Jordan and designed for the student populations of these countries. Accordingly, Palestinian students themselves were usually exposed to educational references that never really connected to them as a unique people. Ironically,

now that Palestinians are producing their own curricula and textbooks, a struggle to identify what it means to be a Palestinian and what their shared history is has emerged. They have learned, much to their surprise, that it is difficult to agree on what exactly their unique identity and history is. This is the first time that they have been able to articulate their identity without referencing another group – never before have Palestinians really had complete control over their own education. Administrators themselves are also now struggling to make sense of what it means to lead a specifically Palestinian school: they are learning how to articulate the fundamentals of their cultural and historical traditions. For many school leaders, this is a new challenge that they themselves are finding it difficult to respond to – they are just developing their own identity.

In the midst of this, even the self-understanding of the historical mission and mandate of Catholic schools are changing. Without question, the majority of the schools were founded to cater specifically to Christian and Catholic students. With the change in demographics, and the exodus of Christians from the region, the Catholic schools are now catering to a variety of cultural and religious groups. Therefore, administrators are increasingly expected to consider the historical traditions of their schools. Teachers and students may tend to presume that the schools have always had large numbers of Islamic students. However, the reality is quite different. Many of the Christian administrators spoke about how they studied the works of Christians from throughout the Arab world. A strong focus on Christian literature and language as well as Christian art and culture from the region were communicated. With fewer and fewer Christians in the region, some lament that this connection to their Christian tradition is getting lost, but few have given much consideration to how it might be reclaimed given the new realities.

One omission that emerged continually in discussions with administrators was the lack of interest in Jewish culture. Quite simply, both the Arabs and the Jews have lived in the region together for centuries. They have undoubtedly influenced each other spiritually, academically, culturally, and religiously. That said, most of the school leaders seemed quick to dismiss the effects of the Jewish population on the Catholic schools and the Arab culture in the region. This is unfortunate since Palestinians benefit from a whole variety of literary, scientific, and artistic knowledge that is specifically Jewish-influenced. Currently, for many administrators, the traditions of either the Jewish or the Israeli populations are not considered appropriate material for their schools. This means that a real treasure of tradition never manages to emerge within the classrooms – this is an issue administrators ought to consider.

Groome wrote, “Educationally, tradition is mediated through the humanities, sciences, and arts. Together, they offer parables of enduring truth and value that lend wisdom to life in any age” (2001, p. 245). In contrast to Groome’s affirmation, Catholic school leaders do not generally dedicate a lot of time and energy to tradition. Quite simply, many administrators are unsure of what sort of institution they are, in fact, leading. The identities of the schools were much clearer when they were filled with Christian students and teachers were predominantly priests and sisters from Europe. Students today are generally not Christian; teachers often have little interest in western culture; and most have very little regular contact with more than a single Catholic priest. The traditions that had long sustained the school have fallen apart. Questions about what it means to be a Catholic school in an Arab culture where the Christians are a minority are not currently addressed. In light of this, it is beneficial for the school leaders to



rediscover their spiritual and academic heirloom; they need to consider the mandate of Catholic education and how they will pass their special gifts on to future generations.

One major concern relating to tradition is the demographics of the schools. For most, there are fewer Christians in the schools every year because Christian families are either emigrating or very small while Islamic families are typically quite large. One of the most rapidly changing demographics concerns the religious traditions of the teachers on staff. Most schools had priests, religious brothers, or nuns acting as teachers in recent memory; today, the majority of the Catholic schools have largely (if not predominantly) Islamic teaching staffs. Four of the school administrators saw that teacher and staff formation was an important and necessary challenge that needs to be undertaken if the ethos and vision of the school is to be transmitted to both staff and students. No longer can the formation of the teachers be presumed, as it might have been when the teaching staff came from the seminary or the convent. Concrete steps could be taken to ensure that the staff will know the unique methodologies embraced at the various Catholic schools. This will ensure that the mission and mandate will be preserved in the historical memory of the institution when the schools themselves are ultimately lay-administered.

One of the questions most frequently asked of those school leaders who were priests, religious brothers, or nuns addressed how they would ensure their school would maintain its specific charism if something happened to the congregation. Very few of the religious leaders had given any thought to how the school would continue in such a circumstance. In contrast, lay school leaders expressed the most interest in the Catholic vision of their school; they recognized the treasure that they have received and desired to pass it on. This needs to occur on a wider basis at all schools in the region; it needs to

become a process that every institution engages in on a regular basis. Ideally, it would be of most benefit if cross-sections of staff from Catholic schools came together for regular education seminars from within the Catholic tradition.

### **Community.**

The administrators of the Catholic schools in East Jerusalem and the West Bank have done a tremendous amount to foster a sense of community among the stakeholders in the school and between the school and the larger community. In most of the schools, regardless of how strong or weak they were in terms of any of the other elements of Catholicity, a sense of welcome emanated from every members of the community. In addition, the vast majority of the administrators understood their position as caring for a living community. They took their jobs very seriously and typically agonized over every decision that would negatively affect anyone within their institution. The school leaders have – in general – done a tremendous job creating places where individuals genuinely care for each other, where individuals can express what is important to them, and where a deep connection abides between all.

One of the first things observed while visiting a single-sex school for girls was that none of the Islamic students wore their traditional head-coverings. The school leader as well as many teachers noted that they try to instil in the girls that each of them is to be seen as part of a school community rather than as girls divided by religious faith. Within the confines of the school walls, the girls are expected to look beyond their religious differences and find commonalities. This attitude was identified as normative in most of the observed Catholic institutions. Religious, social, and political differences are quickly dismissed as secondary to the relationships that are to be built in the classrooms and on

the playgrounds. Although personal faith seems very important to Palestinians as a whole, administrators of Catholic schools were clear that students must recognize first and foremost that they are all brothers and sisters called (as students in a Catholic school) to care and support each other.

Those affiliated with the Christian schools were said to deal with others in more open and welcoming ways. When the students from the Catholic schools walk through the streets in their uniform, they are not looked upon as different. Rather, it was observed on many occasions, they are seen as belonging to an established community institution. The many Catholic schools in East Jerusalem and the West Bank generally have excellent relationships with those in their wider communities. Administrators report that both the Islamic and the Christian leaders have respect for the work of the Catholic schools; most would go out of their way to help these institutions in any way possible. It was observed many times how administrators – when they walk through the streets around their own schools – are greeted as a local authority by all. They have a credibility and respect that comes only from having fostered positive relationships over many years. Those affiliated with Catholic schools are seen as open to dialogue, respectful to alternative perspectives, and gentle in their dealings with others. As a result of such qualities, which reflect a strong Catholic identity, others deal with them in much the same way.

Many of the conversations with the teachers revealed that they feel Catholic schools change the social and political landscape in East Jerusalem and the West Bank. They suggest that although the world may be quick to label Palestinians in general as radical, it is impossible to do so with credibility in light of what the Catholic schools achieve. Each administrator of the 14 schools reflected deeply Christian values. They

sought to return love for hate. The situation for the Palestinians is very complex, but the school leaders seem to be trying to lead the schools in a very deliberately Christian way. They are thus changing how Palestinians themselves both respond and react to their own context. An informal dinner with an Islamic family brought up the conflict between Israel and Palestine. To my surprise, the family quoted the local school administrator who had said that education and not violence is the way to transform a nation. Many in the region have been influenced by the values taught in Catholic schools.

One area for continued growth concerns the way that both Christian and Muslim teachers deal with each other. Some school leaders – particularly those at the schools in East Jerusalem – spoke about increasing tensions between the two groups. With every passing year, due to changing demographics, more Islamic teachers and staff members are being hired. Some of the Christian teachers expressed feelings of uncertainty and fear. In hushed voices, some spoke about how the schools are losing their identity and how they feel that Muslims should not in general be hired in Christian schools. Inversely, a few Islamic teachers felt that the Catholic identities of the school had no impact on them or their jobs. As one might expect, this lack of concern for the Catholicity of the school caused friction between them and the more seasoned Christian teachers. To this end, school administrators might consider paying close attention to how the changing staff demographics affect the community identity at the school. The city of Jerusalem is very conservative religiously as well as politically; such deep sentiments could easily divide the common vision of the staff as well as their sense of collaboration.

The various Catholic schools in the region play an important and necessary role within the larger Christian community. For many Christians, the schools are beacons of

hope and support in the midst of a situation that is sometimes very stressful. Four of the administrators saw that they could work to raise the profiles of the Christians in the region and ensure that they are treated fairly and with the respect to which they are entitled. That said, school leaders sometimes betrayed a tendency to see themselves as accountable only to those within the school and often showed little incentive to move beyond the confines of the school into the wider community. Nevertheless, an increasing awareness was expressed by many of the school leaders that the schools can and should be doing more to build community among the Christians in the region. They are in fact all working toward the same ends; working together is thus a very natural response. School leaders increasingly recognize that building relationships with the larger Christian community is part of their job; the Catholic identity demands that one seek to be in relationships with others around them.

Building and sustaining community is a very important part of Catholic identity. Not only are communities within the confines of the school necessary; relationships among the Christians in the surrounding areas are also to be fostered and developed. Catholic school leaders often mentioned the common good that Catholics are invited to work toward; depending on the circumstances, the common good can take on different forms. In East Jerusalem and the West Bank, the Christians are a minority within a minority group. Seeking to reconcile themselves with their neighbours (to help them enter into positive relationships) is a very meaningful step that the many administrators of Catholic schools spoke about but only few are actively working toward. All the same, this task is indeed becoming more normative. Most administrators are looking to have their schools enter into a wider conversation between all Christians in the region. If they

continue to seek to participate in the community, they are doing a great service that is indeed part of what it means to be Catholic in nature. The school leaders lead those under their charge into the community. They can offer a great deal when they seek to be in a relationship with others.

**Positive anthropology.**

The administrators of the Catholic schools in East Jerusalem and the West Bank had universally expressed that their schools make no distinction between Christians and Muslims. They portrayed themselves as doing a phenomenal job of building bridges between the two communities. Indeed, most of the administrators spoke with great certainty that the positive relationships between the two religions were largely due to the influence of the Catholic schools. The administrators themselves often spoke about the goodness of all of their students, regardless of their particular religious affiliation. This positive sentiment carried over into teachers' class management. Class or religion did not seem to determine status in any school; teachers generally claimed that – no matter the family background or their religious affiliation – every student was an important and integral part of the school community. Although some teachers occasionally revealed religious biases among themselves, the administrators were extremely positive in their dealings with students of both the Christian and Islamic faiths.

Notwithstanding how positively both Christians and Muslims were received at the Catholic schools in East Jerusalem and the West Bank, some anti-Israeli sentiments had occasionally emerged. Although it was not universally the case, some school leaders spoke about the Israelis in less than favourable terms. None of the schools had any Jewish students; in fact, the question of Jewish students in the schools occasionally caused some

school leaders to react with concern. For the most part, administrators themselves equated the terms Israeli and Jewish with each other. Only a few of the school leaders recognized that the social and political challenges facing Palestinians are a direct result of the Israeli government's agenda and that these need to be distinguished from the Jewish religion. These administrators – while frustrated with the complex relationship between Israel and Palestine – were able to speak positively about the Jewish faith and its devout followers.

One administrator – in particular – had a favourable attitude toward the Jewish population; this positively seemed to affect the whole school. Recognizing that a Catholic school should teach love of one's neighbour, the administrator claimed that monthly presentations and weekly intercom announcements had greatly improved negative sentiments about the Israelis. At this school, interviews with staff suggested that employees had a real empathy about the challenges facing the Israelis. They even demonstrated awareness that the Israelis – as the Palestinians – have suffered a greatly because of the conflict in the region. This school leader's unique approach positively affected the whole school. The various Catholic school leaders in the region could consider adopting such regular programs. Aside from creating a more positive school environment, they would certainly reinforce important Christian values.

An interesting phenomenon related directly to positive anthropology is that of student discipline – one of the clearest managerial challenges facing school leaders. Most of the school administrators spoke about how their students often misbehaved and were in need of continued discipline. In most schools, administrators and teachers habitually raised their voices at the students. Although the students never seemed bothered by the ongoing admonishments, attention might be paid to what such continual chastisement

communicates to the students. In many of the interviews, school leaders (often out of exasperation) described the students as *bad* and *disobedient*. With this as the common narrative used to describe the students, questions could be asked about whether students might actually come to self-identify with such terms. Discipline is important, but teachers and administrators are invited to consider the messages that they transmit. Knowing how to correct student behaviours without diminishing the sense of self-worth that a student has is an ongoing process that relies on continued reflection.

A final issue related to positive anthropology concerns how school leaders treat the teachers and the staff. At the institution where the administrator specifically focused on care for those who work at the school, the teachers seemed very positive and upbeat. They reflected knowledge about how deeply they were cared for; in return, they seemed to embody this same care in their classrooms. This particular school was a delight to be in. This sense of concern was nevertheless not a universal sentiment. In some schools, the administrators are busy with their own schedules and find little time to provide the ideal degrees of support for employees. In these institutions, teachers sometimes spoke about feeling unsupported by the administrator simply because he or she was too busy. As a result of this perceived lack of support, teachers often felt as they had to self-manage because the school leaders were busy with a variety of other tasks. This lack of support felt by some teachers could be cause for administrative reflection by all school leaders.

The administrators of Catholic schools do a very good job recognizing the goodness in students regardless of their religious identity. Both the Christian and the Muslim students are treated with dignity and respect. This reflects an important attitude that Catholic schools could work to instil. However, school leaders could focus more



attention on how Israelis are portrayed in their school. Negative feelings were expressed (at times) when speaking about with Israelis. Catholics (like all Christians) are called to reflect love in word and action – this is true even when the neighbours are hard to love. In addition to this, attention could be paid to student discipline in the schools. Yelling has a real potential to reinforce negative self-perceptions in the students. Lastly, administrators might evaluate how supported teachers and staff in their schools feel. The administration of an academic institution is demanding, yet school leaders should ideally seek to make time daily to give teachers and staff the attention they need.

Two administrators claimed explicitly that they consider it part of their administrative position to foster relationships among Christians, Jews, and Muslims. These two leaders recognized that, although the three groups may not always get along or agree on every political and social issue, every individual is inherently a creature of God; each is entitled to be shown human respect and dignity. Deep hurts exist in the region – they cannot be wiped away easily. Yet it was perceived that the administrators generally saw the goodness in people – whether in Christians or Jews, in Palestinians or Israelis. The desire to foster relationships between divided groups on the part of these specific two administrators seemed rooted in the recognition that all human persons have the potential for good. The holy spark within each one can develop into a flame of compassion, generosity, and kindness. In this light, although only two administrators are working actively to build relationships between diverse groups, a real sense prevailed that school leaders themselves each desired to undertake such actions.

Forgiveness and mercy as well as care and compassion are values that could be equated with a positive anthropology found in Catholic schools. The administrators of

schools in East Jerusalem and the West Bank face a very hard uphill battle when it comes to developing the perceptions of teachers, staff, and students about those who may be different. At times the administrators are discouraged; at times their own hurts and human limitations lead them to frustrations. Nonetheless, each of them articulated a deep desire to do only what is right and just. The schools each have a real treasure in their administration; they themselves have been formed with a positive anthropology that can and is slowly catching on. The current situation in East Jerusalem and the West Bank means that administrators risk their reputations and positions if they speak out openly about building relationships between Christians, Jews, and Muslims. Many in the region do not see others in such positive ways. Thus, the administrators are quite quiet about this topic. All the same, they are each working to communicate to those in their schools an anthropology marked by respect, challenge, and virtue.

### **Universal inclusivity.**

The term *catholic* is often translated as *universal*. As such, it seems that a Catholic school seeks to embody a sense of welcome to all individuals. According to the teachings of the Church, every individual of faith – regardless of tradition – can come to recognize and to know God. The Church does not reject anything that is holy or true in these other religious expressions. A school that is Catholic is ideally open to students of every faith and creed. In addition to diversity of religious expression, the term *catholic* can also include individuals of all races, ages, political or social affiliations, and cultural backgrounds; each should be able to find their unique place within the vast community. No individual should be excluded from a Catholic school. Although a framework defines what it means to be a Roman Catholic, there are many more diverse expressions of what

it means to be *catholic* within the universal community. The Church has always adapted to new situations and sought diligently to embrace alternative ways of coming to know truth. The many Catholic schools in East Jerusalem and the West Bank do much to appeal to the Muslims in the region, but they are far from universal institutions.

The obvious exclusions to the Catholic schools in East Jerusalem are students from the Jewish faith. Practically speaking, if a Muslim is entitled to attend a Catholic school, then a Hebrew speaking Israeli should also be allowed. This is not the case in any of three schools in East Jerusalem – a location where Israelis themselves are free to move. Although it is probable that few students from the Jewish tradition have ever wanted to attend a Catholic school in East Jerusalem, questions about how welcome they would be were asked of each administrator. Not surprisingly, each claimed that Israelis were not welcome at their school. There were a variety of reasons for these responses. The most common were the concern for the safety of the Israeli and a fear that it would incite Islamic sentiments. All the same, it remains true that Israelis are typically not permitted to attend Catholic schools in East Jerusalem. In other parts of Israel, some Catholic and Christian schools have students from all religions. These schools are typically found in locations where religious tensions are not quite as high. Currently, Catholic schools in East Jerusalem neither include nor accept Jewish students. As a result, there is a limit to the inclusivity of their schools.

In addition the Israelis, there were other groups that Catholic schools in East Jerusalem and the West Bank either could or would not take. Most institutions were not equipped to handle physical or intellectual limitations. The schools were typically old buildings with large staircases that the students climbed a number of times each day.

There were very few signs that students with physical limitations – such as those in wheelchairs or with crutches – could make it around the vast institutions. In addition, there were almost no resources for students with intellectual disabilities or behavioural concerns – although students with such needs are taken regularly into the government schools. Most of the time, the administrators of Catholic schools cited a lack of financial resources needed to deal with such students. Because they cannot admit students with special needs, this limits the universal inclusivity of the Catholic schools in the region.

One final component relating to the lack of inclusivity results from the claim that the schools are generally in deep financial trouble. School leaders had overwhelmingly claimed that money (or lack of it) was their biggest daily challenge. Consequently, many administrators have become very discriminating as to who are admitted into the school. It was reported that some school leaders turned away Catholic students who could not pay tuition in order to admit Islamic students who could. Admission into Catholic schools in the region currently has a much to do with the family's ability to pay tuition. Regardless of the religious tradition of the student or their intellectual capacity, a student who cannot pay tuition is likely not going to be admitted into the school. Although some institutions have scholarships, they are few in number. School leaders may want their institutions to be open to all students; however, this is limited by financial realities.

At a time in recent memory of many, the Catholic Church seemed to consider itself the one institution that had all the answers. When it came to cooperating with those of different religious traditions or philosophical ideas, Catholics were generally very disinterested. The sense prevailed that everything that needed to be known about any given topic is already known by the magisterium; cooperation with others, no matter who

they were, was a futile endeavour. Ironically, even within the Church itself, religious orders saw themselves as having such complete wisdom that they rarely sought to exchange ideas or seek input from other religious communities. The various communities of men such as the Jesuits and the Dominicans rarely went to each other for help or apostolic input; the orders of nuns such as the Sisters of St. Joseph and the Sisters of St. Francis were equally isolated. The free and easy exchange of ideas between Catholics and non-Catholics as well as between Catholics did not exist to any great extent. Often, every religious community, school, and church was an entity unto itself.

A few Catholic school leaders in the West Bank have begun to look seriously at collaborating with both Catholics and non-Catholic educators beyond their own schools. They see that education in the region should not follow an attitude of *us versus them*: this does not benefit anyone. Rather, recognizing that everyone has something valuable to offer to the topic of education, openness develops to welcome new ideas and exchange insights that have far too long been held secret. We need not be afraid of those who are different than we are. In fact, there is something very catholic about living without borders or boundaries. By sharing knowledge with others, the administrators of the Catholic schools are implicitly recognizing the importance of universal inclusivity: differences will exist between various schools in Palestine, but being open enough to share of oneself with others builds up a community. No one benefits from isolation. Therefore, Catholic school leaders in the region are starting to participate actively in their communities by building relationships with Catholics and non-Catholics alike.

**Areas of Concern**

Although not all school leaders are working consciously to enhance the Catholic elements of education as tradition, community, a positive anthropology, and universal inclusivity, a few certainly are. Hopefully, these school leaders can influence others to see the benefits that can come when one carries out functions, tasks, and behaviours actively and consciously. There are, of course, other areas for growth that administrators themselves could be aware of insofar as the Catholic identities are maintained. The specific areas of concern relate to sacramentality and transcendent awareness, spirituality, and social justice. Although it seemed apparent that many of the schools were doing very well in some of these areas, the administrators themselves rarely, if ever, commented on them as major managerial challenges. They are thus seen as areas for growth that administrators might pay attention to either to ensure that they remain as strong as they are today or to heighten the focus that is placed on them in the schools. These three Catholic elements are deemed important and one might consider how they will be maintained into the future.

**Sacramentality and transcendent awareness.**

Most of the Catholic school administrators in East Jerusalem and the West Bank reflected a desire to create environments where their staff and students could encounter the transcendent on a regular basis. Although some Roman Catholics believe that God can only be found in formal liturgical events, this is not true. Even the most mundane encounter can reveal the presence of God if observed with the right attitude. Groome refers to these unique experiences as sacramentality, perhaps better described as being aware of God's presence. This need for transcendent awareness is an integral component

of a school's Catholicity. Recognizing this, only a few administrators spoke concretely about how they are working to provide the students with such experiences. For example, one school leader worked to enhance the fine arts programs while another created an area in the school where students can go to pray and reflect. Within these schools, mostly because the administrator saw it as a real need, a sense of transcendent awareness exists.

In addition to providing opportunities to encounter God, a small number of the school leaders have made a very deliberate and conscious choice to ensure that their institutions reflected a sense of pride and that the students felt rooted as well as safe. These schools seemed welcoming, and the buildings appeared diligently maintained. The hallways were adorned with student art, and the classrooms themselves were decorated with posters from the students. Something as simple as a poster of a flower in bloom (which hung in one classroom) was enough to brighten an entire space. In these schools, there was a tangible sense that one could relax and not worry about the strife beyond the front doors. The physical characteristics of an institution, as these schools proved, can do much toward promoting an awareness of the transcendent.

Aside from the physical characteristics of the schools, most administrators had demonstrated a variety of other ways to foster a sense of transcendent awareness in their schools. In particular, nearly all school leaders spoke about the importance of attitudes and behaviours. Life for Palestinians can be very difficult – staff and students in Catholic schools can often feel very discouraged. Because of this, school leadership can be hard; it is the administrator who usually needs to deal with poor attitudes. Despite this, I observed that the majority of school leaders presented themselves as positive and very peaceful individuals. My own perceptions suggested that they focused on leading their schools

with great optimism and hope. This, in turn, seemed to influence the attitudes of all those who both worked and studied in the institution.

In addition to creating a positive physical atmosphere and embracing a positive attitude, one administrator regularly sought to treat her many students to experiences that enhance their aesthetic sensibilities. During one visit, the school leader informed me that a short one-hour concert would be taking place in the school auditorium. She had invited five musicians from a local university to play a variety of classical songs. The university musicians saw the invitation as an opportunity to entertain students in a poor, struggling school. The administrator, on the other hand, saw their presence as a chance to expose students to artistic beauty. Initiatives like this are a regular part of school life in this institution. On a very frequent basis, the school leader provides opportunities for the students to experience music, drama, and the visual arts. She claimed that such events not only demonstrated to the students the importance of the fine arts, but showed them that God could be found anywhere if they only knew where to look.

Similarly, the same school administrator had developed a very successful moral development program. Everyone in the school met daily for a short talk by either the administrator or some other guest speaker. The themes were intended to raise the morale of the students, to engage their imaginations, and provide them with an insight into how their own lives could be transformed. In addition, she sought to limit a general self-perception that Palestinians as an oppressed people with very little hope for the future. She instead sought to build men and women who knew and were in relationship with God and who could take control of their own lives. Given the levels of hopelessness in the



region, the administrator was doing a tremendous amount of work to help each of the students obtain a transcendent awareness.

The administrators, teachers, staff, and students of Catholic schools in East Jerusalem and the West Bank live and work in a difficult place. Most see themselves as under a continued occupation by the Israelis, and their socio-economic status is generally quite low. For the most part, a deep and sustained sense of sadness exists. Students have few opportunities to engage with the fine arts such as music, painting, and drama. Many of the schools reflect a sense of tiredness as though their golden age had long passed. In some of the schools, the school leaders seek to bring brighten the lives of the students, but this also was very rare and not altogether sustained in any one school. One administrator, in fact, claimed that students have forgotten how to dream; they simply do not know how to play. Experiences in the region have shown that the wonder of creation and the joy of participating in the divine work of God are not widespread themes. The bland existence of a broken people was perceived as normalized in most schools.

As a result of the current situation, Catholic school leaders are invited to create spaces where students can develop a sense of transcendent awareness in their schools and in their lives. Students who are surrounded by various forms of beauty can naturally more easily come to experience the presence of God within the world. In that light, Catholic school leaders could be encouraged to create spaces where such beauty can emerge. As the situation is presently, an important element of school Catholicity was not observed in most of the institutions; without an environment that heightens the senses and raises the spirits, students can become trapped in a world where the presence of God is not easily discerned. It is hard for anyone to deeply feel the transcendent even in the most sacred of

locations; those who are confined to spaces where beauty itself is a rarity are much less likely to make such an encounter.

### **Faith.**

It is quite impossible to live in the Middle East without being inundated with issues of faith and religious devotion. Without any question, those living in East Jerusalem and the West Bank find themselves in the midst of a deeply religious culture. No matter what might separate one person from another politically or socially, most take their personal religious faith very seriously. Because of this, it was not a surprise that administrators of Catholic schools in the region focused a great deal on issues related to the faith of the students and the relationships of individuals from different traditions. In a region where religious violence is increasingly common, the Catholic schools reflect a rare tolerance and openness. All the same, certain approaches to building religious tolerance in the school have direct effects on the Catholic identities of the schools. Interestingly, most administrators do not seem to know how to maintain a specific focus on the Catholic identity of the school when the non-Catholic student populations are increasing every year. Administrators are providing subtle messages to the staff and students; not all of it seems helpful to their Catholic mandate.

The positive aspect related to faith development at the schools is that talk of prayer, God, and the spiritual life is almost continual. In every class, regardless of the topic, there is always some passing allusion or reference to faith formation. Palestinian culture is inherently religious and the schools have a mandate to form religious men and women. As a result, the focus on topics related to faith is not altogether surprising. Even in the public schools in Israel and the West Bank, students are exposed to faith-based

language; the Jewish and the Islamic traditions in the region do very little to separate religion from education – they are intimately intertwined. Within the Catholic schools, as was mentioned before, administrators and staff pride themselves on making no distinctions between Christian and Muslim students. Each group is expected to be religious in their own ways; the school stresses the commonalities between them and works very hard to minimize the differences. Although the schools are Catholic in name, the school leaders ensure that non-Catholic students do not feel isolated because of their unique faith traditions.

One of the most often quoted phrases used by many administrators of Catholic schools says, *before God, we are all the same*. No distinction is made between the religious formation of the Christian students and that of the Islamic students. At the Catholic schools in both East Jerusalem and the West Bank, students from both groups are given opportunity to meet with religious leaders from their respective faith tradition to grow in knowledge and practice. As such, every student (not just the Catholics) is provided a faith-based education. To this end, it seems that the school leaders are doing a tremendous amount of good work to provide students with opportunities to grow as individuals in relationships with each other and communities before God. Some of the concerns that might exist in the western context, such as decreased commitment to a personal faith or increased influences of secularism, simply do not exist on a wide scale in the schools: the students are faith-filled, and the administration is working well to ensure that this remains a reality for the future.

The one concern that emerges from this is how school leaders are able to ensure that the Catholicity of the school is maintained while not focusing specifically on the

Catholic faith as the only legitimate expression of religious devotion. Students are encouraged to be faithful, but non-Catholics are not expected to embrace the Catholic tradition or even accept the many doctrines that are taught. The school roots itself in universal Christian values, which separate the Catholic schools from many of the public schools in Israel and the West Bank; however, there are many non-Catholic, Christian schools that profess the same values. Administrators have not generally given much consideration to how their schools differ from the other Christian schools in the region. It is quite likely that questions about what makes a Catholic school Catholic would be met with unclear responses. Administrators know their schools foster faith development and prayer but most have not thought about what makes them essentially Catholic.

The various Catholic schools in East Jerusalem and the West Bank are rooted in a culture that fosters religious and faith development: it is natural for individuals in the region to consider their religious identities to be important. Most of the students are spiritually rooted in a strong faith tradition; thus teachers seem to naturally address those issues of religious concern. The various administrators work to ensure that students recognize that their faith in God unites them rather than their different religious traditions that divide them. Nonetheless, the school leaders themselves have given very little thought to how their focus on faith development differs from the various other Christian schools in the region; they have not thought much about what makes their school specifically Catholic in the way they engage faith development and formation. Groome offers concrete suggestions in this regard, but such insights have yet to make their way into Catholic education in the region.

Although the Catholic schools in the region do a great deal to address issues of faith and spiritual development, much of it takes place naturally because the institutions themselves are located within a region of the world that is predisposed to a religious frame of mind. However, none of the school leaders spoke about how they can increase the religious faith and devotion of all their students practically and methodologically. In many schools, the Christians are expected to attend religious services; they are additionally expected to participate in religious faith formation classes. At the same time, the Muslims, especially in the West Bank where it is part of the legal curriculum, learn about Islam and Islamic traditions. All the same, there are almost no formal programs for students to grow together spiritually. In many western Catholic schools, retreats, lectures, and days of prayer are designed to help students achieve a deeper sense of their own personal faith life. Such programs are simply not established in the Catholic schools in the region. Students are religious, but the schools do very little to form them or lead them to a deeper, more authentic understanding of God.

Religious longing is a fundamental part of the human experience. Every individual is seeking for something to give his or her life a complete sense of meaning. In both East Jerusalem and the West Bank, religious expression was described as both political and radical. For many, it seems, faith is moving from a personal experience toward a mere adherence to creedal statements. In other words, for many, religion was perceived as an intellectual endeavour that lacks an affective part. In light of these religious and cultural changes, administrators of the Catholic schools might consider implementing programs and curricula that allow students to encounter the transcendent on that deeper affective level. Because the students come from different religious

traditions, they may not always understand the practical faith expressions of those from other traditions. However, it could be beneficial if students share their experiences of prayer with others.

### **Social justice.**

The whole of the Christian tradition is focused on emulating the actions and deeds of Jesus. Out of this, the Catholic Church has developed what it calls its social teaching. There is a mandate from the magisterium of the Church for Catholics to care for others, to seek the common good, to struggle for justice, and to fight oppression. These are not only suggestions; they are constituent parts of living a Catholic lifestyle. Catholic schools in East Jerusalem and the West Bank are thus presumed to have a responsibility to engage in social justice. School leaders are charged with the task of ensuring that students embody these distinct values. The data collection connected to social justice suggested that although administrators do embody such values in some ways, they do have a distance to go. The issues affecting the Palestinian people are of great concern to most administrators of Catholic schools, and their institutions have typically been major advocates of Palestinian rights. Nevertheless, the schools generally reflect a limited scope in their expression of social justice. Concern for the Israelis – who sometimes face equal forms of injustice – is not an issue that many school leaders seem willing to address; to this end, they might be doing something more.

Administrators of the Catholic institutions in East Jerusalem and the West Bank have obviously done much to address issues concerning the oppression of Palestinians. They are vocal advocates who use their position and power to speak continually about how the conflict between Israel and Palestine has affected the Arabs in the region. To

their credit, they have embraced the teaching of the Church to have a concern for the poor, to work for a just society, and to create a lasting peace. Their desire to respond to violence with peace means that they thoroughly understand the message of Jesus.

Without any doubt, the administrators of the Catholic schools have shown that they are willing to speak out for those whose voices have been taken from them; they are some of the biggest most influential for the Palestinian cause in the entire region. Their concern is not rooted in a desire for power and control; rather, they simply seek justice for all stakeholders in the Palestinian territories.

To this end, the administrators of Catholic schools seem to ensure that the methods and goals of Catholic social teaching are a regular part of the curriculum and student formation. What makes the various Catholic schools in the region different from many other Palestinian schools is that they are strong advocates for non-violent responses as a way of bring about equality and freedom for the Palestinian people. During and after the first intifada, for example, it was reported to me that most Catholic school leaders saw immediately that violence was not an appropriate way of seeking justice. As a result, they worked exceptionally hard to provide students with a variety of positive ways of living alongside Israelis. School leaders reported that they sought to implement peace programs; they sought to have students foster deeper relationships with Israelis, they expanded their reach into the local communities, and – perhaps most importantly – they began providing their students with the tools to assess their situation from an intellectual, pragmatic position. The school administrators spoke many times about how violence is not an option in their struggle for justice; education is the only way to bring about justice for the Palestinian people.

Despite the many good things that began in the Catholic schools after the signing of the Oslo Accords, administrators report that they became discouraged when the second intifada broke out. Many of the administrators simply abandoned the peace programs in their schools and gave up on trying to foster any sort of relationships with Israelis. Most spoke about such attempts as a tremendous drain on their time and energy that yielded little practical results. The interviews with school leaders sometimes revealed a lack of generosity toward the Israelis – most school leaders are very concerned about their own Palestinian communities but many are no longer interested in looking at the issue from the other side. They seemed discouraged by the effects of the second intifada and its effects on their schools and communities. Discussions about and work relating to social justice often revolve entirely around the Palestinian struggle for a national identity. The lack of desire on the part of some to notice how the Israelis themselves are mired in a situation that they also find difficult and unjust is unfortunate.

Only two school administrators claimed that they continue to work on a regular basis to foster relationships between their students and Israelis. Their biggest challenge was that the general Palestinian population is often quite hostile toward anyone who collaborates with the Israelis on any level. A number of former administrators spoke about losing their jobs after the first intifada when they themselves sought to bring in programs dedicated to fostering the fragile relationships between the groups. As such, this component of social justice is a cause for evaluation. Immediately, it seems apparent that the task of building relationships between Israelis and Palestinians is not one that administrators alone should take up; it is also one that corporate boards, religious orders, and Catholic leaders could also embrace. An administrator should ideally feel secure



enough in his or her position to build relationships between Palestinians and Israelis. Of all the organizations in the region, it seems that the Catholic Church should be working at all levels to build a sustainable relationship between the two groups.

The Gospel of Matthew recounts that followers of Jesus are known by their commitment to feed the hungry, to give drink to the thirsty, to welcome the stranger, to clothe the naked, to comfort those who are sick, and to provide companionship to those in prison. The teachings of the Church have a strong focus on the need for Christians to build a just and compassionate world. One must care actively for those who are suffering and in need. Because of this mandate, Catholic schools themselves are often seen as places where stakeholders grow in awareness of how their actions and their omissions can benefit or injure those around them. They must be taught not only the theory of working to bring about a better world, they must also be provided with the opportunity for practical experience. In most of the Catholic schools in the region, it seemed evident that Palestinians feel they suffer great injustices at the hands of the Israelis. While this may be true, a continually self-referential attitude does not seem helpful when it comes to developing students who are committed to work for justice. Students might better be provided with opportunities to experience the world beyond their own context.

In both East Jerusalem and the West Bank, a variety of individuals and groups suffer deeply in ways that are not necessarily related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Groups such as the Bedouins, women, the aged, and the physically handicapped all suffer discrimination and injustice within the region. More than any other group, students of Catholic schools might be encountering these groups on a regular basis. Indeed, all Catholics must have a preferential option for those who are poor and (while working with

those who are) they must also come to see the inherent dignity in each person. Few, if really any, of the Catholic schools in the region have programs that allow students a sustained and intimate contact with those who suffer injustice. Service and mentor programs do not exist in the region; the students themselves do not have the opportunity to look at the lives of others who have, in many cases, much more difficult challenges than they do. In this context, school leaders might consider working practically to develop such programs.

### **A Final Scrutiny**

After isolating those managerial challenges relating to and having an influence on school Catholicity in East Jerusalem and the West Bank, it was apparent that administrators generally focus on maintaining academically strong schools. They spend large amounts of time working to ensure that students not only graduate, but that they do so in a noteworthy way. Insofar as this element of school Catholicity is concerned, the institutions in East Jerusalem and the West Bank are at the top of their game. Areas of growth include tradition, community, positive anthropology, and universal inclusivity. Although these elements do exist within a cross-section of schools, administrators as a collective do not dedicate any sustained or focused amount of time to them. Areas of concern include sacramentality, spirituality, and social justice. School leaders seemed unable to commit to these elements of school Catholicity.

Administrators of the Catholic schools in East Jerusalem and the West Bank are aware that their institutions could be improved. Despite their best intentions, though, they are in a quandary. They have great desires for change, but financial constraints make major change impossible. Most administrators spend large parts of their day trying to

keep the school financially afloat – fundraising, writing grant proposals, or begging for donations are normative tasks for most Catholic school leaders. The areas of growth and areas of concern do not seem to exist because of administrative carelessness. Rather, they seem to be products of financial instability. Retreat programs cannot be developed when students do not have pencils or paper and the roof is leaking. The financial needs of school leaders are unquestionably affecting the Catholic identities of their schools.

Without a change in financial stability, the varying levels of school Catholicity could continue to diminish. A school that calls itself Catholic, but has little more than intellectually competent students is arguably only *Catholic* in name. To build the elements critical to school Catholicity, administrators need the necessary funds to work. It seems immediately clear that if the millions of faithful Catholics in wealthier countries are interested in Catholic education in Israel and the Palestinian territories, they might consider funding these institutions themselves. Financial help from Catholics abroad would ensure that local administrators had enough revenue to create prayer spaces, develop faith programs, and fund social justice outreach.

School administrators in East Jerusalem and the West Bank express a desire to foster school Catholicity, but they need help. They spend much of their time asking for money from those who have often given more than they can really afford. Catholic education in the region might not survive if administrators cannot find donors willing to contribute to these institutions. Most of these dedicated school leaders have simply run out of options – they have few other places to turn. Catholic schools have had a continual presence in and around Jerusalem for hundreds of years. Changing demographics have nevertheless made them endangered organizations. Time is to be running out for these

historical institutions; they draw closer to financial bankruptcy every year. The majority of school leaders made it clear that a dramatic and necessary change in circumstances is needed if Catholic schools are to survive in the region. Until the Catholic schools in the region are placed on financially stable footing, little else can or should be done.

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## Appendices

## Appendix A: ENREB Approval Certificate

 <p><b>UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA</b>   <b>Ethics</b> Office of the Vice-President (Research)</p>	<p>CTC Building 208 - 194 Dafoe Road Winnipeg, MB R3T 2N2 Fax (204) 269-7173 <a href="http://www.umanitoba.ca/research">www.umanitoba.ca/research</a></p>
<b>APPROVAL CERTIFICATE</b>	
E January 27, 2011	
<b>TO:</b>	<b>Jeffrey S. Burwell</b> (Advisor D. Creamer) Principal Investigator
<b>FROM:</b>	<b>Stan Straw, Chair</b> Education/Nursing Research/Ethics Board (ENREB)
<b>Re:</b>	<b>Protocol #E2011:002</b> <b>"From Checkpoints to Classrooms: The Challenges of Catholic School Leadership in East Jerusalem and the West Bank since the start of the second intifada in September 2000"</b>
<p>Please be advised that your above-referenced protocol has received human ethics approval by the <b>Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board</b>, which is organized and operates according to the Tri-Council Policy Statement. This approval is valid for one year only.</p> <p>Any significant changes of the protocol and/or informed consent form should be reported to the Human Ethics Secretariat in advance of implementation of such changes.</p>	
<p><b>Please note:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- If you have funds pending human ethics approval, the auditor requires that you submit a copy of this Approval Certificate to the Office of Research Services, fax 261-0325 - please include the name of the funding agency and your UM Project number. This must be faxed before your account can be accessed.</li> <li>- if you have received multi-year funding for this research, responsibility lies with you to apply for and obtain Renewal Approval at the expiry of the initial one-year approval; otherwise the account will be locked.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>The Research Ethics Board requests a final report for your study</b> (available at: <a href="http://umanitoba.ca/research/ors/ethics/ors_ethics_human_REB_forms_guidelines.html">http://umanitoba.ca/research/ors/ethics/ors_ethics_human_REB_forms_guidelines.html</a>) <b>in order to be in compliance with Tri-Council Guidelines.</b></p>	
<i>Bringing Research to Life</i>	

## Appendix B: Consent Forms



**ST. PAUL'S COLLEGE**  
 University of Manitoba  
 70 Dysart Road  
 Winnipeg, Manitoba  
 Canada R3T 2M6  
 (204) 474-8575 fax (204) 474-7620

**Written Consent Form – School Leaders**

**Research Title:** From Checkpoints to Classrooms: The managerial challenges facing Catholic school leaders in East Jerusalem and the West Bank and their relation to and influence on school Catholicity

**Researcher:** Jeffrey S. Burwell

**Advisor:** Dr. David Creamer

This consent form is only part of the process of informed consent. A copy of this form will be left with you for your records. It gives you the basic idea of the research and what your participation will involve. Please read this document carefully. If you want more details about anything mentioned or information not included, you are free to ask.

This study will explore the diverse challenges that face administrators of Catholic schools in East Jerusalem and the West Bank as they relate to school Catholicity. There are no perceived risks to individuals who participate in this study. Data will be obtained by **(1)** recorded interviews with administrators, **(2)** a short survey that they may complete, and **(3)** ethnographic observations of the daily operations of the school as well as recorded conversations with school staff and teachers. In all cases, anonymity will be assured. Both participants and their schools will be given pseudonyms and all other identifying data—such as school location—will be obscured in the dissemination of the final document.

Every participant should be aware that all data obtained for this project will be stored in a locked cabinet in my personal office and that I will be the only individual with access to this data. No other person will have access to the recordings or the transcriptions, but quotes from the interview may be used in the dissertation. In addition, data and quotes from this study may be used for presentations at conferences and in journal publications. The projected date for the completion of the dissertation is December 2011 and all data collected in this study will be destroyed within one year after its publication.

You are free to request a summary of the findings simply by checking the appropriate box below.

- Yes, **I want** to receive a summary of findings.
- No, **I do not want** to receive a summary of findings.

Participation in this study is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time simply by telling me that you wish to do so. At that point, all data collected from you and about your school will be destroyed.

The **first (1) part of the study** involves a four-topic interview with administrators, including a variety of follow-up prompts. It will explore 4 identified challenges that affect Catholic schools in the region; these challenges emerged from initial interviews undertaken at your school between April 2010 and July 2010. The interview should take less than one hour. It is anticipated that the interview will take place in your school between February 2, 2011 and March 15, 2011.

The interview questions are designed to provide an opportunity for Catholic school administrators in East Jerusalem and the West Bank to highlight issues of concern related directly their own context. You can refrain from answering any questions that you prefer to omit. There is no compensation of any sort for participation in this study.

The **second (2) part of the study** involves a short survey that administrators may complete. It may be requested that you fill out this survey as best you can and return it as well as (if possible) a copy of your school's mission statement, any publicity materials used in your school, and the student and faculty handbooks to the researcher. You are free to decline participation in either the interview or the survey. Participation in one form of data collection does not oblige you to participate in the other.

- No, I **do not** want to participate in the interview.
- No, I **do not** want to participate in the completion of the survey.

The **third (3) part of the study** involves ethnographic observations of the daily operations of the school itself as well as informal conversations with staff members and teachers. The observations will be very general. I want to be able to describe my perceptions about the schools (such as size, location, or layout) and my experiences of the operations (such as types of assemblies, sizes of classes, or structure of the school day). I will not identify students, staff members, or teachers in any of the described observations.

The conversations with staff members and teachers are intended to nuance information that administrators provide and to make the final presentation of the data clear. I am not interested in discussing the administrator of the school with staff members or teachers and this is not a review of the administration.

Rather, I am interested in discussing more of the general themes that the administrator may have highlighted as challenges: such as student attendance, cultural or religious influences, or influence of military checkpoints or barricades. As such, the data from staff members and teachers is only used to enhance the material provided by the administrators themselves. All staff members and teachers will be asked to fill out a consent form similar to this one. You are free to disallow me from speaking with teachers, from using any personal observations of the school, or both in the final presentation of the data. However, the majority of the study itself relies on the information that you as the administrator provide.

- Yes, **I give you permission** to observe the daily operations of the school.
- Yes, **I give you permission** to speak with staff members and teachers at the school.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood the information regarding participation and agree to participate as a subject. It does not waive your legal rights nor release the researcher or involved institution from their legal and professional responsibilities. Participation in this study is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time simply by telling me that you wish to do so. At that point, all data collected from you and your school will be immediately destroyed; your school will no longer be considered part of the study.

Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent. If necessary, you are free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation from Jeffrey Burwell or his advisor.

Once the study has been completed, presumably by the middle of March 2011, I would be happy to speak with you once again either in person or on the telephone to answer any other final questions.

This research has been approved by the Education-Nursing Research Education Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project, contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat by email. You should keep a copy of this consent form for your records.

Participant's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

My contact information is: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



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### Written Consent Form – Staff members and teachers

**Research Title:** From Checkpoints to Classrooms: The managerial challenges facing Catholic school leaders in East Jerusalem and the West Bank and their relation to and influence on school Catholicity

**Researcher:** Jeffrey S. Burwell

**Advisor:** Dr. David Creamer

This consent form is only part of the process of informed consent. A copy of this form will be left with you for your records. It gives you the basic idea of the research and what your participation will involve. Please read this document carefully. If you want more details about anything mentioned or information not included, you are free to ask.

This study will explore the diverse challenges that face administrators of Catholic schools in East Jerusalem and the West Bank as they relate to school Catholicity. There are no perceived risks to individuals who participate in this study. Data will be obtained by **(1)** recorded interviews with administrators, **(2)** a short survey that they may complete, and **(3)** ethnographic observations of the daily operations of the school as well as recorded conversations with school staff and teachers. In all cases, anonymity will be assured. Both participants and their schools will be given pseudonyms and all other identifying data—such as school location—will be obscured in the dissemination of the final document.

Every participant should be aware that all data obtained for this project will be stored in a locked cabinet in my personal office and that I will be the only individual with access to this data. No other person will have access to the recordings or the transcriptions, but quotes from the interview may be used in the dissertation. Everything staff members and teachers say will be kept confidential, administrators will not be informed of our meeting. In addition, data and quotes from this study may be used for presentations at conferences and in journal publications. The projected date for the completion of the dissertation is December 2011 and all data collected in this study will be destroyed within one year after its publication.

You are free to request a summary of the findings simply by checking the appropriate box below.

- Yes, **I want** to receive a summary of findings.
- No, **I do not want** to receive a summary of findings.

Participation in this study is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time simply by telling me that you wish to do so. At that point, all data collected from you and about your school will be destroyed.

The part of the study directly involving you as a staff member or teacher concerns the recorded conversations. The conversations are intended to nuance information that administrators provide and to make the final presentation of the data clear. I am not interested in discussing the administrator of the school and this is not a review of the administration. Rather, I am interested in discussing more of the general themes that the administrator may have highlighted as challenges: such as student attendance, cultural or religious influences, or influence of military checkpoints or barricades. As such, the data from staff members and teachers is only used to enhance the material provided by the administrators themselves. Your administrator has provided both you and me permission to have an informal conversation, but the choice to participate is completely your own. You can refrain from answering any question and avoid any topics you wish to omit. There is no compensation of any sort for participation in this study.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood the information regarding participation and agree to participate as a subject. It does not waive your legal rights nor release the researcher or involved institution from their legal and professional responsibilities. Participation in this study is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time simply by telling me that you wish to do so. At that point, all data collected from you alone (and not the school itself) will be immediately destroyed. All data, including recordings and transcriptions, will be stored in a locked cabinet in my personal office at the University of Manitoba in Canada. Additionally, I will be the only individual to transcribe the recordings and synthesize the data.

Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent. If necessary, you are free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation from Jeffrey Burwell or his advisor.

Once the study has been completed, presumably by the middle of March 2011, I would be happy to speak with you once again either in person or on the telephone to answer any other final questions.

This research has been approved by the Education-Nursing Research Education Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project, contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat.

You should keep a copy of this consent form for your records.

Participant's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

My contact information is: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Appendix C: Request to Meet with Staff Members and Teachers

School leaders provided a similar letter to staff members and teachers either in their mailboxes or on a common school bulletin board before my arrival.

**Attention:** Staff members and teachers

We will have an educational researcher from Canada (Ph.D. student in Educational Administration) in our school from (date) to (date) exploring the challenges of Catholic school administration in East Jerusalem and the West Bank as they relate to school Catholicity.

His name is Jeffrey Burwell and he is interested in meeting with individuals at the school who can provide any additional information about Catholic education in the region related to topics such as the second intifada, the current state of Catholic schools, or the most particular challenges that Catholic schools face.

As the administrator, I have approved his presence in the school and I welcome anyone who wishes to meet with him to do so either by emailing him (before his arrival) or connecting with him while he is in the school. You are free to meet either on campus with him or elsewhere.

There is no expectation that individuals will or will not meet with him; it is completely up to each individual. Your meeting with him will be completely confidential.

Thank you.

## Appendix D: Interview Guide

1. What are administrators doing in their institutions to foster a positive and sustainable relationship between Israelis and Palestinians?
  - Peace education curricula; student exchanges within either Israel or the West Bank
  - Awareness of and attempts to minimize curriculum or textbook bias; use of programs from local organizations
  - Encounters between students from Israeli and Palestinian schools in global regions outside Palestine, such as the Seeds of Peace camp in the USA
  - Other
2. How does Israeli national security affect Catholic schools in the region, and how are administrators addressing the related challenges?
  - Checkpoints; encounters with the Israeli military; freedom of movement; teachers' and students' access to schools
  - Relationship of the school community with the wider Jewish and Islamic communities in the region; effects of the West Bank settlements
  - Impact of the military on the psychological or social development of students
  - Other
3. What are some of the strictly Palestinian challenges that affect Catholic schools today, and how are administrators responding to them?
  - School finances; physical resources; teacher and student retention; academic and extra-curricular programs
  - School governance; board structure; relationships with local religious leaders and other school administrators
  - Professed Catholic identity of the school and its connection to a predominantly Islamic student body
  - Other



4. What sort of challenges do administrators of Catholic schools envision might emerge in the future, and how are they trying to anticipate them?

- Mandate of Catholic education both now and in the future; ongoing exodus of Christians from Israel and Palestine
- Teacher and administrator training; the decreasing number of Christian teachers and administrators in the region
- Competition between schools, especially those in close proximity of each other; working relationships between Catholic school administrators
- External cultural, religious, and political pressures on Catholic schools; diminishing levels of involvement from religious communities of priests, nuns, or brothers
- Other

## Appendix E: Administrator Survey



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**Research Title:** From Checkpoints to Classrooms: The managerial challenges facing Catholic school leaders in East Jerusalem and the West Bank and their relation to and influence on school Catholicity

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. Please complete this survey at your convenience.

It would be appreciated if you could provide to the interviewer a copy of your school's mission statement, any publicity materials used in your school, and the student and faculty handbooks.

**This section is optional and can be omitted if desired**

**Personal and professional background of administrator:**

Gender:             Female             Male

Age:                     20 – 29             30 – 39             40 – 49  
                                50 – 59             60 and over

Religion:             Catholic             Muslim             Other \_\_\_\_\_

Religious Status:  Priest, Religious Brother or Sister

Member of the Laity

Other \_\_\_\_\_

What university degrees(s) have you received and from which schools? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How many years of teaching experience do you have as an administrator? \_\_\_\_\_

How many years, including this one, have you been an administrator? \_\_\_\_\_

How many years, including this one, have you been an administrator at your current school?

\_\_\_\_\_

### Characteristics of your school

Statistics:      Number of students \_\_\_\_\_  
                          Percentage that are Catholic \_\_\_\_\_  
                          Percentage that are Muslim \_\_\_\_\_  
                          Percentage that are other \_\_\_\_\_  
                          Number of full-time teachers \_\_\_\_\_  
                          Number of part-time teachers \_\_\_\_\_  
                          Number of support staff \_\_\_\_\_

Gender of students in your school:  Boys only  
 Girls only  
 Both boys and girls

Grades offered by your school:  1     2     3     4     5     6  
 7     8     9     10     11     12

Would you best describe your school as a:  Terra Santa School  
 School administered by a religious order  
 School of the Latin Patriarchate  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_