

CHAPTER 6 - DISCERNING A DIRECTION: MARCELLIN COLLEGE, MELBOURNE

*Who will teach me what I must
shun?
Or must I go where the impulse
drives?*

Goethe¹

From 1982 to 1989, I was principal of Marcellin College, Melbourne - a school owned and administered by the Marist Brothers, Melbourne Province. During this period I strove with colleagues to articulate and implement what we believed to be an appropriate educational vision for such a school - a vision in keeping with the philosophy of the Marist Brothers and one relevant for the 1980s. The chapter covers many of the decisions taken by the school's leadership team during that period. Naturally I have had to be selective because of the impossibility of covering in one chapter everything relevant from an eight year period. The account is only one person's account - for all that it was checked in draft by many colleagues of that time - and very much a Principal's account. Sitting in the principal's chair gives one the opportunity of observing, speaking with and receiving feedback from many groups within the educational and wider communities. During this period the issue of Marist educational vision came close to my heart and has provided the impetus and rationale for undertaking this research. Since the description and analysis are autobiographical and refer to particular men and women working at, or associated with, Marcellin College during that time, I make Collingwood's sentiments my own:

Because an autobiography has no right to exist unless it is *un livre de bonne foie*, I have written candidly, at times disapprovingly, about men whom I admire and love. If any of these should resent what I have written, I wish him to know that my rule in writing books is never to name a man except *honoris causa*, and that naming any one personally known to me is my way of thanking him for what I owe to his friendship, or his teaching, or his example, or all three (1964, Pref.).

6.1 - CONTEXT

¹ Quoted on a bookmark from Barnard Bookforum, 2955 Broadway, New York City.

In Melbourne, by the 1950s, there were insufficient Catholic schools for the numbers of Catholics seeking places due to the post-war baby boom and the large numbers of immigrants coming from overseas (Anderson, 1992, p.19). The Marist Brothers² accepted the invitation of the legendary Archbishop Mannix, to open a primary and secondary school for boys in Camberwell, an eastern suburb, six miles from the city-centre. Marcellin College opened in 1950,³ with six Brothers and two lay staff teaching 107 boys from Grade 3 to Year 9 (Fitzpatrick, 1988, p.11). In 1953 my parents decided to send me to this school, among other things because they knew the Marist Brothers would ensure my Catholic education included an emphasis on devotion to Mary which they did not see me getting in other nearby religious order schools. By 1962, enrolment had grown to over 500 boys, with further places being sought by Catholic parents in suburbs north of Camberwell, and in 1963 the Brothers opened a second campus at Bulleen 15 kilometres north east of the city on a forty acre dairy farm adjacent to the Yarra river. In 1964 Marcellin College joined the Associated Grammar Schools - an association of seven Anglican and one other Marist school which provided its students with a high quality sporting competition with schools generally serving a middle to upper class clientele. In 1979, a decision was taken not to establish another Catholic secondary school in the area, and the Marist Brothers agreed to increase Marcellin College's enrolment to cover the predicted growth in the local population. By 1981, the last year the school taught primary classes, 441 students were enrolled at the Camberwell campus and 639 at the Bulleen campus. These figures reflect the closing of primary Grades 5 and 6 at the end of 1981, the increase in students at the Year 7 level and the relatively constant retention rate over the four year period (Casey, 1983, Doc. MBA, p.1 and p.6).⁴

TABLE 6.1 - ENROLMENTS 1978 - 1981

	YR	1978	1979	1980	1981
C'WELL	5	80	80	40	-
	6	80	80	81	41
	7	160	160	181	222
	8	160	160	161	178
		(480)	(480)	(463)	(441)

² The Marist Brothers first come to settle in Australia from London in 1872.

³ In 1946 the Brothers had purchased a property called 'Ardmara' containing a two-storeyed house and large garden area (Doyle, 1972, p.556). Initially the house was used as a scholasticate for trainee Brothers. Later the interior of the house and the stables at the rear of the house were converted to classrooms and the garden turned into a school playground. The property was ready to house the first students of Marcellin College, Camberwell.

⁴ The year 12 figures include a small number of girls from the local Catholic girls' secondary school who wanted to study science subjects.

BULLEEN	9	178	168	171	172
	10	166	167	173	173
	11	152	156	162	167
	12	131	127	118	127
		(619)	(618)	(624)	(639)
TOTAL		1099	1098	1087	1080

By the period to which this study relates, then, Marcellin College had grown from a small, one campus primary and secondary school for lower to middle income families, to a large two campus secondary college for students from middle to upper class homes - in its own terms a very successful and prestigious school. The main income earner in Marcellin families was self employed in 36% of cases, and held a professional or managerial position in 54% of cases (MC, 1987, Doc. MC, p.22). The same 1987 survey would show that, while the majority of parents were born in Australia, no less than a quarter had grown up in Italy reflecting the switch in immigration to Australia since 1947 from those of British to those of other European origin (Foster and Stockley, 1984, p.37; MC, 1987, Doc. MC, p.25; Hughes, 1987, p.596). In over half the Marcellin families, both parents worked (MC, 1987, Doc. MC, p.22). Nevertheless parents still worked enthusiastically for the Parents' and Friends' Association, the Ladies' Auxiliary and various *ad hoc* committees.⁵

DEVELOP THE CATHOLICITY OF THE SCHOOL Towards the end of 1981, I was called to Templestowe to see my Marist Provincial,⁶ Br. Walter Smith, to discuss the brief he had for me as the incoming principal of Marcellin College's senior school at Bulleen. He told me of his recent visit to Marcellin College to speak with the staff about the importance of the school's Catholicity and gave me a copy of the notes he used on that occasion. He informed me he was appointing Br. Allen Sherry to the staff as the Marist Province's first school chaplain to assist us in our work of developing further the school's Catholicity. We also discussed my belief that the Marcellin teaching staff should be on the same salary scale as teachers in other Catholic secondary schools in Victoria, rather than being paid according to a specially designed scale containing higher salary levels as was common among non-Catholic private schools. Walter supported me

⁵ Br. Allen Sherry observes these parents represented 'a very small percentage of the overall parent body and predominantly the professional Anglo Saxon middle class' (1992, Corr., p.1)

⁶ Australia has two Marist provinces, the Melbourne province and the Sydney province. In the Melbourne province there are 138 Brothers (MBS, 1991b, p.60). Every three years, following local elections, one Brother from each province is appointed to the position of provincial, or leader of the province. The provincial, assisted by a locally elected group of advisers called the Provincial Council, is legally responsible for schools owned by the Order - such as Marcellin College. The provincial monitors each school's finances, appoints Brothers to the staff and endeavours to ensure the school meets the needs of the Catholic community it serves while maintaining the quality of the school's educational programme (Casey, 1992, Doc. MBA, p.14). Although the provincial is legally the employer of all lay staff, he delegates this duty to the school's principal.

in this and left me with the clear general impression he wanted me to focus very specifically on the Catholic commitment of the school. A decision taken at that time to abolish the entrance test for students wishing to enrol at Marcellin College, Camberwell was also significant in this context. To my mind, and no doubt to the minds of those Brothers who took this decision, this was more in keeping with Catholic, as opposed to private, school philosophy.

A couple of weeks later I dined with Fr. Michael Elligate, the assistant priest of the Bulleen parish and one of the chaplains on the staff. There I heard his views of the school, views he had recently conveyed to the priests of the Melbourne Archdiocese in the newspaper for priests from which I quote:

At the moment, the school I work at is situated in the new-rich suburbs of Melbourne where a success-oriented culture holds status, property and possessions as its great gods.

Maybe a little under half of our students come from homes where catholic life is not important but a solid private school education is considered more than desirable. As it has been said before, religion is a small price to pay for an opportunity to acquire an apparently superior education.⁷

There was even some suggestion that the school itself sometimes lent itself to this 'lip-service' approach:

A certain form in the school did not have a religious education class for four months because their former R.E. teacher was on long-service leave. One did simply ask "Would the under-15s be left without a footy coach for the best part of a season" (Elligate, 1981, Doc. MC, pp.1-2)?⁸

I had now received a brief similar to Walter's from a Melbourne priest, whose views, I felt, had credibility with other Melbourne priests. But, of course, I had impressions and views of my own. Over the previous eleven years, when I had been working in Marist schools in rural Victoria, I had periodically visited Marcellin College for principals' meetings. During these visits, and from discussions with Brothers and old boys of the school, I had observed changes in the school since my student days. I suspected these resulted mainly from the nature of the clientele being

⁷ Mr. Peter Devine responds to this statement as follows: 'My contacts with the parents of Marcellin at that time did and do not lead me to believe that "religion is a small price to pay for an opportunity to acquire an apparently superior education" attitude that typified most parents' (1992, Corr.,p.1).

⁸ Long Service leave is of 13 weeks, not 4 months duration (Devine, 1992, Corr., p.1).

served by the school. I was also aware that within the Marist Brothers' Melbourne province, a number of Brothers spoke affectionately of Marcellin College as 'Bulleen Grammar'. I felt uncomfortable when I heard that term because it seemed to me contrary to an alternative term like 'Bulleen Catholic'.

And so I embarked on my new task, armed with the brief given me by my Marist Provincial - a brief to which I personally subscribed. I did not stop to consider any resistance that might come my way and, adopting my usual style of 'shooting from the hip', began to strive for the specified goal. I thought I had a clear vision for the school and, while I could not anticipate what the future would hold, I felt confident that, with God's help, the task ahead was achievable.

The life of Marcellin College during the eight years that followed was characterised by a rhythm of rapid changes, steadying the pace, further changes. The student enrolments reveal a peak in the enrolment level in 1985 and an increase in the retention rate across the eight year period, offset by the substantial enrolment drop in the last four years - a drop which enabled Whitefriars College nearby to increase its intake by a stream.

TABLE 6.2 - ENROLMENTS 1982 - 1989

	7	8	9	10	11	12	TOTAL
1982	223	223	186	180	177	116	1105
1983	212	223	226	197	197	138	1193
1984	214	216	233	225	199	152	1239
1985	212	214	219	244	222	164	1275
1986	210	210	218	221	227	169	1255
1987	166	204	212	212	207	167	1168
1988	163	160	200	214	201	166	1104
1989	154	167	156	194	208	176	1055

(Orrell and Lawlor, 1982, Doc. MBA, p.1; Elliott, 1991, Doc. MC, p.1).

School fees remained relatively constant throughout the period, being at the higher end of Catholic school fee levels and the lower end of private school levels.

TABLE 6.3 - CALENDAR OF KEY EVENTS

OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL

1982	NEW PRINCIPAL COMMENCES (JANUARY)
1983	CHANGE OF MARIST PROVINCIAL (SEPTEMBER)
1986	MARIST PROVINCIAL COUNCIL PERSONNEL CHANGED (SEPTEMBER)

GOVERNMENT PURSUES NON-COMPETITIVE ASSESSMENT POLICY
 1989 CHANGE OF MARIST PROVINCIAL (JULY)
 1990 NEW PRINCIPAL COMMENCES (JANUARY)

INSIDE THE SCHOOL

THE CREATIVE STAGE (2.6 YEARS)

1982 SCHOOL EXECUTIVE FORMED (MARCH)
 MARIST VISIT (MAY)
 TEACHERS' SALARIES ALIGNED WITH CATHOLIC AWARD (AUGUST)
 ADVISORY COUNCIL ESTABLISHED (SEPTEMBER)
 UNION LEADER AND SPORTSMAN RESIGN (DECEMBER)

1983 12% INCREASE IN BULLEEN ENROLMENT (FEBRUARY)
 SCHOOL EXECUTIVE EXPANDED TO INCLUDE DEVELOPMENT OFFICER (OCTOBER)
 PROVINCIAL VISITS MARIST COMMUNITY (NOVEMBER)
 SCHOOL ENDS YEAR WITH RECURRENT DEFICIT (DECEMBER)
 PRINCIPAL'S TERM ON COMMONWEALTH SCHOOLS' COMMISSION CONCLUDES
 (DECEMBER)

1984 CHANGE OF MARIST COMMUNITY SUPERIOR (JANUARY)
 FUTURE ORIENTED INSERVICE DAYS (FEBRUARY)
 CATHOLIC SCHOOL LEADERS' GROUP COMMENCES (MARCH)
 DEVELOPMENT GROUP ESTABLISHED (AUGUST)

THE TESTING STAGE (2.4 YEARS)

1984 BEHAVIOUR INCIDENT (SEPTEMBER 14TH)
 MARIST VISIT (SEPTEMBER 25TH)
 PHILOSOPHY SUB-GROUP BEGINS ITS WORK (NOVEMBER)
 SCHOOL EXECUTIVE EXPANDED TO INCLUDE DEVELOPMENT OFFICER (OCTOBER)
 DEPUTY PRINCIPAL RESIGNS TO TAKE UP ANOTHER PRINCIPALSHIP (DECEMBER)

1985 SCHOOL COORDINATOR JOINS EXECUTIVE TO REPLACE DEPUTY PRINCIPAL
 (FEBRUARY)
 SCHOOL EXECUTIVE EXPANDED TO INCLUDE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CO-
 ORDINATOR (FEBRUARY)
 OPENING OF THE NEW CREATIVE ARTS BUILDING (FEBRUARY)
 PHILOSOPHY SUB-GROUP SEEKS AN EXTENSION (MAY)
EDUCATIONAL VISION PAPER PRESENTED (SEPTEMBER)
 PRINCIPAL AND CHAPLAIN TRAVEL TO THE PHILIPPINES ON A POVERTY
 EXPOSURE TOUR (DECEMBER)

1986 MARIST BROTHERS APPROVE EDUCATIONAL VISION (AUGUST)
 PHILOSOPHY SUB-GROUP CONTINUES ITS WORK
 ADMINISTRATION CENTRE RENOVATED

THE CONSOLIDATION STAGE (3 YEARS)

1987 27% DECREASE IN YEAR 7 ENROLMENT
 SCHOOL EXECUTIVE FORMALISED WITH APPOINTMENT OF 3 VICE-PRINCIPALS -
 INCLUDING VICE-PRINCIPAL MINISTRY (FEBRUARY)
 PARENTS SURVEYED (JULY)
 MARIST VISIT (AUGUST)
 EXPLANATION OF MARCELLIN'S ENROLMENT TRENDS TO THE ADVISORY COUNCIL
 BY MARIST SUPERVISOR OF SCHOOLS (OCTOBER)

1988 INSERVICE OPPORTUNITIES FOR STAFF HOLDING MIDDLE MANAGEMENT
 POSITIONS (FEBRUARY)
 YEAR 7 ENROLMENT MAINTAINS NEW LEVEL (FEBRUARY)
 DEVELOPMENT GROUP BECOMES CURRICULUM COMMITTEE (FEBRUARY)
 DECISION ANNOUNCED TO AMALGAMATE CAMBERWELL AND BULLEEN CAMPUSES IN 1990 (OCTOBER)

1989 LAY PRINCIPAL APPOINTED FOR 1990 (APRIL)
 MARIST VISIT (NOVEMBER)

It will be observed that this calendar suggests a view of the period as falling into three main stages of creation, testing and consolidation. These are discussed in turn in the following sections.

6.2 - THE CREATIVE STAGE

During my first week at Marcellin College, I was invited by our ex-Olympian athlete sportsmaster to accompany him to the school's ovals. On the way, he drove me out the school's front gate and across the road to the ovals of a high fee private school. Getting out of the car he picked a few blades of grass from this school's main oval and asked me to consider the quality of these blades. Getting back into the car, we proceeded back inside our front gate to our own ovals where once again he chose some blades of grass for me to examine. He informed me of his disappointment with the quality of the grass on our ovals compared to our wealthy neighbour, insisting that if we were going to be a 'force to be contended with' in future school sporting events, we needed to allocate considerable funds to upgrading the school's ovals.⁹

Some months later, I decided, primarily for philosophical rather than financial reasons, that Marcellin College would be adopting Catholic school salary levels. I had discussed my proposal with the school's Deputy Principal, Mr. Peter Devine to whom I had delegated the responsibility for the day to day running of the school.¹⁰ Peter advised me of likely staff reaction and through our discussions I developed a proposal that Peter thought would be acceptable to, but not welcomed by, the staff. This proposal recommended a reduction in the number of salary levels for teachers from 13 to 10 and the 'freezing' of the salaries of those staff members¹¹ who were already being paid above the Catholic award until that award 'caught up' - a period of twelve to eighteen months. I informed the staff of my decision at one of our regular, after-school, staff meetings. I gave them my rationale telling them I was basing my decision on the currently accepted practice of at least 95% of Catholic schools in Victoria.¹² A profound silence overtook the gathering. The leader of the union spoke briefly against my proposal and the staff meeting came to an almost immediate close. Many unofficial Marcellin staff meetings and telephone conversations took place in Melbourne that evening. The

⁹ During my student days at Marcellin we used to practise for our sporting events either on the bitumen behind the school or on local playing fields which needed to be hired.

¹⁰ We worked on a 'shared leadership' model. He recalls the pressures he felt during those three years - particularly when long serving staff began to find some of the changes difficult to accept (Devine, 1992, Corr., p.3).

¹¹ Approximately 10%.

¹² There were three reasons for making the decision that Marcellin College teachers should be on a Catholic Teachers' Award.

a) Marcellin College is primarily a Catholic school belonging to the Archdiocese of Melbourne. It is important not to create divisions or envy within the Catholic system.

b) While teachers need to be justly paid, they are primarily providing a service to those they teach. Preoccupation with salary levels can disadvantage the quality of service.

c) The school should be particularly welcoming to those of poorer means, who are often lower achievers and whose parents may not be able to pay full fees.

sportsmaster and the leader of the union resigned from the staff at the end of that year.

Meanwhile I was beginning to feel uncomfortable about all the power which seemed to reside in the hands of the principal. It was becoming unusual, in the early eighties, for Catholic schools to be administered in an autocratic, rather than a collaborative, way.¹³ I consequently invited Peter Devine and the recently appointed Business Manager to join me on a newly formed school executive, with my own secretary carrying out the executive's secretarial work. I wanted to rely on these people because of my belief in delegation and also because of my commitments outside the school - particularly with the Commonwealth Schools' Commission, where I was representing Catholic education one day a week.

Two Marist visitors arrived for their biennial visit¹⁴ in May 1982. At the conclusion of their visit, they reported:

Marcellin is still adjusting, after one [school] term, to a new Headmaster and the inevitable change in the style of leadership.

Brother John McMahon does not have any specific teaching load. He hopes to meet a ... [cross-section] of students through invitations to RE lessons. He is also absent from the School on a regular basis through his work on the ... [Schools'] Commission.

Brother John would articulate his general approach under two broad headings:

1. The need to pray with his Staff. Prayer is not seen as strong among the Staff.
2. The responsibility to act as a "Chairman" in the functioning of the School ...

Inevitably, in this approach, the Deputy Headmaster is called upon to exercise many of the functions previously carried out by the Headmaster. He appears perfectly capable, and willing to do this, but it will take some time for his new role to be clarified and accepted.

The visitors also observed the enrolment change.

¹³ Ms. Julie Ryan doubts that schools 'were necessarily run in a collaborative way in the 1980s'. She adds: 'At many inservices I went to I got the impression that Marcellin was the exception rather than the rule' (1992, Corr., p.2).

¹⁴ Every two years, each Marist school is visited for one or two days by two administrators from other Marist schools. The visitors carry out an unofficial and informal evaluation aimed at supporting the principal and leadership team of the school they are visiting. At the end of the visit they write a report which is submitted to the local principal for checking and then forwarded to Marist Headquarters in Melbourne. Visits to Marcellin College took place in 1982, 1984, 1987 and 1989 (Orrell and Lawlor, 1982, Doc. MBA; Gilchrist and Casey, 1984, Doc. MBA; Braniff and Huppatz, 1987, Doc. MBA; Van Rooij and Furlong, 1989, Doc. MBA).

A significant change in student clientele is already being experienced at the Junior School through the decision to drop the entrance examination and undertake the acceptance of all applicants from the [local] parishes ... This will mean a broader cross section of academic ability and the need to cater for less able students through remediation and alternative courses in a comprehensive curriculum.

They made reference to 'sporting and academic pursuits'.

Achievement in sporting and academic pursuits ... [has] been receiving less recognition under the new regime, resulting in unsureness and even threat among some staff and students accustomed to emphasis on these two aspects of education. This has enabled the surfacing and articulation of the objection to compulsory sport by a group of Year 12 students (Orrell and Lawlor, 1982, Doc. MBA, pp.1-2).

Other 1982 developments included the establishing of a Staff Committee made up of the Heads of Departments and Year Level Coordinators, which I, as principal, chaired, and of two other committees - one for pastoral care chaired by Br. Allen Sherry and the other for curriculum development chaired by the Head of the Commerce Department (*ibid.*). In October, we advertised a vacancy for a careers counsellor and subsequently appointed Ms. Julie Ryan to the position. She had been recommended by Marist Brothers who had worked with her on the staff of another school in rural Victoria where she was still working (MC, 1984a, Doc. MC, p.8). Her appointment to the school was to prove an important one.

SCHOLIUM 6.1 - MS. JULIE RYAN

Julie commenced at Marcellin College in February 1983. Towards the end of 1984 she was appointed Development Officer which involved chairing and acting as executive officer of the newly formed Development (or Curriculum) Group. In 1987 she became Vice-Principal Curriculum, a position she still held at the end of 1989. In addition to her position at Marcellin, during 1988 and 1989 she acted as a curriculum consultant for the Government's Ministry of Education. Her personal and professional contributions were pivotal to the renewal of Marcellin's educational vision.

By the end of 1982 we had also appointed a Business Manager and established an Advisory Council.¹⁵ This Council, as well as the school

¹⁵ The Advisory Council was set up to assist the principals of the Camberwell and Bulleen campuses by advising upon and monitoring:

- (1) strategic planning for the College
- (2) policy, procedure and controls to ensure the effective and economical operation of the business affairs of the College
- (3) the College finances

Members of the Council were

- (1) the two principals until 1988, then the one principal in 1989;
- (2) a nominee of the Provincial of the Marist Brothers;
- (3) eight persons, normally parents, who were nominated by the principals and approved by the Marist Brothers' representative, from the following categories of professional interests: Education, Financial Management, Law, Business Management, Industrial Relations and Engineering;

executive and the other committees already mentioned, immediately broadened the decision-making processes of the school. Most Catholic schools had school executives at this time and increasing numbers of schools were setting up their own school boards, a subject with which I was familiar since I was then concluding the writing of my Masters thesis on the topic: 'Catholic Secondary School Boards in Victoria'.

During that first year the newly appointed Marist chaplain, Br. Allen Sherry, with whom I lived in community,¹⁶ and I, often shared our concerns with each other about the philosophy of Marcellin College. Al worked in the area of faith development with the senior students, taught religious education, offered meditation classes and ran a Justice Action Group. He saw it as particularly important that we review the school's philosophy statement and so, after seeking and gaining my approval, and assisted by a long serving staff member, Al drew up a new draft philosophy statement and consulted the staff as to its acceptability. Based on the responses of 70% of the staff, he drew up a revised statement and a set of school aims, both of which are reproduced below (Sherry and Smith, 1983, Doc. MC, p.2):

MARCELLIN COLLEGE

A STATEMENT OF SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY

Marcellin College is named after the founder of the Marist Brothers, Blessed Marcellin Champagnat (1789-1840). The College is a Catholic Secondary School conducted by the Marist Brothers, who, together with the parents of the students and the staff of the school, seek the 'on-going Christian formation of the students through the integration of faith and life' (1). As a Marist school, Marcellin College derives its inspiration from Catholic tradition, the spirit of the Marist Order, and sound educational theory and practice.

The College motto 'Per Virtute ad Altissima' ('through striving reach for the highest') suggests that in our daily living we are not content with just an adequate grasp of

(4) the elected Presidents of the Parents' and Friends' Association (from 1987), the Ladies' Auxiliary (from 1988) and the Past Students' Association (from 1988) (MC, 1989, Doc. MC, pp.2-3.

¹⁶ Marist Brothers normally live in a community of between two and ten Brothers. The Brothers working at Marcellin College, Bulleen, lived on the school site. Not all Brothers in the community worked in the school but community discussion often focused on the life of Marcellin College. While individual Brothers thought differently about the school, an atmosphere of respect for each individual always pervaded the community's life. In 1982 the Marist visitors reported: 'The Brothers, as a group, ... [are] seen to be very important to Marcellin. The parents identified it as a "Brothers' School". Their contribution ... [is] seen to vary from personality to personality. However, they ... [are] seen as bringing an extra richness and availability to their pastoral care of the students - and their fellow staff members' (Orrell, and Lawlor, 1982, Doc. MBA, p.4).

living and learning and developing skills. Rather, we are aware that excellence lies in being fully alive as human beings.

(1) The Catholic School, Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, Art.43.

Marcellin College: A STATEMENT OF AIMS

Marcellin College aims to bring out in its students the confidence to make a deep personal decision to follow the lead of Jesus to his Father.

The College seeks the fostering and nurturing of the faith implanted through Baptism. Endeavouring to place the students' search for meaning and values of life within the Catholic tradition, the College facilitates the students' faith development that they might eventually define their own role in the world, in the light of the Gospels and the teaching of the Church.

Marcellin College, setting out to provide an environment which allows a Christian formation to evolve, places the Gospel values of freedom and charity as the main characteristics of the ethos of the school. The College, then, endeavours to create an environment in which the students can explore their living, even make mistakes, within a context of being cared for.

In its organisation Marcellin College allows for individual freedom and encourages a process of decision-making in which values and individual worth are reflected through the closest possible relationships between staff, parents and students.

Marcellin College also aims to create and maintain a flexible and enriching educational programme for its students. Such a programme aims to prepare the students to play a creative and sensitive role in society with a special emphasis on the needs of others. To this end the school seeks to develop within the students a critical mind that is sensitive to important social issues so that they will be willing to take a stand from basic Christian principles.

While these statements seemed to gain the general approval of staff, not much was said either for or against them. Staff had merely responded to the writings of their two colleagues (*ibid.*, p.3). I agreed to this process because I wanted staff to think about the school's philosophy. However I came to realise later, that while we benefited from an exercise which put

the school's philosophy 'on the agenda', we should have proceeded in a way which included greater participation by members of the Marcellin community. Such engagement may first have prevented the final statement from being rather bland, and second, and more importantly, may have saved us going through the whole process again.

When staff returned for the commencement of the 1983 school year, student enrolments had increased by nearly 100 due to the larger numbers of students in the local area wanting a Catholic education. At this stage, most parents seemed unaware of any significant change in direction at the Bulleen senior campus. We welcomed many new teachers to the staff and enjoyed the associated feelings of growth and optimism. Staff were beginning to realise their opportunities for participating in the policy formulation of the school through the school executive, the staff committee, the curriculum committee or the pastoral care committee. Long serving staff, however, found this hard to accept. They felt taking their suggestions to a committee took valuable time away from their class preparation, believing the principal was the right person to make most school decisions. Incoming staff, however, generally took the committee structure as accepted practice.

Inservice days were now becoming a more frequent and appreciated occurrence. In September 1983, Br. Allen Sherry led a day's inservice in which he covered topics related to the faith development of young adults. These issues bore a strong relationship with Marcellin's newly articulated philosophy statement. In retrospect, my memory of that day is that most staff were not engaging with the issues Al was raising.¹⁷ (DG, 1984, Doc. MC, p.1). Indeed, though now well into my second year of principalship, I felt we had hardly scratched the surface in getting staff to reconsider seriously the educational vision of the school.

However some significant changes were taking place, as Julie Ryan reported when writing later about this period in a Catholic Education Office journal.

Over the last two years [1982-1983] there have been many significant curriculum developments at Marcellin - a special education department has been introduced, a career

¹⁷ The 1982 Marist visitors reported: 'Brother Allen Sherry's role as Chaplain was welcomed by many of the Staff who saw the experiment as an interesting development and were supportive of it. Some, however, would be indifferent to his work in the School (Orrell and Lawlor, 1982, Doc. MBA, p.7).

education program has been implemented, the transition course has been extended and a range of Group 2 subjects [at Year 12 level] now exists (Ryan, 1985, Doc. CEOV, p.6).

These curriculum changes were, of course, in harmony with the revised philosophy statement, particularly in the way they attempted to assist the lower achievers in the school by offering first, the services of a careers teacher and second, more creative and manually oriented courses through both the transition programme for Year 10 and 11 students and the Group 2 Subjects for Year 12 students. During this period Julie detected 'a general feeling among staff that these new directions needed to be co-ordinated' for she now realised some staff were becoming uncertain about 'our future direction'. Such uncertainty was not limited to the staff (*ibid.*).

Newly appointed Marist Provincial, Br. Des Crowe, during his 1983 visit to the Bulleen Marist Community, informed me of his own uncertainty about the changes he was hearing about at Marcellin - a school for which he was ultimately responsible. He was worried about my policy of delegation, feeling I was sharing too much responsibility with others. I thought about what Des had said, sought some advice from senior staff and professional colleagues, and a few days later returned to him, with some feeling, to explain our *modus operandi* and the processes we were employing to discern the future direction for Marcellin College. While I found that exchange difficult, it proved to be invaluable as I was shortly going to depend on Des's understanding and to receive his unqualified support over a tricky matter of student behaviour.

Not long after Des' visit, Br. Julian Casey, representative of the Marist Brothers on the Advisory Council and Supervisor of Marist Schools, presented a report to the Advisory Council offering some guidelines as to how we might handle our forecast operating deficit of \$53,000 for the 1983 school year by slowing our capital building programme and increasing our school fees. Plans for our \$1 million Creative Arts building were well advanced and we were also preparing to build a new administration centre to replace the existing overcrowded area. Julian described this period as 'a bottleneck of expanding dimensions in the school, namely enrolments, curriculum, capital works and administration'. He added: 'Objective and "formula-ized" methods of allocation of monies to projects, sites and departments seem to be needed' as well as 'a general consensus about the need for hard choices'. I felt the pace quickening (Casey, 1983, Doc. MC, p.1).

Towards the end of 1983, I called for volunteers to organise two staff inservice days scheduled for the beginning of the 1984 school year. Julie Ryan offered to participate and co-ordinate an organising committee. The group was assigned the task of choosing the topics for the inservice. It invited Mr. Gerard Stafford, a resource person at the Catholic Education Office of Victoria, to facilitate and contribute to these days. Gerard worked with the organising committee for several months and on November 11th presented a paper to the group in which he noted:

Marcellin College is a large and long established Catholic boys' school which has achieved a reputation as being successful in offering a traditional "academic" education to its students. (ie: an education in the grammar school tradition which is oriented towards successful completion of H.S.C.).

Along with many other Catholic secondary schools it now finds itself in a "crossroads" situation whereby it is confronted with the option of choosing to continue in its traditional mode or of seeking to build a new direction for the school community.

He then summarised some of the College's recent developments - information about which he had gleaned from his discussions with the members of the working committee.

The Marist Order's vision for the school, manifested through the open entry policy, for example, is aimed at ensuring that through a more comprehensive curriculum Marcellin will be enabled to cater for the needs of all of its students within its local area. The administrative approach being adopted is collaborative and collegial thus enabling the talents of staff to be identified, welcomed and utilized (Stafford, 1983, Doc. CEOV, p.1).

He then outlined diagrammatically the change in direction he saw before the Marcellin community as shown on the following page.

The February 1984 inservice days were devoted to the theme 'Developing the Curriculum - Hopes and Challenges'. After several input, discussion and reporting back sessions, Gerard concluded proceedings with a summarising session in which he described the assembled staff members as having achieved 'consensus' in agreeing, first, to develop principles 'about how Marcellin operates', and second, to examine 'practices which

need to be better developed'.¹⁸ He recommended that the staff meet to consider the setting up of an 'Ad Hoc Planning Group' (MC, 1984b, Doc. MC, p.3). The staff supported the recommendation to establish a committee 'to work on a proposal for an enabling structure to facilitate further curriculum development (Ryan, 1985, Doc. CEOV, p.6).

**TABLE 6.4 ALTERNATIVE VISIONS FOR MARCELLIN
COLLEGE**

¹⁸ This process type conclusion gave us agreement on how we were going to articulate the principles and practices rather than stating what these principles and practices were at this time.

I sensed a feeling of excitement in the air because staff were now working together to plan for the future. Some months later the Marist visitors were to enter a note of caution which itself witnessed to the change in tempo:

... the task of the principal requires him not only to encourage the ideas, but also to tame the collected enthusiasms with the constraints of 'people' and 'budgets' and to foresee the implications of each proposal for a wide range of existing thrusts. This is no easy task (Gilchrist and Casey, 1984, Doc. MBA, p.2).

During the first half of 1984, this new committee spent much time producing a role description for such 'an enabling structure'.¹⁹ In addition to staff involvement, this recommended involving representative groups of parents and students, emphasising 'the gradual involvement of students in discussion and planning about the curriculum'. In other words, the proposal committee was informing the Marcellin community of its hope that many staff, parents and students would be involved in future curriculum development processes. Early in its deliberations, the proposal committee defined total curriculum as

all the arrangements made by the school for the promotion of student learning and personal development ... not only the formal curriculum but also the planned arrangements in support of that and also all the personal interactions that occur within the school community (Ryan, 1985, Doc. CEOV, p.6).

This effectively gave the members of the 'enabling group', soon to be called 'The Development Group', the mandate to consider all areas of school life including the school's 'future direction'.²⁰ No terms of reference were specified for the Development Group because there was the feeling that the Group would have to define its own role rather than be given one. Instead, the proposal committee chose the gospel values of community, service and mutual respect to be those on which the Development Group would base its work. The committee described these values in the following terms:

Community refers to the very way the school members interact with each other. It should be a place where happy

¹⁹ The role description adopted was one described in a Melbourne Catholic Education Office journal.

²⁰ The development group - informally at least - said its role was to develop the curriculum at the school and that curriculum extended from the Year 10 Maths to the position of the dustbins' (McBeath, 1992, p.1).

and dynamic creativity generates unity through co-responsibility and shared participation.

For community to flourish the value of service is vital. The nature of service highlights the equality of each member so that no one is subservient.

Since the total curriculum has as its aim the total formation of the individual as well as the critical communication of human culture then the value of mutual respect is paramount (Ryan, 1985, Doc. CEOV, p.6).

Meanwhile issues were brewing in other quarters. Since early in 1984, I had become aware that the arrival of our new Marist chaplain, Br. Nick McBeath, was adding another style to Marist chaplaincy. Our first Marist chaplain, Allen Sherry²¹ had been expressing his belief that the process of change at Marcellin College was progressing too slowly. Nick, being new to the school, felt less inclined to rush the process. With these two approaches in tension, I called a meeting on April 10th. 1984 of the two chaplains, the Religious Education Co-ordinator, the Assistant Religious Education Co-ordinator, and the Deputy Principal and asked the assistant religious education co-ordinator, Nic Vidot, to chair the meeting.²² The meeting agreed to take the slower course and left it to the Administration to oversee the renewing of Marcellin's educational vision.

After five drafts and six months, the proposal for the establishment, membership and function of the Development Group was finally ready. Julie Ryan, convenor of the proposal committee, applied for, and was appointed Marcellin College's Development Officer - the title given to the leader and executive officer of the new group, and a position which gave her a half-teaching allowance to carry out her Development Group responsibilities. All teachers, irrespective of their position in the school, were invited to indicate their willingness to become elected members of the Development Group, knowing that membership would involve a reorganisation of their teaching loads to enable them to attend meetings during the last period of one school day a fortnight, a meeting which would continue for an hour after school on that day. In August 1984, with the elections completed, the Development Group was born (*ibid.*, pp.6-7).

²¹ Julie Ryan believes the seeds Al. sowed 'set clear directions and enabled us all to move further' (1992, Corr., p.3).

²² The agenda of the meeting is shown below:

a) Each to present his/her vision of Marcellin College, a Marist Catholic Secondary School.
b) The role of Administration, R.E. Department, Chaplaincy etc. in the formation/enabling of the above (no.1).
c) Further meetings (Vidot, 1984, Doc. MC, p.1).

SCHOLIUM 6.2 - THE DEVELOPMENT GROUP

The Development Group began with nine members, seven of whom, including Nick McBeath, were elected by the staff, initially for a two year term, while Julie Ryan and I²³ participated in an *ex officio* capacity. The members came from several departments, taught at all levels in the school and were generally men and women in their thirties, some of whom had leadership positions within the school.

Most meetings involved free flowing discussions. Agendas, often twenty pages in length, were distributed several days before the meeting. Members were also reading in their own areas of expertise - whether it was Scripture, religious education, or secular educational theory and practice. This literature nourished our discussions and also provided us with a different theory base to that coming from the staff room which was often more oriented towards a private school approach to education. In this Group we received a more appropriate theoretical context for Catholic education and one which assisted our discussions with members of the school community outside these meetings.

The Development Group insisted on involving other staff, parents and students in its work by inviting them to address, in sub-groups, problems which the Group saw as important for the school. Briefs, which were subject to Development Group approval, were prepared for these sub-groups by the Development Officer. All sub-groups included, and were sometimes chaired by, a member of the Development Group.

The Development Group met every two weeks from 1984 until 1988 when it became the school's Curriculum Committee. In their 1984 report, the Marist visitors suggested 'such a group could well become a necessary part of any large school in the future. Hence the documentation of its experience will be an important factor if the concept is to spread to other schools' (Gilchrist and Casey, 1984, Doc. MBA, p.3).

Eight key sub-groups were to be established by the Development Group during the ensuing years.²⁴

With Julie showing expert leadership of creative, talented and hard-working people, the Development Group took to its task like a duck to

²³ Nick McBeath believes my presence on the Development Group gave the members a feeling of freedom. In Fullan's (1992, p.42) words the people on the group were 'empowered' because they felt they could count on the support of the 'boss' (1992, p.42).

²⁴ Topics, year commenced and duration for the key Development Group Sub-Groups were: School camps (1984 - 1 term), School philosophy (1984 - 3 years), School decision making (1984 - 1 year), Staff common room use (1985 - 2 terms), Formal curriculum including assessment and reporting (1985 - 2 years), Transition group evaluation (1985 - 2 terms) and Pastoral Care (1987 - 1 year) (Ryan, 1985, Doc. MC; pp.1-2;.Ryan 1984c, Doc. MC, p.1; Ryan, 1987, Doc. MC, p.1; Panetta, 1985, Doc. MC, p.3).

water. The members felt they were in a 'high status group' and had some responsibility to fulfil the hopes of those who had elected them. Many of them were currently undertaking additional university courses and all were reading extensively so as to be able to participate fully in each meeting. Meetings often overflowed afterwards into informal sessions in offices, carparks or staff members' homes. Staff perceptions of the Development Group varied, as the Marist visitors reported:

Some see it as an 'initiating body', others as a 'resource group for problem solving' others as a 'review panel to monitor everything that happens in the school', others as 'a means of implementing ideas more effectively' and others as 'the school conscience' (Gilchrist and Casey, 1984, Doc. MBA, p.3).

No matter how individuals felt about it, the staff as a whole soon realised this dynamic and forthright group was going to take the school very quickly down a new path. Some staff wondered whether it was the right path. The Development Group was not only building a new vision by creating 'a mental picture of what the future could and should look like' but was also preparing to see to the implementation of this vision (Patterson, Purkey and Parker' 1986, p.88). In September, 1984, Julie Ryan joined the school executive on 'a trial basis' so as to ensure communication with the members of the executive who were not on the Development Group.

But as change became real so the 'reaction' against it was to rise above a murmur. We were about to enter on the testing stage of our journey.

6.3 - THE TESTING STAGE

On September 14th, 1984, during the school's lunchtime break, a student was tied to a tree and physically assaulted, although not hurt, by a number of his peers to the cheers of surrounding students. Shock waves spread rapidly through the Marcellin community. Letters of complaint were received by the Marist Provincial, Br. Des Crowe, about the lack of discipline at the school. Parents now had an incident to highlight their growing concerns about the school and their feeling that I was away from the school too much - endorsed by the students' choice of my nick name, 'Phantom'. I knew from previous conversations with parents, particularly with a group of mothers at a Parents' and Friends' Dinner Dance, that parents were worried about my style of delegating too much - a practice

they thought I would discontinue if I were 'around' more. I had broken it to these parents that I believed strongly in delegation and had put it into effect for six years during my previous principalship. I also told them of the importance of representing Catholic education on government bodies and that I believed all principals of Catholic schools should take their turn on such bodies, even if it did involve being out of the school for one day a week.

A clash of expectations as to the role of a school principal had emerged. I wanted to revise the educational vision of the school, but parents wanted me to concentrate on discipline and school uniform and took the view 'Brother John's running this school, he's a Marist Brother, he knows what to do, why doesn't he get out and do it?' We had reached a testing stage in establishing and implementing Marcellin's renewed educational vision for the College. I was determined to maintain my stance of trusting those to whom I had delegated responsibilities and of standing behind them when difficulties arose, of consulting as widely as possible and of praying with the school community. For, I felt, if God's Spirit is to enliven the school community, the school's leaders must facilitate, rather than get in the way.

In response to this incident, I had included an article titled *The Discipline of Respect for Others* in the next school newsletter, which offered the following report and invitation:

... The boys concerned have been disciplined but we believe that the whole school community needs to accept responsibility for looking seriously at the attitudes and overall environment that give rise to incidents like this ... A good school should listen attentively to the options of all within it and be prepared to adjust if necessary. With this in mind I invite opinions from parents, students and staff on how Marcellin can become a more peaceful school ... (McMahon, 1984a, Doc. MC, p.1).

Included in the same newsletter was an extract from a student's essay in which he asserted 'The ultimate tragedy is not the brutality of the bad people, but the silence of the good people' (Allsopp, 1984, Doc. MC, p.2). My invitation, and the student's essay, generated a considerable number of parent responses which varied from 'Students must be aware that such acts of violence will meet with strong punishment' (D'Adam quoted in McMahon, 1984b, Doc. MC, p.1) to 'we must change ourselves before we change others' (Collins quoted in McMahon, 1984b, Doc. MC, p.1). The

educational vision debate was beginning to enter the public arena through the school's newsletter. I felt an urgent need to clarify and articulate that vision before it became too polarised and individuals got hurt by 'sticking their necks out' unnecessarily over particular causes. This was to take longer than I anticipated.

Marist visitors arrived for their next visit on September 25th. 1984 - merely eleven days after our behaviour problem! Among other things they suggested 'there could be some merit in the appointment of a second deputy provided that such an appointment enabled a closer link to be established between the day to day functioning and the administration' (Gilchrist and Casey, 1984, Doc. MBA, p.3). The visitors concluded their report with the general comment:

There would seem to be a much greater acceptance of the 'new' principal this year. We came across no grizzling directed towards him: rather a recognition of the changed direction ... simply by a more visible presence on the part of the principal. The school therefore seems poised to consolidate these gains and 1985 should see:-

- a) further progress in a renewed vision of Marcellin as a Catholic school ...
- c) a more concerted approach to parents in order to help them understand the changes (Gilchrist and Casey, 1984, p.5).

On October 9th., 1984, through a staff memo (Ryan, 1984a, Doc. MC, pp.1-3), and on October 16th., 1984 through the weekly school newsletter, the *Eagle*, Julie Ryan invited staff, parents and students to apply to join a philosophy sub-group²⁵ of the Development Group. She explained the work which would be involved for intending members and indicated that recommendations from the sub-group would go 'via the Development Group to the staff and Principal' (1984b, Doc. MC, p.2). Since only a few staff, parents and students volunteered their services, the group's final membership included these self-nominated members and some co-opted members. The philosophy sub-group worked from the following terms of reference which it had received from the Development Group:

²⁵ The philosophy sub-group met for its first meeting on November 12th, 1984. Its members included three staff, two parents, two students, Julie Ryan and me (SPSG, 1984, Doc. MC.) The Development Group had asked for the final draft of a proposed philosophy statement for Marcellin College to be presented by June, 1985. At its meeting on May 6th. 1985, the group sought an extension for its work until October 1985 - work which was eventually completed in 1986. The group met eight times over its three year period of existence, but it carried out most of its work between meetings.

- (1) The philosophical statement of Marcellin College must have its foundation in christian principles. It should also draw upon the Marist Educational philosophy.
- (2) In drafting the school philosophy statement, the process used should raise the consciousness of the members of the school community.
- (3) The sub-group would be responsible for the preparation of appropriate activities to facilitate the involvement of parents, staff and students in the drafting of the document.
- (4) The final statement of school philosophy should be comprehensive but concisely stated (*ibid.*, 1984a, Doc. MC, p.1).

The sub-group worked hard on its task, surveying parents, students and staff as to their feelings about the school (Vidot, 1985a, Doc. MC, p.1; Vidot, 1985b, Doc. MC, p.1).²⁶ It carried out further research in the form of 'interviews and document search' and studied Scripture and particular Documents of the Church (Vidot, 1985b, Doc. MC, p.1). Having agreed with its chairperson, Nic Vidot, to research the specifically Marist philosophy of education for the sub-group (*ibid.*, 1985c, Doc. MC, p.1), I began to realise how little current documentation there was on Marist educational vision - it was at this point that the topic for this dissertation was born. I also experienced the great interest many lay people were showing in Marist educational philosophy. The sub-group finally approached this topic from two perspectives: the educational philosophy of Marcellin Champagnat himself and the most recent comprehensive exposition of Marist educational philosophy in the 1968 General Chapter Document *Our Marist Apostolate* (MBS, 1969).

Towards the end of 1984, Peter Devine informed me he would be completing his term as Deputy Principal at the end of the year and taking up a principal's position at the beginning of 1985. We advertised the deputy principal's position, decided not to make an appointment from the twenty applicants, and, instead, invited a current staff member (Frank Scott, Head of Commerce) to join the executive as 'school coordinator'. In February 1985, the school executive also confirmed the Development Officer as a member of the executive and welcomed yet another new member - the Religious Education Coordinator, who was also a member of

²⁶ The questionnaire to parents, for example, asked:

- a) Why do you send your son(s) to Marcellin?
- b) What are the present good attributes/strengths of Marcellin?
- c) In what areas could Marcellin College improve?
- d) What do you hope your son(s) will receive from being at Marcellin?
- e) What should Marcellin be known for in the wider community (MC, 1985, Doc. MC, p.2)?

the Development Group. The executive now included three 'Assistants to the Principal' who were equal in status - the Development Officer, Religious Education Co-ordinator and School Co-ordinator. Two of these and the Principal were also members of the Development Group. A new leadership structure had emerged.

Meanwhile the philosophy sub-group was beginning to founder in its work. While a lot of data had been collected, we did not know how to use it to form a statement of philosophy. We wondered how to represent the views of those we had surveyed, how much weight to give the relative opinions of parents, staff and students and how to include Marist educational philosophy and official church teachings on education in our statement. The philosophy sub-group was not to finish its task for some months yet. In the meantime, the Development Group took up the running at the end of which the philosophy sub-group had a less difficult task because a Direction for Marcellin College, Bulleen had been independently articulated.

This came about because by the middle of 1985, the Development Group saw the immediate need to prepare a paper for presentation to staff on 'The Direction for Marcellin College', not least because some staff were still 'waiting and watching' (Gilchrist and Casey, 1984, Doc. MBA, p.2). The group harnessed all its resources, including the fruits of the philosophy sub-group's initial work. Members researched the texts listed in Table 6.5 which they had chosen from their own reading or their current university courses and believed were important resources for Marcellin's present stage of development.

TABLE 6.5 - TEXTS INFLUENTIAL IN MARCELLIN COLLEGE'S EDUCATIONAL VISION STATEMENT

<u>TITLE</u>	<u>AUTHOR</u>	<u>YEAR</u>
PEDAGOGY OF THE OPPRESSED	PAULO FREIRE	1972
THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL	SACRED CONG.	1977
CONSTITUTIONS AND STATUTES	MARIST BROTHERS	1986
BIBLE, RSV, ²⁷		1977
ACHIEVEMENTS FROM THE DEPTHS	STEPHEN FARRELL	1984
CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION	THOMAS GROOME	1980
OUR MARIST APOSTOLATE	MARIST BROTHERS	1968

After a series of vigorous Development Group debates, I presented the first draft of a Direction Paper to the Development Group on August 19th., 1985. The Group modified this draft and recommended I write the

²⁷ The 1977 edition.

final paper during the coming school holidays for presentation to the staff on the first day of the final term for 1985. As spokesperson for the Development Group, and in my own capacity as the school's principal, I presented the revised paper to staff on September 9th, 1985.

MARIST EDUCATIONAL VISION 'The Direction for Marcellin College, Bulleen' paper began by recalling the role Marcellin Champagnat had played in the education of youth in rural France in the early eighteenth century, then focused on three themes discussed by the Marist Brothers in their recent Melbourne province assembly held in January, 1983 - 'our commitment to the church', 'our involvement in education' and the 'place of justice and peace in our work' and went on to discuss Marcellin College as a Catholic, comprehensive and local school (McMahon, 1985d, Doc. MC, Art.2.35).

In expanding on the Catholic dimension, I acknowledged the changes in the church since the Second Vatican Council as outlined in Richard McBrien's (1980) *Catholicism*, and focused on a number of articles from the Church's Document *The Catholic School* (1978). I argued that the Marist school, as a Catholic school (McMahon, 1985d, Doc. MC, *passim*),

- (1) sees Christ as 'the foundation of the whole educational enterprise' with the 'principles of the gospel' becoming the school's 'educational norms' (CS, 1978, Art.34),
- (2) involves the whole school community in the prophetic mission of Christ,
- (3) regards its prime purpose as being of service to the Christian education of youth,
- (4) strives to enable each student to achieve his or her best,
- (5) sees authority primarily for service rather than domination,
- (6) includes proclamation of the Word, celebration of the sacraments and witnessing to the gospel, both individually and institutionally, in the school's programme,
- (7) recognises the school exists for contributing to the Reign of God rather for building its own good name,
- (8) welcomes people of other Christian faiths into its community,
- (9) sees its religious education programme as supporting the permeation of the school's Christian vision,
- (10) embodies the values it preaches within its structures by, for example, adopting a collegial model of leadership, a model endorsed 'with virtual

unanimity' by the Second Vatican Council 'in plenary session' (Burns, 1992, p.550),

(11) is sensitive to the poor, not turning its attention 'exclusively or predominantly' to those from the wealthier social classes for that would be to 'continue to favour a society which is unjust' (CS, 1978, Art.58),

(12) embraces the school's multi-cultural character and

(13) dialogues with culture (CS, 1978, Art.15) participating in political activities which promote the Reign of God.

The comprehensive dimension of the school is described in the paper as

(1) welcoming students of different academic abilities,

(2) enabling students to follow either a narrow academic course at the senior level or a course which covers a wide subject range,

(3) judging its success by students achieving their best rather than by Year 12 academic scores,

(4) aiming to do all things well, recognising that education incorporates all aspects of physical, spiritual and mental development,

(5) welcoming students with physical disabilities, provided the school's resources enable such students to benefit,

(6) expecting teachers to teach across ability groups and

(7) avoiding directing bright students into particular courses.

As a local school, I described Marcellin College as:

(1) serving primarily the children of parents residing in the nearby Catholic parishes,

(2) welcoming the local bishop's involvement in co-ordinating the school's overall pastoral strategies,

(3) taking part in local community activities and

(4) welcoming members of the local community into the school both to participate in the educational programmes and to use the school's facilities.

Ninety staff, from both campuses of Marcellin College, gathered in the Functions Room at the Bulleen Campus to spend the morning listening to a presentation of the direction paper. Throughout the presentation, I attempted to give examples from our current Marcellin experience. The staff listened attentively and at the end of the presentation mainly questioned the reference I made to the need to 're-examine' the school's membership of the Grammar School Association (McMahon, 1985, Doc. MC, Art. 5.44).²⁸ This membership was seen by the members of the Development Group as a key obstacle to developing Marcellin's revised educational vision

²⁸ Julie Ryan, in responding to a draft of this chapter stated: 'The importance of the document was also in you clarifying your thinking and focusing us on future directions. I don't think it was particularly significant to staff.' (1992, Corr., p.5).

because of their belief that Grammar Schools are basically elite private schools. The Marist visitors had reported about the Marcellin staff in 1982 as follows: 'Many of the Staff were said to be status conscious; well aware that they were working in a Catholic GRAMMAR School with the opportunities for further advancement that such experience would bring (Orrell and Lawlor, 1982, Doc. MBA, p.4). The Direction Paper suggested seeking permission from Marist superiors to discuss the school's membership of the Association. Permission was eventually only indirectly sought through presenting the Direction Paper to the Marist Supervisor of Schools, Br. Julian Casey, who subsequently tabled it for discussion at a Marist Schools' Committee meeting, a committee of which I was a member.²⁹

On re-presenting the Direction Paper to official parent bodies later in the year, I found parents also felt strongly about the school's membership of the Associated Grammar Schools and wanted to know good reasons why it even needed to be discussed. In then giving the Direction Paper to my Marist superiors, it became immediately clear, particularly through the Schools' Committee³⁰ meeting, that our Grammar school membership was not up for discussion. When I conveyed this informally to the Development Group members they were disappointed. They knew we had 'lost the battle' - some even thought we had 'lost the war'. I believed we could still achieve our shared vision, albeit in a different way, despite this set back. While I found the decision difficult to accept at the time, I now realise the Grammar School question had taken on too much symbolic significance and had tended to become the end, rather than simply one means among many to helping Marcellin become a more Catholic school. Some months later, at an Advisory Council meeting, Br. Julian Casey communicated the Marist Province's approval of the proposed educational vision as outlined in the Direction Paper, adding that he saw no need to discuss our membership of the Associated Grammar Schools. With the educational vision for Marcellin College approved, I was determined our membership of a sporting association was not going to prevent us from continuing to implement that vision. However as 1985 came to a close, a new challenge was upon us. Marcellin College's overall enrolments had begun to fall for the first time since 1982.³¹ This was to bring a challenge from a new quarter in the course of the following year.

²⁹ Bringing the issue into the public forum proved helpful in providing a clear focus for the broader issue: what kind of school should Marcellin College be? Nevertheless, it did not encourage those members of Marcellin's staff who were, in some sports, trying to cajole students into competing in the Saturday morning competitions. Nor did it encourage the students themselves who were competing enthusiastically for their school week after week.

³⁰ The Marist Schools' Committee is a subcommittee of the Provincial Council. It normally discusses items of current importance in schools where Marist Brothers work.

³¹ *cf.* Table 6.2, p.184.

It would prove helpful that at the Marist Brothers' Provincial Chapter held in September 1986, I was elected to the Provincial Council. This meant I was now assisting in the monitoring of the overall policy for the Marist schools of the Melbourne province - including Marcellin College. Working at this level ensured good lines of communication between the Marist provincial, Des Crowe, and Marcellin College's leadership team and ultimately facilitated further changes at Marcellin College.

By 1986, the Advisory Council³² had become a very influential group in the school since it

- (1) received the Order's response to the educational vision paper,
- (2) oversaw the financial management of the school and
- (3) acted as an intermediary between the governors of the school (the Provincial Council) and the school principals.

Some senior staff were concerned that the Council included no representative of the teaching staff, wondering, for example, about the extent of the Council's shared expertise in curriculum matters. To the Council, lower enrolments meant less income, smaller expenditure and declining school morale. Council members knew that some students were leaving Marcellin College after completing Years 7 and 8 because of their parents' concern about the senior school's perceived lack of discipline and reduced emphasis on academic excellence. They were less aware, however, that some of these students returned to Marcellin when they found the academic streaming at other private schools too great a challenge - students for whom I believed Marist educators should particularly cater. Nor was the Council as aware of Marcellin's continued good performances at the Year 12 level because of the decision we had taken to adopt the Catholic school policy of not announcing Year 12 pass rates. Members were finding it difficult to resist an 'economic rationalist' approach which views schooling as an industry and individual schools as small businesses subject only to market forces (Dwyer, 1992a, p.17 and 1992b, p.7; TAB, 1992h, p.1147; Slattery, 1992, p.16).³³ Consequently the Council called for a report from me or my representative on the school's future direction

³² *cf.* Footnote 15, p.189.

³³ The risk of this economic rationalist approach was not limited to Marcellin College. Throughout the 1980s it was influencing Australia's major political parties (TAB, 1992i, p.1167). The Australian dream of an egalitarian society with a 'fair go' for all in the spirit of 'mateship' had already begun to fade (TAB, 1992h, p.1147). Today, the Australian Catholic Bishops observe that the advocates of economic rationalism believe strongly in the free market and the need to reduce government spending and intervention. These advocates argue for the principles of privatisation and user pays, calling for lower welfare payments and tax and less trade union influence. Taken to extremes, the Bishops see this ideology promoting individualism, the survival-of-the-fittest philosophy and greed (AEC, 1992, p.4).

and accepted my suggestion that Julie Ryan would be well placed to present such a report.

At its September, 1986 meeting, Julie Ryan delivered a paper titled *Curriculum Directions at Marcellin College, Bulleen The Next 5 Years*. This reminded us of the external influences on the school's curriculum, particularly those resulting from the Government's Ministry of Education.³⁴ It then highlighted the following basic principles for Marcellin's future:

- (1) The Religious Education Programme is a commitment of high priority,
- (2) The school needs to provide for students with a wide range of abilities,
- (3) The school is committed to a comprehensive curriculum offering,
- (4) The school is committed to providing for students to Year 12 level and
- (5) The school is committed to integrated programs (Ryan, 1986, Doc. MC, Art. 2.0).

The Advisory Council seemed generally persuaded of these points and of the high quality of educational opportunities offered to students. They made an issue, however, of the school's recent moves towards non-competitive assessment though these connected intimately with the school's provision for a wide range of ability (as in (2) above). I wondered if the school's educational vision had really permeated the parent body. I had assumed, wrongly it appeared, that they understood from talking with staff and attending parent meetings on the topic that criterion-referenced testing was more consistent with the school's revised philosophy than norm-referenced testing.³⁵ Initially examinations were discontinued in Years 9 and 10 because I felt they were being used to test teachers, perhaps even more than students. While I agreed students needed to be assessed, preferably on a continual basis, I felt there were more professional and direct ways to appraise staff. Changes in the school's assessment and reporting procedures were developed in the Development Group's Formal Curriculum sub-group and subsequently approved by the staff and the school executive.³⁶ Parents had also had opportunities to express their

³⁴ Julie explained: 'Over the last 10 years both jargon and practice have changed. We have moved from VUSEB to VISE to VCAB [government bodies]; from core curriculum to option program to common curriculum; from centrally prescribed curriculum to school based curriculum development and from segregation to integration [all government recommendations]' (Ryan, 1986a, Doc. MC, p.1).

³⁵ Considerable changes took place in Marcellin's assessment and reporting procedures over the eight year period. In 1982, for example, formal examinations were held at all levels from Year 9 to Year 12 - generally in the school's gymnasium with the same examination given to all students across the particular year level, irrespective of the teacher. By 1989, formal examinations were held only at Year 11 (internally set) and Year 12 (externally set) with testing now being carried out by classroom teachers setting their own tests at Years 9 and 10. In 1982 all reporting was completed quantitatively, with places in class allocated to students in some classes. By 1989 most reports only carried letter grades.

³⁶ Assessment and reporting in Religious Education were introduced in 1987 (Rijs, 1992, Corr., p.4).

views. But it was now becoming clear that in many - or most - parents' opinion academic standards were best achieved by hard fought competitive assessment. To their minds, the more mild 'willingness to accept mistakes'³⁷ proposed by 'pious school philosophy statements' did not help their sons face the realities of the competitive world. I feared economic rationalism was beginning to have its influence on Marcellin's developing assessment and reporting policies.

Fortunately for us, however, the Government's Ministry of Education was introducing more internal assessment and less norm-referenced external assessment - as much as the Universities, who still advocated competitive assessment, would allow politically. Consequently Julie Ryan could conclude her paper to the Advisory Council as follows:

The next 5 years certainly hold many challenges for Victorian schools. It will be a period of rapid change and one requiring constant vigilance. We must be sure that we are meeting the challenges that come from the Ministry of Education and at the same time ensure that we are true to the Christian ethos that should be fundamental to Marcellin College (*ibid.* Art. 5.0).

A new 'speaker', the Ministry of Education, had entered the Marcellin debate. It also proved helpful to our cause that Catholic Education authorities were strongly supporting the Government's 'non-competitive' position and advocating more school based assessment at all levels, including Year 12. Meanwhile, however, private school lobby groups, including the non-Catholic Grammar schools, continued to express their preference for norm-referenced external examinations.³⁸

6.4 - THE CONSOLIDATION STAGE

By 1987, the educational vision for Marcellin College had basically been implemented. Salaries had been brought into line with other Catholic schools, the School Executive was functioning well, the Advisory Council was becoming more involved in policy formulation, staff, and a few students, were working together on committees, the school's newly introduced music programme was growing with school bands and orchestras performing in the new \$1 million Creative Arts Building, the administration building had been renovated to provide offices for the

³⁷ As expressed in Marcellin's first Statement of Aims.

³⁸ In October 1992 the Labor Party lost Government. School communities now wonder what the incoming Liberal/National Party's position on assessment and reporting will be.

expanded leadership team and streaming had been eliminated from Mathematics classes (D, 1991, Doc. MC, p.3; DG, 1985, Doc. MC, p.4.). The Brothers of the Marist province seemed less inclined to speak about 'Bulleen Grammar' and I was spending more time around the school. In addition, the religious life of the school seemed to be developing further, with extra time being allocated to religious education and the classes themselves reduced in size. School Eucharists, available to the whole school community, were becoming a weekly occurrence, retreats were extended from Year 12 to the other three year levels and members of other religious congregations - two priests and one sister - joined the staff. Further responsibilities were now being allocated to department heads, year level co-ordinators and homeroom teachers and the student representative council was becoming more significant in the school. The consolidation of these changes now became the priority and it was to require determination, particularly on the part of the leadership team. We did not want to fight any more battles, but rather to quietly and insistently adhere to the implementation of our agreed vision for the school.

At the commencement of 1987, I formalised the leadership team further by appointing two members of the executive to vice-principal positions. Newly appointed Mr. Paul Herrick (Vice-Principal Administration) took charge of the school's day to day administration and Julie Ryan (Vice-Principal Curriculum) maintained her responsibility for the school's curriculum development. These, the Religious Education Co-ordinator, Nic Vidot, who was to be 'redefined' as the Vice-Principal Ministry a year later, the Business Manager, my secretary and I formed the school's leadership team.³⁹ We were a strong and mutually supportive group.

When the 1987 Marist visitors arrived, they reported on the executive's continued 'support for the direction which the School is taking, and the vision projected by Br. John'. They also highlighted a new difficulty reporting:

In discussion with the Assistants to the Principal [Vice-Principals], it became evident that they felt that the decision-making process in the School was rather

³⁹ This appointment was important, both to acknowledge the centrality of Nic's contribution to the school community, and to demonstrate the importance of Christian beliefs permeating the whole Catholic school structure, rather than being the mere 'icing on the cake' (Walsh, 1983, p.4). By now staff and parents had accepted the principle involved in having a Vice-Principal Ministry because of the Religious Education Co-ordinator's presence on the school executive since 1985 (Rijs, 1992, Corr., p.4).

cumbersome, with a lot of consultation and several Committee stages absorbing a lot of the original freshness and energy (Braniff and Huppatz, 1987, Doc. MBA, p.1).

We had moved from the 'freshness' of the creative stage with the excitement of the Development Group period, through the testing stage to an unfortunate bureaucratising dimension of the consolidation stage. The visitors also observed first a 'perception that there was some resistance or lack of commitment in the 'Staffroom ethos' to the religious aspect of the School's philosophy' and second that the students 'felt that things had "tightened up" ... since the Executive had become more visible' (Braniff and Huppatz, 1987, Doc. MBA, p.3).

Meanwhile the members of the Advisory Council were still concerned about Marcellin's future, particularly in the light of the 27% decrease in Year 7 enrolments from 1986 to 1987.⁴⁰ Consequently the Council formed a Communication Committee, which included the principals of both campuses, and asked it to survey the parents on how they felt about Marcellin College. The committee employed a professional firm to carry out the research. A member of the firm met with the Communication Committee and discussed our hopes for the survey. The firm then constructed the survey and in May 1987, mailed it to every Marcellin family at Camberwell and Bulleen. Parents returned their completed surveys to the firm's office where the results were collated and analysed into categories and the initial report compiled. The firm's representative then reported to the members of the Communication Committee prior to taking the final report to the June 1987 Advisory Council meeting. I felt we had to go along with this initiative because, while I had tried to assure the Council of the school's future economic viability, I felt Council members wanted the additional assurance of some external proof. I knew staff were very much against such an economic rationalist, number-crunching, mainly computer-collated approach to education, an approach which they believed should remain in the business world and not be applied to human learning. I felt the greatest value of the survey was the opportunity it gave those parents who did not have the time to join parent committees, to describe their feelings about the school in the survey's more open-ended type questions.

⁴⁰ 210 in 1986 to 166 in 1987 - cf. Table 6.2, p.184.

496⁴¹ fully completed questionnaires were returned . In one of the open ended questions, parents were asked to write down their main reason(s) for sending their boy(s) to Marcellin. 38 different reasons were mentioned with the most frequently mentioned being:.

TABLE 6.6 - PARENTS' REASONS FOR CHOOSING MARCELLIN - 1987 REPORT

1. The 'Catholic' factor	49%
2. The 'convenient location' factor	34%
3. The 'reputation' factor	21%
4. The 'educational standard' factor	18%
5. The 'discipline' factor	14%

(MC 1987, Doc. MC, p.8)

Market research exercises such as these have recently become popular in Australia. For example, the same type of question was put to parents sending their children to Catholic secondary schools in the Australian Capital Territory in 1985.

TABLE 6.7 - PARENTS' REASONS FOR CHOOSING CATHOLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY - 1985 REPORT

1. The 'religious' factor	70%
2. The 'education program' factor	58%
3. The 'discipline' factor	48%
4. The 'convenient location' factor	24%
5. The 'reputation' factor	23%

(Anderson, 1990, p.101)

Comparison between these two sets of figures is difficult because of possible different understandings of words such as 'Catholic' and 'religious'. The results do, however, suggest that while the 'Catholic' factor was the most frequently nominated response by Marcellin College parents - in itself an encouraging result - it was not as frequently mentioned as 'religious' by parents with children attending Catholic schools in the ACT.

In another open ended question, Marcellin parents were asked to write down what they considered to be the main strength(s) and weakness(es) of the College - a question also asked by the philosophy sub-group in 1986. The two nominated main strengths were, the encouragement given to Christian standards (25%) and, the care shown by teachers (20%) (*ibid.*, Chart 12), while the school's two nominated most significant weaknesses were lack of discipline at the senior school (19%) and that 'Brother John should be more directly involved with students/less with committees' (17%) (*ibid.*, Chart 13). At the end of this research I felt

⁴¹ 55% of families.

the Advisory Council had gained little new information from the exercise but had at least taken some action to understand the decrease in enrolments. Coincidentally, the Marist visitors had noted in their 1987 report:

... it appears that a few parents see only the need for academic excellence and do not really understand the Marist philosophy of a broad educational base catering for a wide range of abilities among students set in an atmosphere of Catholic values and individual concern (Braniff and Huppertz, 1987, Doc. MBA, p.4).

In October of the same year, Br. Julian Casey presented to the Advisory Council an explanation for the enrolment changes at Marcellin College.⁴² Julian explained that Marcellin's recent decrease in enrolment had been quite expected judging by government predictions of a declining student population in the area. He felt there was no cause for alarm. Things were beginning to settle down.

In 1988 the Provincial Council, of which I was now a member, decided to amalgamate the Camberwell and Bulleen campuses from the commencement of the 1989 school year and to appoint a lay principal who would commence at the beginning of the 1990 school year. In the light of these very significant, but not unexpected, changes the Advisory Council decided to write a constitution 'to clarify the functions of the Advisory Council' and to 'provide some procedural guidelines' for its operation in the future (MC, 1989, Doc. MC, p.1). The Council's Constitution specified, in quite legal terms, 'the purposes for which the College is conducted' as:

- (1) to provide the students with a Catholic secondary education, including in its curriculum religious instruction in accordance with the principles, teaching and beliefs of the Catholic Church as determined from time to time by the Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne; and
- (2) to provide the students with a Catholic education according to the educational philosophy of BLESSED MARCELLIN CHAMPAGNAT, the founder of the MARIST BROTHERS (MC, 1989, Doc. MC, p.1).

⁴² Julian's paper included the following sections:
a) Victorian Patterns in General
b) Catholic Patterns in Melbourne Archdiocese
c) The Area Around Marcellin
d) Marcellin Enrolment Figures
e) The Next Step (Casey, 1987, MBA p.1).

Mr. Paul Herrick, who had been Vice-Principal Administration since 1987, was appointed Marcellin College's first lay principal. I felt confident the educational vision developed for Marcellin College between 1982 and 1985 would continue to be implemented under Paul's leadership. On November 8th. and 9th., 1989, my last year as principal of Marcellin College, Marist visitors once again came to the school. They observed:

The day-to-day running of the college lies effectively with the Vice Principals, and their openness and honesty with each other facilitates a very effective team approach ...

Members of the R.E. team in a Catholic School have been commissioned with a very special responsibility within the overall mission of the Church. It is great to see that staff are willing and able to be of service to the college community through the acquiring of appropriate religious education qualifications.

The overall effectiveness of the religious nature of the school is very much enhanced by the active presence of the Chaplains [priests]. Chaplains are available for regular liturgical celebrations, counselling, visitation of the sick, contact for both staff and students.

The students appear to be very positive towards the school community as a whole, and are able to verbalise the Catholic nature of the school (Van Rooij and Furlong, 1989, Doc. MBA, p.3).

The Catholic nature of Marcellin College was now more to the fore. I felt my successor would have different educational challenges ahead of him.

6.5 - IN RETROSPECT

At Marcellin College I believed we needed to clarify this Marist school's educational vision because first, if 'we are to educate sensibly' we must above all 'do it with a sense of direction' (Reid quoted in Carr and Kemmis, 1989, p.52) and second, any vision needs to be 'explicitly stated' if it is to be 'enthusiastically and confidently promoted' (White, 1991, p.21). As the school's educational leader, I saw it as my responsibility to see to the articulation of such a vision in a credible and accessible way.

In trying to change the direction of Marcellin College and make it a more Catholic and Marist school, we did not realise how long such a process takes, nor did we anticipate, although perhaps we should have, the resistance we would encounter. Stoll and Fink note

... we have observed a few over-zealous principals try to make all their staff implement a particular goal. We are reminded of the value of the Concerns-Based Adoption Model^[43] ... as a measure of teachers' readiness to become involved in an initiative ... and would recommend to all principals that they examine the research on teachers' career cycles^[44] ... (Huberman, 1988) and stages of adult development^[45] ... to better understand the motivation of the people in their schools (Stoll and Fink, 1992, p.35).

While it is debateable how quickly to move in implementing such a vision, and we possibly moved too quickly, we knew by the time the consolidation stage had arrived, that we simply needed to be insistent that the school's direction was here to stay, at least during my term as principal.

I believe we made some advances in achieving the brief given me by Br. Walter Smith in December 1981. There were also some costs (McLachlan, 1992, Int., LON.).

TABLE 6.8 - ADVANCES

- (1) Implementation of a more Catholic school philosophy.
- (2) More time for religious education classes, school liturgies and community service.
- (3) Readiness for Government changes in assessment and reporting.
- (4) Broader based curriculum for all.
- (5) Greater participation in decision making by members of the school community.

TABLE 6.9 - COSTS

- (1) Fall in the school's enrolment.
- (2) Loss of some competent teachers.
- (3) Uncertainties about the school among parents.
- (4) A period of decreased school discipline.
- (5) Experiences of personal hurt by individual members of staff.

The advances could not have been achieved without the expertise and dedication of the school executive, other key members of staff, many involved parents and some key students. The costs could have been reduced by my being more sensitive to the recent history of the school, by ensuring greater consultation with parents, particularly during the creative period when we were preparing to make decisions which would have a

⁴³ (CBAM) cf. Loucks and Hall, 1979.

⁴⁴ cf. Huberman, 1988.

⁴⁵ cf. Krupp, 1989.

significant impact, and by waiting longer before implementing some of the changes.

It has taken some time for me to be able to reflect more rationally about my own 'performance' as the school's principal. While I feel generally satisfied with the eight years, four of the areas where I lacked judgement are:

(1) On some occasions I delegated too much too quickly adhering too strictly to my belief in 'autonomy over dependency' (Fullan, 1992, p.54).⁴⁶ For example, in 1985, I asked Department Heads, including inexperienced people, to short list applicants for teaching positions, without looking at the initial applications myself. Perhaps, as a result of this, the 1984 Marist visitors observed: 'The administrative structure which encourages a devolution of decision making, requires a checking process' (Gilchrist and Casey, 1984, Doc. MBA, p.2).

(2) In delegating responsibilities to others, I provided inadequate specialised training opportunities. For example, as the Marist visitors also observed:

In the process of devolution of responsibility, the Year Level Co-ordinators have picked up a staff supervision task. This seems to be causing problems for the less experienced Co-ordinators and seems to be dysfunctional with a pastoral orientation given to the position' (*ibid.*, p.4)

(3) In retrospect, I should have insisted on a more comprehensive reporting of our Development Group discussions as they were taking place. The members of the group were reading widely and the benefit of this reading, as well as the fruits of the stimulating discussions, were neither being shared with, nor tested by, the wider school and Marist communities. For, as Fullan observes (1992, p.44) educational vision is not something an individual or a group happens to have - 'it is a much more fluid process' and 'must not be confined ... to a privileged few'. More extensive reporting could also have avoided later uncertainties among members of the school's parent community about the type of school we wanted.

After 1987, when School Executive members became vice-principals, the leadership team's strength ensured the consolidation of the school's revised educational vision. Inviting the Development Officer and

⁴⁶ Fullan (1992, p.42) also acknowledges the tension a leader feels between allowing 'too much freedom' which often results in a 'vague sense of direction and wasted time' and having a 'clearly defined structure' which can generate 'resistance or mechanical acceptance'.

Religious Education Co-ordinator onto the executive prior to these vice-principal appointments enabled the executive to test the viability of increasing its size and of broadening its expertise. It also prepared the staff for a leadership team approach to school administration, a team which by 1989 would include a fourth vice-principal as a result of the amalgamation of the two campuses.

TABLE 6.10 - THE SCHOOL EXECUTIVE

YEAR	MEMBERSHIP						
1982	P	DP				BM	PS
1983	P	DP				BM	PS
1984	P	DP	DO			BM	PS
1985	P	SC	DO	REC		BM	PS
1986	P	SC	DO	REC		BM	PS
1987	P	VPAB	VPC	REC		BM	PS
1988	P	VPAB	VPC	VPM		BM	PS
1989	P	VPAB	VPC	VPM	VPAC	BM	VPS

CODE:

P	Principal
DP	Deputy Principal
BM	Business Manager
DO	Development Officer
SC	School Co-ordinator
REC	Religious Education Co-ordinator
VPAB	Vice-Principal Administration Bulleen
VPAC	Vice-Principal Administration Camberwell
VPC	Vice-Principal Curriculum
VPM	Vice-Principal Ministry
PS	Principal's Secretary
VPS	Vice-Principals' Secretary

The membership of the Marist Brothers' community changed continually over the eight year period.

TABLE 6.11 - MARIST COMMUNITY - BULLEEN

YEAR	SCHOOL MEMBERS					TOTAL
1982	P CH1	YR10(S)	T1	T2	REC	6
1983	P CH1	YR10(S)	T1			4
1984	P CH1	CH2(S)	T1			4
1985	P	CH2(S)	T1		T3	4
1986	P	CH2(S)	T1		T3	4
1987	P	CH2(S)	YR9	T1		4

1988	P	YR9	T1	TA	4
1989	P	YR9		TA	3

CODE:

P	Principal
CH1	Chaplain 1
CH2	Chaplain 2
YR10	Year 10 Co-ordinator
YR9	Year 9 Co-ordinator
T1	Teacher 1
T2	Teacher 2
T3	Teacher 3
REC	Religious Education Co-ordinator
TA	Teacher Aide
(S)	Superior of the Community

(Clarke, 1992, Doc. MBA, p.1)

During 1982 and 1983, the community found it difficult to adjust to the changes in the school, with the superior being the 'meat in the sandwich' between 'the old and the new'. When the new superior, Br. Nick McBeath (CH2S in Table 6.11),⁴⁷ arrived in 1984, I felt the community became more relaxed about the school and more sympathetic to its new direction. The expertise of pivotal lay staff, like Julie Ryan, Nic Vidot and Paul Herrick, greatly assisted the process of establishing and implementing the school's revised educational vision. The title 'Development Group' proved advantageous to the 'Curriculum Committee' in embodying the broader concept of 'total curriculum' and in witnessing to the dynamic, rather than merely administrative nature, of curriculum development. We reverted to the term 'Curriculum Committee' in 1988 first, to take a pause from dynamism and encourage 'consolidation' and second, because of perceived overlap with the Heads of Department Group. These leaders of faculties, rather than being appointed permanently as in the past, were now appointed for 2 years, with the opportunity of reappointment - a policy advanced by Catholic Education authorities. Most department heads I appointed were new appointees keen to promote the renewed vision of Marcellin College. The tensions between the newly emerging Department Heads Team and the Development Group were highlighted by the 1987 Marist Visitors who felt the school's

⁴⁷ Nick McBeath, a trained theologian, arrived at Marcellin College as the school's second Marist chaplain. He immediately joined the Development Group debates and proved a valuable contributor to the philosophy sub-group. The 1984 Marist visitors noted: 'The Chaplain maintains excellent communication with the principal, is supportive yet challenging' (Gilchrist and Casey, 1984, Doc. MBA, p.4). Nick helped the Marist community articulate and nuance the issues the school was addressing. Travelling together to the Philippines for three weeks gave the two of us an opportunity to discuss Marcellin's agenda as we endeavoured to absorb the influence of dire poverty on so many Philippino people. Being popular with staff and students enabled Nick to add much Marist credibility to the developments taking place. By the time he left the school to work in New Guinea, Marcellin's testing stage was over.

main concern was with the role of the Development Committee [Group]. How do the Department Heads fit in? What exactly does it do? Is its role mainly concerned with curriculum and, if so, why are its representatives elected, rather than Heads of Department. If it makes general decisions, does it overlap the Executive too much (Braniff and Huppatz, 1987, Doc. MBA, p.4)?

It was clear much water had flowed under the Marcellin bridge.

TABLE 6.12 - CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

YEAR	GROUP	LEADER
1982	CURR CTTE	SENIOR CHEMISTRY TEACHER
1983	CURR CTTE	HEAD COMMERCE DEPARTMENT
1984-87	DG	DEVELOPMENT OFFICER
1988-89	CURR CTTE	VICE-PRINCIPAL CURRICULUM

Throughout the eight years, Marist Brothers working beyond Marcellin College also played a significant role in the development process through Provincial consultations, Marist visits and timely suggestions and cautions from the Marist Supervisor of Schools, Br. Julian Casey.⁴⁸ Continual advice from professional colleagues also helped to steady and clarify the discerning process, particularly during the testing stage. Having opportunities to share theoretically about our common practice as leaders in Catholic schools enabled us, as members of the school executive, to deepen our own understandings of our current practices and then to articulate our shared understanding to staff, parents and students.

Thus towards the end of 1983, three other Catholic school principals and I felt the need for an opportunity to discuss the leadership of Catholic schools. We agreed to form a 'Leaders' Group' which would meet six times each year. We would bring with us one vice-principal and our religious education co-ordinator. The group commenced early in 1984. Each meeting began with a meal followed by a short period of prayer and then a discussion of a pre-selected article which covered some aspect of leadership of Catholic schools. These discussions gave us the chance to interpret not only the current dialogue in the literature between theology and education and theology and leadership but also between theory and practice. Meetings took place at each school in turn from 12.30 PM to 3.30 PM. The group proved to be of valuable personal and professional support, particularly during Marcellin's creative and testing stages, and a good training ground for present and future Catholic school leaders. The group's methodology of informing discussion of practical issues with current

⁴⁸ Julian was supervisor of Marist schools and Vice-Provincial from 1982-1988. As Vice-Provincial, he was aware of the different ways the two Provincials approached their overall responsibility for Marist schools. Julian was cognizant of the original mandate Walter Smith had given me. Marist visits came under Julian's authority through his leadership of the Marist Schools' Committee. He also visited the school at other significant times such as in 1983 when the school ran at a recurrent deficit. At the peak of the testing stage in 1984, Julian was one of the Marist visitors. Julian was elected provincial in July 1988 and oversaw the amalgamation of the two campuses and the introduction of the lay principal. His advice throughout proved invaluable in allowing creativity but providing timely, gently worded, advice when necessary. Our relationship remained solid throughout.

literature was adopted by Marcellin's Development Group and Philosophy Sub-Group. The Leaders' Group was still meeting at the end of 1989.

In final summary, and in some more direct relationship to the focus of this thesis, the Marcellin experience and this critical revisiting of it leave the following in their wake

- (1) one fairly elaborate articulation of the meaning of being a Catholic (though perhaps not necessarily Marist) school (pp. 205-206 above).
- (2) a sense that such statements only 'bite' when cashed out in terms of specific issues of the moment, in our case pay policy, admissions policy, assessment policy, job descriptions, grammar school,
- (3) a sense of the great importance of the process of defining and redefining a philosophy - because we did it too quickly, we had to redo it,
- (4) a sense of the importance to that process of a vibrant development group
- (5) and, then too, of communication between this group and both the staff at large and parents
- (6) a sense of the great potential for Marist - lay collaboration in creating schools of vision and idealism and
- (7) a sense of the inevitability of some families and some teachers choosing to leave such schools.

We now move to Glasgow for our second major case study, where we experience a much older school.