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RELIGIOUS BIAS

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Any discussion about fairness or bias in higher education inevitably involves a series of value judgements as to what should count as evidence and how the evidence might be interpreted. Nowhere is this more true than in the case of the religious dimension. Indeed the whole issue of bias needs careful philosophical unravelling and it is hoped that such a conceptual analysis will be undertaken. This chapter restricts itself to looking at a range of material which might help the reader come to some interim conclusion about religious bias. Unfortunately, in this as in many areas it is the gaps in the evidence which are most prominent and so any conclusions are inevitably tentative.

The well-established distinction between the structures and the processes of higher education is used. It will be argued that while some of the institutional structures could be interpreted as being biased in favour of religion, the day-to-day processes of higher education are very much against religion.

In the first section on structures, an attempt will be made to describe the possible elements of the higher education system which might exhibit a religious bias. In historical terms the Church was the main provider of higher education, although this virtual monopoly was challenged from the Reformation onwards. The Catholic University is a crucial aspect of the international scene, and in the United States and parts of Europe Protestant universities and colleges are also important.

England has no Christian university, although in a number of ways Oxford and Cambridge approximate to this model. Apart from Oxbridge, Durham and King's College London, the main ecclesiastical bias at the university level resides in the Christian nature of the faculties of theology. The polytechnic sector is virtually free of religious bias, whereas the so-called third sector contains the Roman Catholic and the Church of England colleges of higher education: two coherent and explicitly value-laden groups of Church colleges. The Scottish, Welsh and Irish contexts are also examined.

The second section will examine the methodologically more difficult area of the place of the religious variable in the processes of higher education. Relatively little work has been done in Europe and so American evidence will be used. The areas discussed include the development of religious attitudes, religion in the curriculum, sex differences, student beliefs, staff beliefs, and the effects of the college environment on religion. The

conclusion drawn is that in the majority of institutions the processes of higher education appear to work implicitly against religious beliefs and practices.

RELIGION AND THE STRUCTURES OF HIGHER EDUCATION

The Church's Historical Involvement

The main provider of higher education in the medieval period was the Church. She alone possessed the money, the manpower and the resources necessary to create universities, and so it was inevitable that the Church should have a predominant control over the contents and the methods of education. However, she did not have an exclusive monopoly and from the very earliest there was a strong tension between ecclesiastical control and academic autonomy. In 1395 Oxford was granted complete exemption from episcopal supervision and Cambridge followed suit in 1439. Not that this freedom placed the universities outside the Church: essentially they formed the educational arm of the Church and most of the university teachers were in holy orders.

After the Reformation the educational legacy of the medieval period came under question as the newly emergent nation states were not so keen on education being in the hands of a universalist church. However, it was not until the later stages of the Industrial Revolution that church control of education was challenged, and the resultant demand for university education in effect meant secular education. As a result of the variety of church-state influences in education, there have arisen a number of distinct types of educational patterns, and these are well documented in Bereday and Lauwerys (1966).

The International Context

Despite the Roman Catholic Church's long involvement in higher education, most of the Catholic universities are creations of the last one hundred years. The great universities founded in the Middle Ages by the Catholic Church were secularized following the Reformation and the French Revolution and it was not until the late nineteenth century that a concerted effort was made in Europe, Latin America and parts of the Third World to establish new Catholic universities. The history of the development of higher education in North America meant that both Catholic and Protestant universities were founded slightly earlier.

The United Kingdom has no explicitly Catholic or Protestant universities but in other European countries a number are to be found. In Belgium the two Catholic universities of Louvain, one French and one Walloon, have a total of about thirty thousand students. They are independent of direct state control and the titular head of both universities is the Archbishop of Malines. In terms of finance however, ninety per cent of their funding comes from the state. The University of Mons has a small Catholic faculty of 500 students and there is also a Catholic institute of commercial studies.

Spain, Italy and the Vatican City all have Catholic universities, and Holland has the Catholic university of Nijmegen as well as the Free University of Amsterdam which is based on the principles of Calvinism. The University of Fribourg, although it is a state-provided institution, is Catholic in character, and the faculties of theology in the other Swiss universities are either Protestant or Catholic in stance and allegiance.

France has no free-standing Catholic university and the state retains its monopoly over the awarding of degrees and qualifications. However, there are 'free' Catholic faculties attached to secular universities and these are grouped together in institutes. A proposal in the 1970s would have allowed the Catholic institutes to conduct exams and award degrees and other qualifications, but this proposal was eventually rejected.

In the United States, until 1950, institutes of higher education were mainly religious in foundation and by far the largest providers were the Protestant churches, having established over one thousand colleges in all. Pace (1972) examined the history and present status of these colleges for the Carnegie Commission and drew up a typology which enabled him to scale the colleges according to their degree of affiliation to their sponsoring Church. He found that some of these colleges had formally shed their legal ties with their founding Church and a large percentage of the rest remained only loosely associated. Interestingly it was this latter group of institutions, with environments which were 'tepid' both academically and spiritually, which he discovered to be having greatest recruitment difficulties and at most risk of closure. On the other hand those colleges which emphasized their Protestant links, and these were mainly the evangelical and fundamentalist colleges, appeared to have a secure future.

The Roman Catholic Church opened its first college in the United States in 1789, and throughout the nineteenth century there was a steady growth of small Catholic colleges designed largely to preserve the faith of the few Catholic laymen from the immigrant ghettos who aspired to higher education (Greeley 1969). However, most of the growth in Catholic higher education took place this century and student enrolments rose from 32,000 in 1916 to almost half a million. Although there are about three hundred Roman Catholic colleges and universities, many of these are small and about forty per cent of the total Catholic student population attends one of the twenty-one big institutes such as Notre Dame, Fordham and St Louis.

In recent years, particularly following Vatican II, there has been considerable questioning within the Catholic university sector as to its place and purpose. This has been facilitated by such groups as the International Federation of Catholic Universities which have provided enabling services for debate and discussion (McCluskey 1970; International Federation of Catholic Universities 1974, 1979). Despite a significant element of secularization within many of these universities, they still remain recognizably religious institutions both in terms of their structures and their processes. Even if the truly Christian university is unlikely to be ever realized,

nevertheless it remains an ideal type against which other religious institutions measure themselves.

The English Universities

Many have argued that there has been no need to establish a Christian university in England because in a number of very significant ways Oxford and Cambridge already approximate to this model. Certainly in terms of their history they could be described as Christian universities and although they have undergone a gradual process of secularization nevertheless the Christian ethos is still pervasive and evident.

A visitor looking down from the top of the university church in Oxford gains the distinct impression of an ecclesiastical landscape — quadrangles, towers, spires, stained glass windows, pointed arches and chapel buildings. He is quite likely to hear a bell: whether it is summoning the faithful to worship in the college chapel, or the hungry hordes to supper in the dining hall, it sounds religious.

To what extent is Oxford underpinned still by Christian assumptions, traditions and trappings? Somewhere in almost every college will be the chapel; not the centre of life for most students but nevertheless a close and accessible symbol of Christianity. Daily services and Sunday sermons preached by the distinguished are likely to impinge upon a high proportion of resident students in a way that would be impossible in a polytechnic. Although the norm of the resident chaplain who is also a teaching fellow has been abandoned in most colleges, and in some instances the chaplain's post is held in conjunction with a city curacy, still virtually every college has a designated chaplain who can get to know his people in a way that would be the envy of most other university chaplains. Three of the college chapels, Magdalen, New College and Christ Church, have choir schools attached, and as a result they draw congregations from outside the college.

The role of Visitor of a college has a symbolic importance which is easy to minimize. Most other universities choose a prominent secular member from 'the great and the good' but in Oxford sixteen of the colleges have a bishop. The Bishop of Winchester is Visitor to five colleges, the Archbishop of Canterbury to four and the Bishop of Lincoln to two. Many of the colleges are also patrons of a number of parishes, which involves finding new incumbents and maintaining satisfactory long-term links with those parishes.

The titles of twelve of the colleges are religious, comprising six saints; Jesus, Trinity, All Souls, Corpus Christi, Magdalen and Christ Church. The merging of the religious and the academic is highlighted by Christ Church. The position of Christ Church is unique in that the college chapel is also the cathedral for the Diocese of Oxford, and the head of the college is also dean of the cathedral. Apart from the Dean, and the Archdeacon of Oxford who is also sub dean of the college, four of the five residentiary canonries are annexed to chairs of theology. At the student level several places, academic

clerkships, are awarded to those who sing in the cathedral choir.

Although the university consists of a federation of colleges, at the same time it has an over-arching structure of its own. This too has its quota of ecclesiastical symbols and customs. Right at the centre of the university, in Radcliffe Square, stands the university church. The University Statutes declare that 'in the week preceding each Full Term, the Holy Communion according to the Liturgy of the Church of England shall be celebrated by the Vice Chancellor or some person appointed by him in the Church at St. Mary the Virgin . . .' (*Statutes, Decrees and Regulations of the University of Oxford* 1980, p.659). Each Sunday in term a university sermon is preached at the morning service and the regulations limit the choice of preacher as follows: 'The Vice Chancellor and Committee may use such liberty in nominating Preachers as may be exercised by a Diocesan Bishop in accordance with the Resolutions of the Convocations of the Church of England' (*Ibid*, p.661).

Upon admission to the degree of MA, the ceremony in the Sheldonian has the distinct flavour of an ordination service. Candidates kneel in front of the vice-chancellor who inducts each of them into the MA status by tapping their heads with a book and pronouncing the admission formula which starts and ends with ecclesiastical language. When the vice-chancellor reaches the final words 'in the name of God, Father Son and Holy Spirit' he is to 'reverently bare his head'.

The faculty of theology is thoroughly Christian and implicitly Anglican in its style. The Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity is required to be a priest of the Church of England, and the other main chairs, in terms of their job descriptions, could not be held by non-Christians. For example the Nolloth Professor of the Philosophy of Religion is required to 'lecture and give instruction in the philosophy of the *Christian religion* including Apologetics, that is the setting forth of the *reasonableness* as well as the authority of the Christian religion . . .' (author's italics).

Whatever may be thought about these job designations at least they are consistent with the content of the courses to be taught. The Honours school of theology is specifically Christian in its content and assumptions. Each candidate is required to take four papers in biblical studies, four in Christian doctrine and one or two other papers from a list of subjects most of which are Christian in their orientation. There is but one option in world religions and even the sociology of religion paper is largely about the Christian religion or deviations thereof. The Diploma in Theology follows roughly the same balance although with fewer papers.

The original purpose of the faculty of theology was to provide an academic grounding in theology for prospective priests in the Church of England. In practical terms this is still a significant issue although the basis is more ecumenical now. If there is any truth in the dictum that 'the Church is being killed by degrees' then Oxford would carry a good share of the blame. The faculty of theology is closely linked with the various

denominational theological colleges in Oxford for their increasingly rigorous academic training requirements have produced a constant flow of students into the faculty at both first degree and higher degree levels. The only degree in Oxford that can be studied on a completely non-residential basis is the Bachelor of Divinity: a higher degree specifically designed to enable clergy who are also Oxford graduates to continue their academic studies while working in a parish.

There are ten institutes for theological training in Oxford and each has a close association with the university varying from full college status to recognized institution rights. The three Anglican theological colleges are able to matriculate a total of twenty-five students each year into the university and these are in addition to Oxbridge students who would already have university membership. These three colleges were instrumental in negotiating a university-validated Certificate in Theology which covers most of the requirements of the Church of England's General Ordination Examination.

A number of other institutes of a Christian foundation exist. Perhaps the most prominent has been Pusey House, dedicated to the promotion of Anglo-Catholic ideals within the university. The house has provided residence, library and meeting facilities for students, and its chapel with its Anglo-Catholic ritual and range of impressive preachers has had a significant impact on many students. Several of the religious orders run hostels for students and there is the full range of central chaplaincy services provided by each of the denominations: noteworthy in terms of student drawing power is the Catholic Chaplaincy. The evangelical focus is to be found in the Christian Union, and the two Anglican Churches of St Aldates and St Ebbes.

Oxford has been examined in detail in order to illustrate some of the structural, institutional elements which suggest that in some very real senses it is a Christian university. The same study of Cambridge would reveal many similar features.

The two nineteenth-century foundations of Durham and King's College London, being modelled on Oxbridge, again reveal in their structures clear signs of ecclesiastical bias. In Durham there has been a tradition that both the bishop of the diocese and the dean of the cathedral should be persons of high academic standing in order that they can visibly link church and university. In recent years the University of London has accepted the Jesuit Heythrop College as a full college within the university. Indeed a collegiate structure allows a university to contain within itself a diversity of styles of institution.

A random sample of one thousand Church of England clergy taken from the 1979 edition of *Crockford's Clerical Directory* revealed that one in three are Oxbridge graduates (Cambridge 17 per cent and Oxford 16.7 per cent), a further 10.5 per cent are graduates of King's College London and 9.2 per cent are graduates of Durham. If one adds to this the number of clergy who were trained at the associated theological colleges but who are not graduates of any of these universities, then the importance within the ecclesiastical

tradition of Oxbridge, King's College London and Durham becomes even clearer.

The other English universities reveal little in the way of structural bias: the only exception being in the teaching of theology. Where a university has a faculty of theology it is normal to find that the predominant concerns are with Christianity, but such a weighting could well be justified on educational grounds. Few would accuse the faculties of modern languages of racial bias for having a greater concentration on French than on Swahili. In the Universities of Manchester and Bristol the faculties of theology are closely related to the theological colleges: at Manchester to the three Free Church colleges and at Bristol to the combined Church of England college and the two Free Church colleges. The role of the universities in validating courses in teacher training has tended to heighten the Christian emphasis. Only at the University of Lancaster has there developed a department of religious studies in which Christianity is not the predominant concern. However, the long-term effects of the Lancaster style should not be under-estimated for their style was widely publicized and at a time when most university faculties of theology were experiencing recruitment difficulties, Lancaster was always over-subscribed. Furthermore the two major Schools Council projects on primary and secondary religious education were Lancaster based, and thus the diffusion of the Lancaster 'phenomenological' approach through the school system has been very significant. One university, Liverpool, is forbidden by statute to teach theology.

All universities have chaplaincy provision as part of their general service to students (General Synod 1980a). In one or two cases, such as the University of Exeter, this chaplaincy provision is formally integrated into the university structure, but in most instances chaplains are provided by the various Churches and work on a consumer-attraction basis. Where the chaplaincy is housed in a local church, its marginal position in relation to the central concerns of the university is particularly highlighted. On most campuses religion competes openly for student support with other interest areas and it is often the non-established forms of Christian involvement, such as the Christian Union and the charismatic groups, which are most evident.

The English Polytechnics and Institutes of Higher Education

It is difficult to find much structural bias in favour of religion in the polytechnic system. Their secular origins and predominant concerns mean that the religious dimension does not intrude much into the day-to-day work. Chaplaincy provision, in comparison to universities, is sparse, and the problems of relating to a scattered and mainly non-resident clientele are enormous. Since the mid-1970s a number of polytechnics have inherited a teacher-training role from a merged college of education and included in this has been a strong normative element of a Christian type. Most primary school teachers are expected to teach religious education along Christian lines and a proportion of them would take religious studies as a main

academic subject. However, the progressive cut back in teacher training and the particular vulnerability of the polytechnic teacher training sector is likely to remove this temporary religious intrusion into an otherwise predominantly secular sector.

It is among the institutes of higher education, the so-called third sector, that the evidence of structural bias is most substantial. Until 1870 virtually all the schools in England were provided by the Church and so it was natural that the Church should also provide training institutions for teachers and it was not until after the Cross Commission of 1890 that the state began to provide its own training colleges.

During the period up to the Second World War both the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church continued to expand the numbers in their colleges, although the proportion in Church colleges relative to those in state colleges gradually declined. The mushrooming demand during the 1960s for teacher-training places was a great challenge to both Churches and between 1963 and 1970 the Church of England's numbers doubled to 18,000 and the Roman Catholic Church's numbers went up from 4500 to 11,000. In addition were the two methodist colleges and the one of the Free Church, which in all gave the Church a total stake in teacher training of about twenty-eight per cent. This presented the high spot in the Church's numerical involvement in teacher training (Gedge 1974).

The events of the last ten years are too recent to need close documentation. Despite the so-called massacre of the colleges of education (Hencke 1978) the Church's structural involvement has remained, although at a reduced scale, through its surviving colleges of education, which have now become diversified colleges of higher education.

Both the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of England retain enough colleges to give them a formal stake in the future educational system of this country (see Table 20). In addition, the Methodists keep a toe-hold in the system through their small free-standing Westminster College, and also through Southlands College which is now a constituent element of the Roehampton Institute. The control structures for this newly-emerging third sector of higher education are still being developed and the futures of some of these institutions are now being seriously questioned. It is difficult therefore at this stage to know whether we are talking of a slimmed-down but viable Church sector for the future (Gay 1979) or of an historical remnant which will soon 'wither away on the vine'.

Scotland, Wales and Ireland

In Scotland, ministerial training for the Church of Scotland (Presbyterian) is totally integrated into the university system. The four universities of Edinburgh, St Andrews, Glasgow and Aberdeen have faculties of divinity and colleges of ministerial training and in each case the principal of the college is also a senior member of the faculty of divinity. The Church of Scotland has a committee for 'Church representation on the University

Boards of nomination'. Thus the faculties of theology are heavily Christian in their orientation and at a practical level concerned significantly with the academic element of ministerial training. Two of the present colleges of education are Roman Catholic and the rest are state controlled.

TABLE 20
The Church colleges of higher education

ROMAN CATHOLIC

1 Free-standing institutions

- De la Salle College, Manchester
- La Sainte Union, Southampton
- Newman, Birmingham
- St. Mary's, Strawberry Hill, London
- St. Mary's, Fenham, Newcastle upon Tyne
- Trinity and All Saints, Leeds

2 Colleges within a federal structure

- Christ's College } Liverpool Institute of Higher Education
- Notre Dame }
- Digby Stuart: Roehampton Institute of Higher Education

CHURCH OF ENGLAND

1 Free-standing institutions

- Christ Church, Canterbury
- Trinity, Carmarthen
- St. Paul and St. Mary, Cheltenham
- The College, Chester
- St. Martin's, Lancaster
- Bishop Grosseteste, Lincoln
- St. Mark and St. John, Plymouth
- King Alfred's, Winchester
- Ripon and York St. John

2 Colleges within a federal structure

- St. Katharine's, Liverpool: Liverpool Institute of Higher Education
- Whitelands, London: Roehampton Institute of Higher Education

3 Colleges which have merged with another institution to form a new voluntary institute

- Bishop Otter, Chichester: part of the West Sussex Institute of Higher Education
- Derby Lonsdale, Derby: part of the Derby Lonsdale College of Higher Education

The Welsh system approximates more closely to the English one. The University of Wales is secular in orientation, although its theological faculties are Christian in emphasis, and through the schools of theology and associated theological colleges the faculties are significantly concerned with ministerial training. St David's College Lampeter, founded on the Oxbridge model by the Church of Wales in 1822, has a clear religious bias. For many years most of its graduates entered the ministry and until 1975 the principal had always been a cleric. There is a strong department of theology whose head carries the title of Professor of *Pastoral* Theology (author's italics). Trinity College Carmarthen is a Church of Wales college of higher education.

In Ireland it is extremely difficult to separate out the religious element from the general cultural and historical matrix within which it is set. Political ideologies are given religious form and thus issues which appear in religious clothing may in fact be expressions of something very different. However, it is beyond the scope of this paper to give a detailed analysis of education and society in Ireland.

In structural terms, schooling in Northern Ireland is segregated and teacher-training provision inevitably follows suit. Stranmillis College Belfast, founded in 1922, was intended to be inter-denominational, but from 1925 onwards Roman Catholic men ceased to attend and switched instead to the Roman Catholic women's college of St Mary's Belfast which had been opened in 1900. In 1961 the men's department transferred to separate premises at St Joseph's College Belfast, and so in practice Stranmillis College became a Protestant college. As long as the school system remains segregated, teacher training is likely to as well. The rest of higher education is integrated, although it could be argued that it is implicitly Protestant: eg the faculty of theology at Queen's University Belfast is staffed by recognized teachers from the Protestant theological colleges.

In the Republic, University College Dublin was founded in 1851 by John Henry Newman as the Catholic University in Ireland. Much has been written about Newman's educational ideals and it does seem that he visualized the Catholic university as being open and free, particularly when it was set in the context of a Catholic country (Newman 1910; Ker 1975; Coulson 1976). Newman was increasingly critical of attempts to exert ecclesiastical control over the university and he saw a clear distinction between a Catholic university and a clerical university. In 1908 the National University of Ireland was established, with its three constituent colleges of Dublin, Galway and Cork, and as the state was reluctant to encroach upon the Church's preserve there was to be no faculty of theology. Furthermore, religious education and moral education were not included in some of the university's professional teaching qualifications, and no provision was made for training specialist teachers in religious education (McClelland 1980). Such teaching in schools is normally done by teachers with first degrees in other subjects, by clerics and religious.

Trinity College Dublin was founded to educate the Protestant ruling

class and at various periods the Roman Catholic bishops prohibited Catholics from attending. Fitzgibbon (1981) shows that with the lifting of this ban the proportion of Protestants to Catholics gradually balanced out during the 1960s. She concludes that in the near future the proportions in the college are likely to reflect the overall population structure in terms of religious composition.

St Patrick's College Maynooth is now recognized as a constituent college of the university and until recently was devoted entirely to seminary training. Since 1966 the college has diversified, although the clerical influence is still paramount. The four colleges of education are all Roman Catholic and are concerned primarily with providing catholic teachers for catholic schools.

RELIGION AND THE PROCESSES OF HIGHER EDUCATION

This section reviews some of the evidence relating to the way the religious variable operates within higher education. It is suggested that in a number of Church-related institutions a student's religious beliefs and practices may be maintained or even enhanced, but that in the majority of institutions strong secularizing forces are dominant. In a small minority of cases the processes are *explicitly* biased in favour of religion, whilst in the vast majority of instances they are *implicitly* biased against religion.

The Development of Religious Attitudes

Children's religious attitudes are largely a product of home and to a lesser extent of school influences. In terms of religious autonomy the critical time appears to be in the mid-teens. Argyle (1975, p.59) has described adolescence as 'the age of religious awakening, during which time people either become converted or decide to abandon their childhood faith, if they had one'. Studies of 'conversion' show a peak around the age of fifteen or sixteen and it is assumed that those who make a decision to become irreligious do so at about the same time.

Most investigations of college and university students' religious beliefs and practices bear out this hypothesis. Feldman (1969, p.47), reviewing a large number of surveys in the United States, concluded that according to students' self-reports, marked change in religious orientation is as likely to begin in high school as in college. Thalheimer (1973) discovered that most college staff had veered away from religion in their pre-college period of academic training, and similar conclusions were reached by Hoge and Keeter (1976) and Hastings and Hoge (1976).

British surveys have tended to replicate these American findings. Pilkington and Poppleton (1976, p.9) conclude that university does not have much effect on a student's religious beliefs, but rather 'it seems likely that the important factors bringing about a movement away from religious beliefs and practice occur before students enter the university at all.' Wright and Cox (1967, 1971) investigated the changes in religious and moral beliefs of sixth-formers between 1963 and 1970 and found that among these pupils a

highly significant decline in religious belief and practice took place. Hornsby-Smith et al. (1976) attempted to follow up evidence that there was a major decline in attendance at Mass before the fifth year.

It has to be admitted that the techniques for investigating religious changes and for determining their causes are still at an early stage of development. Nevertheless there is sufficient evidence to suggest reasonably conclusively that major changes in religious orientation tend to occur around the age of fifteen or possibly earlier (Martin and Pluck 1976), and that while the change is multi-directional, it is predominantly away from religious belief and practice.

Religion and the Curriculum

There has been a long-standing fear that the *hidden* curriculum of higher education is strongly biased against religion. At an organizational level concern has been expressed through the University Teachers Group and the newly formed Higher Education Foundation. Sider (1976) argues that although the days of militant campus atheism are gone, most secular universities foster non-religious views in subtle ways. The increasingly common attitude is that one need only worry about small manageable questions and that no general world view is necessary. Moberley (1949) warned that practical atheism is normally much more effective than the more militant variety and by adopting a neutral stance the university implies that religion does not matter. Bereday and Lauwerys (1966, p.17) concluded that 'impartiality to all beliefs tends to have as its effect support for unbelief'. In a recent publication (Working Party on Christian Involvement in Higher Education 1978) the Church of England recognizes that education cannot be value-free and so attempts to draw guide-lines for the inclusion of Christian values in the curriculum. It also examines the type of curriculum a Christian college might offer. Indeed the whole area of values education has become a growth industry in American education.

That there is a direct relationship between religion and the *explicit* curriculum becomes clear upon reflection on the lack of Quaker military scientists or Christian Science doctors. But in most cases the relationship is more complex. There is generally assumed to be a logical conflict between science and religion, and this is borne out by surveys which show the disproportionate number of scientists to population as a whole who are atheists (Argyle 1975). Furthermore, Datta (1967, p.627) found that 'the results of a series of studies extending from 1926 to 1965 have indicated that eminent American scientists are not a random sample of the general population of Church members' and that Catholics, Baptists, Methodists and Lutherans were under-represented. Values attributed to Catholics are generally considered to be incongruent with scientific attitudes and those attributed to liberal Protestants and post-ghetto Judaism are generally considered congruent. Merton (1968, pp.628-660) found that Calvinistic doctrine was intrinsically hospitable to science.

However, although there is a higher proportion of atheists among scientists, and although it seems that certain forms of religious organization are in potential conflict with scientific developments, Lehman and Shriver (1968) found in a pilot study in one American university that the scientist/non-scientist dichotomy did not successfully predict religiosity scores. Consequently, further investigations were carried out in fifteen universities and he discovered that it was more useful to focus on subject matter than on method (Lehman 1974). His resultant scholarly distance theory took as the critical variable whether the discipline involved the study of religion. Those disciplines such as psychology which do study religion were termed 'low-distance' subjects, and those such as physics which do not study religion were 'high-distance' subjects. In high-distance fields, because religion is not an object of inquiry, it is not seen as problematic, whereas low-distance subjects tend to produce lower levels of religiosity. He found that among the secular universities and faculties scholarly distance was a predictive factor of levels of religiosity whereas the scientific/non-scientific dichotomy was not. On these campuses, faculty in low-distance disciplines share norms that tend to proscribe personal involvement in religious institutions. However, on Church-related campuses the concentration of clerics in non-science areas and in disciplines involving the study of religion meant that the scholarly distance theory was reversed and the norms in these faculties tended to prescribe traditional religious involvement.

Feldman and Newcomb (1969) quote two studies, both of which illustrate the apparent eroding force of the social sciences. At one college the curricula causing the most loss in traditional religious values were the humanities, the social sciences, and industrial administration, while those causing least loss were chemistry, physics and engineering. At the other college, social science caused the greater loss while physical education the least loss. Entwistle and Wilson's work in England (1977, p.108) accords with these findings in that 'sociologists showed distinctive social attitudes. They were tough minded radicals whose syllabus freedom was associated with unstable extraversion. They had high political and low religious values.' Argyle (1975, pp.92-3) feels that it is psychology in particular that produces low levels of religiosity and advances as reasons self-selection and the relativizing effect of the subject. In a study in this country McLeish (1970) found that students studying the physical sciences tended to be high on the religious values scores whereas students studying humanities were low. Pilkington and Poppleton (1976) show that both in 1961 and in 1972 students in education and medicine had high levels of religiosity.

Firm conclusions, in the light of the available evidence, are difficult to draw. Certainly the problems caused by self-selection and differential recruitment need careful examination: is it that potentially irreligious people are more likely to choose to study the social sciences? Some of the contradictions in the survey findings point to a need for a more broad-based and systematic analysis with more of the variables held constant. However

the following basic patterns seem to emerge. After allowing for a small percentage of explicitly atheist scientists, the 'high-distance' effect of science tends to allow for higher levels of religiosity. The humane vocational subjects of medicine and education are also congruent with higher levels of religiosity. There appears to be a conflict in the evidence relating to the humanities, probably resulting from the varied usage of a term which covers such a wide variety of component elements. The social sciences, particularly sociology and psychology are strongly related to low levels of religiosity. Theology too is a 'low-distance' subject and the academic study of religion can have a very disturbing effect on a student's religious beliefs, but unfortunately there is little published empirical evidence in this area.

Sex Differences in Religious Behaviour and Beliefs

Available information on sex differences in religious practice and beliefs reveal that such differences are considerable. Argyle (1975, p.71), reviewing the evidence, concludes 'it is obvious that women are more religious on every criteria'. Similar conclusions are reached in America through work which synthesizes survey material. Feldman (1969a, pp.13-14) found that women scored high on the religious value scale and Parker (1971, p.731) decided that 'the overriding conclusion to be reached is that women are more religious and generally more conservative in their beliefs.' Moberg and McEnery (1976, p.54) sampled the students of Marquette University, one of the largest Catholic universities in the United States, in 1961 and again in 1971 and they comment 'typical patterns of higher conformity to Church norms among females than males . . . was observed.' In a study in England, Entwistle and Wilson (1977, p.104) found that women 'had overall higher scores on neuroticism, tender-mindedness and religious values'

While there seems to be a general agreement about women's higher religious base-line, there is some uncertainty about changes in religiosity while at college. Feldham (1969) found that women were more likely than men to report increased religiosity while at college and less likely to report decreased religiosity. A longitudinal study by Farley et al. (1977) found that both men and women increased in commitment to religion and also that in the two decades between 1950 and 1970 women's general religious values appeared to be changing faster than men's. However, in studies in this country Pilkington et al. and Poppleton (1965; 1976) found that women students moved away from religion more than men in their three years at college: a finding replicated for girl sixth-formers by Wright and Cox (1971). While this could be explained by an increased emphasis on equality and similarity between the sexes, and also in terms of a sex time-lag in a levelling-down process in religious commitment, Pilkington and Poppleton (1976, p.5) conclude 'it is significant, however, that it is the women who have tended to conform to the men's rather irreligious norms rather than the reverse' It may well be that this conformity to dominant norms is the crucial issue, for in America Feldman and Newcomb (1969) discovered that

women had a strong tendency to move towards the college norms. In his study of an Anglican college of education Seaman (1978, p.119) comes to a similar conclusion. It would be interesting to know whether the sex ratio of a college exerts any impact on students' beliefs and practices. Astin (1977, p.69) found that attendance at an all-male college led to an increase in traditional religious affiliation.

Student Beliefs

There are great problems in attempting to assess student beliefs and the methodological complexities mean that most conclusions have to be treated with considerable caution.

A number of longitudinal studies indicate an element of decline in religious beliefs among the students investigated. Heath (1968) measured the religious attitudes of students in a small liberal arts college in the United States and found that between 1948 and 1968 there had been a clear decline in religious orthodoxy. Hoge (1974) carried out a replication of earlier studies in twelve United States colleges and universities, some dating back to 1906, and found a long-term liberalization of religious attitudes and a decrease in religious observance. He carried out a further more detailed survey in two colleges in the United States (Hoge 1976), using identical questionnaires. He found that feelings of need for some sort of religious faith or personal philosophy dropped consistently from 1952 to 1974: 'in sum, in the area of religion a sharp decline occurred in traditional religious beliefs from the early 1950s to the late 1960s, with little change since, but Church participation has declined since 1968-69' (p.158). However, when he looked at what he termed the 'basic' religious beliefs, he found that these had hardly altered from 1968 to 1974. Setting his findings against previous research, he concludes:

'All the research indicates that the trends towards less religious orthodoxy and Church participation during the 1960s are continuing in the 1970s Institutional religious life has dropped more than personal religious life. The new mood among students in the 1970s appears to be a retreat from the political activism of the 1960s, but no deviation from the trend towards individualism and experimentation in religion.' (Hastings and Hoge 1976, p.238)

However, a replication survey carried out at Michigan, Cornell and Dartmouth in the 1950s and again in 1972 found that in all three institutions the commitment to religion grew (Farley 1977).

In England, Pilkington and Poppleton (1976, p.2) quote a longitudinal survey of students at Sheffield University in 1961 and again in 1972 and conclude: 'it is quite clear . . . that by 1972 as compared with 1961, there had been a massive and statistically significant movement away from religion on the part of the students.' They were unable to assign any reasons to account for this decline. A similar movement away from religious belief and practice is reported by Wright and Cox (1967, 1971) in a study of sixth formers over the period 1963 to 1970. Although as yet the evidence is slender there does

appear to be a distinction made in practice between being personally religious and participating at an institutional level in religion, and it is this latter element which has suffered the most erosion.

Staff Beliefs

In respect of staff beliefs much of the information once again relates to the American scene and so this will be examined first. Hoge and Keeter (1976) reviewing past research concluded that college teachers were less traditionally religious in their beliefs and practices than was the general population. The precise reasons for this were uncertain, although Thalheimer (1973) argued strongly that it was the result of a self-selection process: a higher percentage of agnostics tended to become academics rather than it being the direct result of academic activity. Hoge and Keeter (1976, p.230) found that teachers tended to be lower in religiosity who had a higher scholarly productivity, spent more time in basic research, saw themselves as intellectuals and felt uncomfortably different from non-academics. Conversely teachers had a higher religiosity who had been longer in their jobs, saw themselves as being relatively committed to their college, considered it important to be liked by different kinds of people and felt free to speak out on controversial issues.

De Jong and Faulkner (1972) interviewed a sample of the faculty at a large American state university and discovered that few of them totally rejected the traditional aspects of religion, so they could not fulfil the stereotype of the atheist professor. Over half of them belonged to a Church, attended services regularly and reckoned that church membership and prayer were important to their lives. However, when viewed against traditional Christian teachings, their beliefs showed a marked departure from the orthodox. De Jong and Faulkner conclude that what emerges is a picture of intellectuals who have rather thoroughly de-mythologized the core beliefs of the Christian faith but still continue to take part in church activities and worship.

The experience of Protestant colleges in the United States has been that when secular values become accepted into the normative structure of the college then most faculty quickly cease to take any explicit religious stance in their dealings with students, and any religious beliefs the staff may have become reserved for the private sphere. Kratcoski (1972, p.25), reviewing the present state of Catholic higher education, concludes that it is walking a tightrope between developing its academic standards and not abandoning the moral and spiritual sides. In this latter area he feels that the role of the faculty is crucial: 'If the value-specifics of Catholic higher education are to be retained and broadened, the faculty must play a major role, either directly through classroom instruction or indirectly through example and informal interaction with students.' He surveyed the faculty of five small Catholic colleges, and found that eighty-eight per cent considered it an important part of their teaching function to advance the aims of the college and eighty-four per cent were committed to influencing character development. A

comparable survey by Hubery in a large state university found that only forty-six per cent of the faculty saw the moral development of students as part of their concern (quoted in Kratcoski 1972).

There is little empirical evidence relating to staff beliefs in England, but we may assume that some of the processes involved in American higher education are also found here. There is some information from studies of humanism in Britain that teachers and lecturers are disproportionately represented among the membership of groups such as the British Humanist Association (Campbell 1971, p.95). Whatever the factual basis of the recent debate over Marxist influence in British universities and colleges, it does reveal that in the popular imagination there is a deep-seated suspicion that many higher education teachers are atypical in their beliefs and attitudes. In this country, where church-going is not so much a part of the way of life as it is in America, a secularization of intellectual belief is likely to be accompanied by a cessation of religious practice.

The Effects of the College Environment on Religion

Does the college environment have an effect on the religious beliefs and practices of its students? An early study by Jacob (1957) queried the ability of higher education to change students' basic characteristics and he concluded that 'religious beliefs and the values thereto, have been remarkably persistent through college regardless of institution or the time when students were in college' (p.56). In 1961 Astin argued that the college 'product' was more dependent on the characteristics of the students entering than upon the influence of the college itself. Similarly Hastings and Hoge's (1976) research concluded that a lack of change in religiosity from college class to college class both in 1967 and in 1974 indicated that the impact of college on students' religion was quite weak. In this country, Pilkington and Poppleton (1976, p.9), examining the survey results over the three-year range of students at Sheffield University both in 1961 and 1972, suggested 'that the experience of university is not in itself an important factor in affecting religious attitudes.'

Feldman, following up his general work with Newcomb on the impact of American colleges upon their students, wrote two articles (1969a, 1969b) on the effect of colleges on religion. Taking as his research question, 'Do American students typically change in their orientation to religion in their undergraduate years?' he found that 'the average score on the religious scale decreases . . . with year in college' (1969a, p.42). A series of studies showed mean changes indicating that seniors, compared with freshmen, were somewhat less orthodox, fundamentalistic, or conventional in religious orientation, more sceptical about the existence of a Supreme Being, more likely to see God in impersonal terms and less favourable to the Church as an institution. This was reflected in change of religious practice, for Feldman found that church attendance and religious participation declined with time at college. These findings are echoed by Parker (1971), who found that of

twenty-nine surveys examined, seventeen reported a predominant change from orthodox or conservative religious beliefs to liberal or secular ones during a student's time at college.

Unfortunately in this country the amount of similar material is rather slender. McLeish (1973, p.419), reporting on a survey of ten colleges of education in East Anglia, concluded that 'students over a period of three years, change in the direction of the lecturers' and tutors' views in so far as they tend to move from a religious conservatism to a secular humanism.' Generalizing from the evidence available, McLeish felt that the basic pattern of change as a result of the college experience was a tendency to lose faith in religion and to develop radical viewpoints (p.421).

It has been argued that such changes in religious stance could be a normal result of aging, but Argyle (1975, p.35), quoting from control studies of young people not at college, shows that parallel changes do occur in the non-student population but to a much smaller degree. Similarly Astin (1977, p.78), in an analysis of ten years of longitudinal data, found that dormitory students were no less religious than students living with parents at the beginning of the college course, but they were substantially less religious four years later.

Students vary greatly both between and within institutions, and statistics of general trends can mask some very significant counter-movements. Feldman (1969a), drawing on studies which use a methodology which does not mask these movements, found that religious change could be multi-directional. He discovered that in many cases the average trend away from religion was small and that 'at some colleges the number of students experiencing increased religiosity more than counterbalances the number manifesting a decline' (Feldman 1969b, p.123). As a result of this he decided that the influence of most college environments on students was neither direct nor uniform but rather indirect and diffuse (1969a, p.53).

That most college environments do not have a consistent unidirectional impact on student religion reflects the fact that most colleges and curricula are not designed to have any specified impact on religious views. Feldman (1969b, p.123) found that in the majority of American colleges there was 'a deliberate avoidance of institutional policies concerning the particular direction of change in religious outlook that the college should promote, although there might be statements about desired college outcomes in terms of the student character.' However, whatever the official intentions of the colleges, their environments do have considerable impact on students' religious beliefs as students themselves report direct challenges and direct reinforcements (Feldman 1969b, pp.123-4). The higher education scene in both the United States and in England consists of a diversity of types of institution varying along the spectrum from explicitly religious to implicitly anti-religious. Because of the opportunity for student choice, differential recruitment means that students may be already typically different in their religious outlooks and commitments as they enter different colleges.

Although the religious issues may not be the critical ones in reaching a decision, Feldman feels 'that the non-religious criteria students use in picking a college may be associated empirically with certain religious views' (1969b, p.106).

It would seem from the evidence that colleges, intentionally or otherwise, do have an impact on students' religion and although significant movements in the direction of increased religiosity are reported, on average the trend is towards a more liberal humanist position.

CONCLUSION

How is the evidence to be interpreted? There does seem to be a certain structural bias in favour of religion in so far as a few institutions have explicitly religious features embedded within themselves. However, whether this is unfair is a matter for debate. A pluralist system may need a sprinkling of value-laden institutions to challenge the predominantly neutral, secularist stance of the majority. Furthermore, a proportion of the English population is explicitly religious and so it might not be unfair to have institutions of higher education reflecting their world views. Although there has been a rumour around for the last ten years of a Moslem university or college being established in England, and although for a variety of reasons such a possibility is unlikely to be realized, nevertheless the founding of a Moslem institute of higher education could be justified in terms of fairness. Whether such an institute would be desirable or acceptable is another question. The author has argued elsewhere (Gay 1979) that there should be a place within the English higher education system for a few value-laden institutions.

Although bias and discrimination are often used as interchangeable terms, it is important to recognize the distinction between them. It is assumed that discrimination relates more to individuals or small groups, whereas bias refers to structural and process characteristics at a more general level and it is this latter area which has been investigated. However, a variety of organizations were contacted who might have had evidence of religious discrimination, but in most cases they were unable to report anything more than isolated incidents.

Evidence of religious discrimination against individuals or small groups is much easier to detect than more fundamental but less obvious structural and process biases. Discrimination is usually blatant whilst bias is deep-seated, subtle and complex. Perhaps one of the most important but least researched areas of religious bias in higher education is in the area of the curriculum. Interestingly this issue is being well researched at the school level where questions such as the selection of course content, teacher attitudes and expectations, styles of teaching, methods of examination and assessment, and a variety of other related areas have been under discussion. It is the author's hunch that much of the higher education curriculum is implicitly anti-religious, but as yet there is little available published evidence to relate to this assertion.

The interim conclusion reached is that in general terms higher education in Britain is biased against religion. With the partial exception of a handful of universities and the Church-related colleges of the third sector, most of the structures of higher education maintain a neutral stance towards religion. However, the processes of higher education, whether intentionally or otherwise, exert strong anti-religious pressures.

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