Green, Michael Charles
Ed.D. 1998
THE CHARISMATIC CULTURE
OF MARIST SECONDARY SCHOOLS
IN THE PROVINCE OF SYDNEY

Michael C. Green F.M.S.

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Education

Faculty of Education
University of Sydney

October 1997
ABSTRACT

This study explores the cultures of secondary schools in the Marist Brothers' Province of Sydney. It proposes the concept of charismatic culture as a way of understanding a relationship between the metaphor of organisational culture and the theological concept of charism.

A context for undertaking research into the schools' cultures is developed through a critical review of the literature associated with organisational culture and by a survey of historical sources and contemporary understandings of the Marist charism in education. Two key features of a strong and functional school culture are identified: the shared sense and explicit expression of purposeful community, and the exercise of visionary, authentic and inspired leadership. A synthesis of seven core values is proposed to underpin the charismatic culture of Marist schools: a spirit defined by a sense of family; simplicity; love of work; God consciousness; presence and good example; fondness for those most in need; and daring and confidence in a spirit of autonomous enterprise.

Using a grounded theory methodology, the study gives definition to the lived experience of the culture of a selection of Marist schools, and determines the extent to which there is a set of distinctive cultural features common among the schools. Data are accessed through semi-structured interviews, and presented and analysed in narrative text. A staged research strategy includes a representative sample of five schools in its initial phase, with further interviews held with ten key informants.

A strong, self-conscious and consistently expressed culture was found to be shared among Marist schools and among those who lead, work and study in them. Family was found to be a root metaphor for the culture of the schools, something consistent with what would be expected from a Marist school culture. Other core cultural values in sympathy with a
Marist charism included a maternal-like instinct for nurture, a disposition to simplicity, and adult presence in the midst of young people. Several other qualities were found to be present, but less obviously or inconsistently expressed: a Christocentric approach to evangelisation, an explicitly Marial dimension, a love of work, a sense of family-school-church connectedness, and the encouragement of daring in leadership.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation is the fruit of the encouragement, guidance and inspiration given by numerous people. In the first place, I express my appreciation to the Marist Brothers of the Province of Sydney, for their many expressions of support and interest. In particular, I acknowledge the Provincial Superior, Brother Michael Hill, and his leadership team for believing in this work and giving me the time and practical assistance to undertake it.

Several people have been closely associated with the development of the research. My supervisor, Dr Kevin Laws, has been the generous source of wisdom, challenge, enthusiasm for the project, and gracious advice. I am especially grateful to Brother Mark Farrelly, not only for his critical and supportive presence at all stages of the research, but also for his generosity in delaying his own sabbatical time so that I was able to enjoy mine. For comments on the text of the dissertation at its more advanced stage, I acknowledge the scrutiny and valuable suggestions of Brother Kenan Delacour.

To all those who agreed so willingly to participate in the research, and contributed to it so sincerely and richly, I offer my deep appreciation — school principals, teachers, students and others associated with Marist education. This study is their story.

M.C.G.
# Table of Contents

1 **Introduction**  
   1.1 Context and Rationale  
      1.1.1 Marist Education in the Province of Sydney  
      1.1.2 Purpose and contribution of the study  
   1.2 Key concepts  
      1.2.1 Culture  
      1.2.2 Charism  
   1.3 Parameters of the study  
   1.4 Approach and structure  

2 **Organisational culture and schools — A review of the literature**  
   2.1 Culture and organisations  
      2.1.1 Bases for an understanding of “organisational culture”  
      2.1.2 Culture and the themes of the excellence movement  
   2.2 Organisational culture and schools  
      2.2.1 Links between culture and effectiveness in schools  
      2.2.2 A deeper understanding of culture  
   2.3 The culture of good schools  
      2.3.1 From competence to excellence  
      2.3.2 Community  
      2.3.3 Cultural leadership  
   2.4 Context for research  
      2.4.1 A conceptual understanding of organisational culture  
      2.4.2 Pointers to a strong and functional school culture  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Context and Rationale</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.1 Marist Education in the Province of Sydney</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.2 Purpose and contribution of the study</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Key concepts</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.1 Culture</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.2 Charism</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Parameters of the study</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Approach and structure</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Organisational culture and schools — A review of the literature</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Culture and organisations</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.1 Bases for an understanding of “organisational culture”</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.2 Culture and the themes of the excellence movement</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Organisational culture and schools</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.1 Links between culture and effectiveness in schools</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.2 A deeper understanding of culture</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 The culture of good schools</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.1 From competence to excellence</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.2 Community</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.3 Cultural leadership</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 Context for research</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.1 A conceptual understanding of organisational culture</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.2 Pointers to a strong and functional school culture</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3 Marist education: sources of its charism and culture
3.1 Foundational influences
   3.1.1 Marcellin Champagnat
   3.1.2 Sources and characteristics of early Marist education
3.2 Contemporary understandings of Marist education
   3.2.1 The mind of the Institute
   3.2.2 A revision of *The Teacher’s Guide*
   3.2.3 A Spanish schema
   3.2.4 A contemporary Marist educational vision
3.3 Towards a culture of the Australian Marist school
   3.3.1 Australian expressions of the charism
       Formative influences
       Contemporary reflections
   3.3.2 An understanding of Marist school culture as a context for research

4 Methodology
4.1 Qualitative orientation
4.2 Research strategies
   4.2.1 Overview
   4.2.2 Phase 1
       Choice of schools and participants
       Data collection
       Preliminary data reduction, presentation and analysis
   4.2.3 Phase 2
       Choice of key informants
       Data collection
       Data synthesis and analysis
4.3 Other considerations
   4.3.1 Credibility
   4.3.2 Ethical parameters

5 The culture of five Marist schools
5.1 Introduction
5.2 General comments
   5.2.1 Self-identity as Marist
   5.2.2 Relational language and themes
   5.2.3 Tone
5.3 Relational themes
5.3.1 Family spirit
5.3.2 Ease of relationships
5.3.3 Integrity of relationships
5.3.4 Equity of relationships
5.3.5 Priority of relationships

5.4 Pastoral themes
5.4.1 Pastoral concern
5.4.2 Style of student care
5.4.3 Openness to all students
5.4.4 Balance between pastoral concern and high expectation

5.5 Attitudinal themes
5.5.1 Shared values
5.5.2 Positive disposition to school
5.5.3 Presence of feminine qualities
5.5.4 Spirit of work
5.5.5 Simplicity
5.5.6 Innovation / risk
5.5.7 Connectedness

5.6 Actional themes
5.6.1 Simplicity
5.6.2 Good order
5.6.3 Good example
5.6.4 Co-curricular programmes
5.6.5 Rewards and recognition

5.7 Spiritual themes
5.7.1 Priority of evangelisation
5.7.2 Liturgy
5.7.3 Staff spirituality

5.8 Ritual themes
5.8.1 Cultural knowledge
5.8.2 Icons
5.8.3 Ritualisation of shared meanings

5.9 Directional themes
5.9.1 Walkabout leadership
5.9.2 Strength of leadership
5.9.3 Cultural leadership
5.9.4 Integrity of leadership

5.10 Purposeful themes
5.10.1 Sense of self-worth
6  Towards a snapshot of Marist school culture
   6.1  Formulation of Phase 2 interviews  168
       6.1.1  Relational themes  168
       6.1.2  Pastoral themes  168
       6.1.3  Attitudinal themes  168
       6.1.4  Actional themes  168
       6.1.5  Spiritual themes  170
       6.1.6  Ritual themes  170
       6.1.7  Directional themes  170
       6.1.8  Purposeful themes  171

   6.2  Findings  171
       6.2.1  General  171
       6.2.2  Relational themes  172
       6.2.3  Pastoral themes  174
       6.2.4  Attitudinal themes  177
       6.2.5  Actional themes  177
       6.2.6  Spiritual and ritual themes  177
       6.2.7  Directional themes  177
       6.2.8  Purposeful themes  177

   6.3  A synopsis

7  The charismatic culture of Marist schools
   7.1  Organisational culture
       7.1.1  Pointers to a functional culture
       7.1.2  Areas of cultural diffusion

   7.2  Marist charism
       7.2.1  Indicators of an authentically Marist charism
       7.2.2  Areas of possible concern

   7.3  Conclusion: a charismatic Marist school culture

References

Appendices
Appendix A Location maps of Marist foundations
Appendix B Province of Sydney Charism and Spirituality Statements
Appendix C Schedule of indicative questions for Phase 1 interviews
Appendix D Schedule of indicative questions for Phase 2 interviews
LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Marist Education, A Spanish Schema</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Features of the culture of Marist schools evident in the literature</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Phases of the study</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>&quot;What makes your hero Marist?&quot;</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Thematic groups</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>Relational themes</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>Pastoral themes</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>Attitudinal themes</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>Actional themes</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>Spiritual themes</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>Ritual themes</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>Directional themes</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>Purposeful themes</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SPECIAL NAMES

Apostolicam Actuositatem  Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity (a document of Vatican II)
CEO  Catholic Education Office
Christifideles Laici  Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation of His Holiness Pope John Paul II on the Vocation and Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the World
FMS  Fratres Maristae a Scholis (Marist Brothers of the Schools)
GPS  Athletic Association of the Association of the Great Public Schools of New South Wales
Gravissimum educationis  Declaration on Christian Education (a document of Vatican II)
GS; Gaudium et Spes  Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World (a document of Vatican II)
LG; Lumen Gentium,  The Dogmatic Constitution of the Church (a document of Vatican II)
NAB  New American Bible
NSW  New South Wales, a State of the Commonwealth of Australia
PC; Perfectae Caritas  Decree on the Appropriate Renewal of the Religious Life (a document of Vatican II)
Qld  Queensland, a State of the Commonwealth of Australia
RE  Religious education
Redemptionis Donum  Apostolic exhortation of His Holiness Pope John Paul II to Men and Women Religious on the Consecration in the Light of the Mystery of the Redemption
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Tertio Millennio Adveniente</em></td>
<td>Apostolic Letter of His Holiness Pope John Paul II to the Bishops, Clergy and Lay Faithful on Preparation for the Jubilee of the Year 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Vatican II</em></td>
<td>The Second Ecumenical Council of the Church held at the Vatican 1963-1965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Vita Consecrata</em></td>
<td>Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation of the Holy Father Pope John Paul II to the Bishops and Clergy, Religious Orders and Congregations, Societies of Apostolic Life, Secular Institutes, and all the Faithful, on the Consecrated Life and its Mission in the Church and in the World.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

1.1 CONTEXT AND RATIONALE
1.1.1 Marist education in the Province of Sydney

They were all assembled in one of the classrooms. The Brothers handed out paper, pens and ink for a test, but scarcely had they received the sheet of paper than they covered it with all kinds of scribbling, overturned the inkwells, broke their pens and began to dance on the trestle tables, several of which were overturned. (Laboureyras [undated]:31-2)

On 8th April 1872, Marist education had an inauspicious, albeit boisterous, beginning in Australia. Garbed in their unusual French religious costume, four Marist Brothers attempted, without immediate success, to establish order among 139 curious and lively boys crowded into a makeshift schoolroom. The small gallery of clerics and other distinguished visitors who witnessed the scene wondered if the years of negotiation and anticipation that preceded this event had been worth their effort. The place was The Rocks, a poor, port-side district of inner Sydney; the pupils were neophytes to the culture that their European religious masters would have them enter. Unused to the expectations of a classroom teacher, unsocialised into the ways of a school, and largely unpractised in either the discipline or the sensibilities of their Catholic faith, the young members of this school were unlikely characters to open the story of Australian Marist education.

It is a story that has unfolded richly in the following century and a quarter. What Marist education has become, and the challenges with which it is currently presented, have formed the context of this study. Its subject has been the culture that has evolved in Marist schools, and the charismatic roots of that culture. The study has explored the lived
experience of the present-day members of the schools and the extent to which they share a distinctive cultural expression. It has looked at the ways in which the culture is a vital one, identified the points of cultural diffusion, and considered the degree to which it could be described as authentically Marist.

Some background on Marist schools and their present situation will help contextualise the study. The Marist Brothers, also known as the Little Brothers of Mary, are a religious institute of lay men within the Roman Catholic Church. Founded in rural France in 1817 by Marcellin Champagnat, their principal work has been in schools and other educational endeavours. They number approximately five thousand, found in seventy-two countries. Since their arrival in Australia in 1872, they have established over fifty schools and other educational establishments in various parts of the country, the majority of which remain open in 1997 and are still administered by Marist Brothers. There are four hundred and fifty Brothers in Australia, divided between two administrative districts, or "provinces." This study focussed on the schools with which the Brothers belonging to the Province of Sydney are or have been associated.

Marist Brothers, however, were not the primary focus of study. Marist schools are much more complex communities and increasingly perceive themselves in terms of the Brothers. The three decades following the Second Vatican Council have been marked by profound change in the Catholic Church. One of the most observable aspects of this change has been the growing preference by members of the Church in Western countries to seek forms of ministry other than the ordained ministry or within religious orders (Stevens, 1994:848). For the Marist Brothers in the Province of Sydney this has meant a substantially altered profile. They are fewer and they are older. Since 1970 the number of Brothers in the Province has fallen by 30 per cent and their median age has risen
from 37 to 60 (Marist Brothers, 1991). Whereas in the 1960s the staff of Marist Brothers schools consisted almost entirely of Marist Brothers, the situation in the 1990s is the same as with most Catholic schools with about 95 per cent of teachers being lay (Bogle, 1994).

The decreasing number of Marist Brothers has been paralleled by a changing ecclesiology which has emphasised an increased role for lay people in the life of the Church. One of the key teachings of the Second Vatican Council was the recognition that people do not belong to the Church as much as they are the Church (Coughlin, 1989): by right and responsibility of their baptism they do not only share in the membership of the Church but also in its mission (Lumen Gentium; Apostolicam Actuositatem, in Abbott, 1966; Harmer, 1994; Howard, 1994; John Paul II, 1996; Groden, 1996). Pope John Paul II (1987:8) employed the scriptural analogy of the vine and branches to describe the Church’s renewed understanding of the universal Christian vocation, describing the role of lay people not as workers in a vineyard but as part of the vine that was the Church. He called for

> a deeper awareness among all the faithful of the gift and responsibility they share, both as a group and as individuals, in the communion and mission of the Church (1987:2)

It is a more integrated view of Church, and one which resists a neat dichotomy between the “clergy” and the “laity” in the context of ministry. Indeed, there is increasing dissatisfaction with use of the term “laity”, since it defines one group in terms of what it is not (Lumen Gentium:12; Englebrecht, 1996; Robinson, 1996). As early as 1971, the leader of the Jesuits was calling his Society to encourage this more inclusive understanding of ministry (Starratt, 1973:27). Recent years have witnessed a growth in the body of research and commentary which have been prompted by such an understanding (e.g. Carey, 1987; Flynn, 1989; Kurimay, 1988; Archibald et al., 1997; Hilton, 1997; David, 1997).
Within the international network of Marist schools, and not least Australia, this emergent thinking has gained wide acceptance and is being actively encouraged by Institute and Province administrations (Green, 1994; Marist Brothers, 1997). At the 1993 General Chapter of the Marist Brothers, the then Superior General gave clear vision to the preferred direction for Marist schools:

In terms of relationships between its members — lay, clerical, and religious — the Church is probably undergoing the most fundamental change since the times of the first Christian community. At baptism, each of us was ordained an apostle of the Good News, and at confirmation we each committed ourselves to be an apostle... Communion ecclesiology stresses the common mission of all and the common call to holiness...

One of the great joys of our time is the fact that there are many lay people who wish to share our spirituality and wish to know more about Champagnat and his spirit and spirituality, and to share his charism. I believe this has enormous potential for the future. (Howard, 1994:14,16)

The rapidly broadening base of staff who consider themselves Marist educators and participators in a more inclusive understanding of ministry was a key factor in shaping the context in which this study was undertaken.

The revolution in the make-up of staff of Marist schools, has been paralleled by an equally dramatic change in the source of their funding. Whereas there was no recurrent government funding of schools before the 1970s and only some minimal capital funding, now most Catholic schools are funded to approximately 85 per cent of their running costs by Commonwealth and State governments (Catholic Education Commission, 1996). Dwyer (1986:3) described this development which occurred under the Schools Commission established by the Commonwealth Government in the 1970s as the most significant development in the history of Catholic schools in this country. A significant result of it, along with the financial viability of the schools, has been an attendant growth in Catholic educational bureaucracy. Since it was government’s preferred method of funding to make block grants to Catholic Education Offices (CEOs), these Offices have grown and
gradually assumed an increasingly hands-on role in the management of schools owned by individual dioceses and parishes (Luttrell, 1992). Such schools are known as "systemic", their government-given appellation. Although the style of management varies among dioceses, typically a Director of Catholic Education, through a local CEO, is responsible for employment and payment of staff, allocation of capital and recurrent funding, appointment and appraisal of those in school leadership positions, and provision of a range of curricular, financial, industrial, and professional development services to schools.

Whereas Marist schools vary in structure and nature within the Province of Sydney, the majority of them are secondary schools and systemic. The growth of Catholic educational bureaucracies has, therefore, had an increasing impact on them. Until the 1970s, when Marist schools were staffed largely by Marist Brothers, the principal sense of association was naturally with other Marist schools, and the networking of the schools and lines of authority among them were focussed on the Marist Brothers' provincial administration. With the growth of CEOs and the changed staff make-up, the schools are increasingly focussed on diocesan administrative structures and diocesan networks.

1.1.2 Purpose and contribution of the study
The study was undertaken at a critical point in the history of Marist schools in the Province of Sydney, given the impact of the two factors outlined above: the move to schools not staffed by Marist Brothers, and the increasing extent to which the schools are meshed into the workings of diocesan-based bureaucracies. Its first aim was to explore and define the cultures of Marist schools through people's lived experience of them. The research assessed the extent to which there was evidence of a distinctive culture in Marist schools, and identified the core cultural values that they shared and to which they gave expression. A second
purpose of the study was to contribute to the continued authenticity and vitality of this culture, first by enriching the articulation of it, and second, by evaluating the extent to which it showed fidelity to its charismatic roots. With a definitive synopsis of their shared culture, and its constitutive elements, the schools will have a stronger base from which to continue to build it. Such an articulation will be of assistance to those responsible for the cultural leadership and the cultural animation of the schools. It is hoped that it would assist in giving a solidity and a focus to the cultures that would help them survive as Marist schools in the face of the diminution of the Brothers, the flowering of a more inclusive understanding of ministry, and the changed nature of Catholic educational administration.

The key research tasks for the study were threefold. First, it was necessary to give some definition to the two conceptual contexts of organisational culture and Marist charism. Within this framework it was then possible to study the presently lived experience of Marist schools with a view to distilling a description of their shared culture. Third, a consideration of this culture, in terms of the conceptual contexts of organisational culture and charism, was undertaken in order to identify the coherence, functionality and authenticity of the culture as a "charismatic culture".

1.2 KEY CONCEPTS
The two concepts of culture and charism are central to this study. A new concept is proposed which links the two: charismatic culture.

1.2.1. Culture
The use of the metaphor of culture to understand the workings of a school or organisation is something that emerged strongly during the 1980s (Beare et al., 1989:18; Alvesson and Berg, 1991:168). Originally an
anthropological concept, *culture* has now been used extensively enough in the literature of organisational theory to justify the term *organisational culture* as one which can stand as a descriptor in its own right. Although there is some inconsistency about its definition in the literature, the following approach to it would capture the essence of culture for most researchers and commentators:

that social and phenomenological uniqueness of a particular organisational community [characterised by] numerous intangible and symbolic elements . . . as well as those which are more tangible and are given behavioural and visual expression (Beare, 1989: 173)

Such expression is founded on a core value-base or set of assumptions, not necessarily explicated, but certainly shared to a sufficient extent to create a bonding of purpose and attitude for the organisation to be functional. Around this set of core cultural values and assumptions may develop the rituals, mythology, patterns of behaviour, iconography, and the ways of acting, responding, judging, and relating that distinguish the school or organisation.

Chapter Two provides a detailed consideration and understanding of this metaphor as it has been used in organisational theory, particularly in the context of schools. A justification of its use as an appropriate window into the organisational dynamics of Marist schools, and a way of describing their corporate lives, is provided in that Chapter.

1.2.2 Charism

"Charism" is considered in this study as a theological concept. Since its revitalisation in the documents of the Second Vatican Council, its use has gained increasing currency among theologians and those involved in the various ministries of the Church. The origins of the term are found in the Pauline texts of the New Testament in the description of the *charismata* or "gifts" of the Holy Spirit: different people receive particular gifts from the Spirit for the purpose of building up and renewing the Church (*e.g.* Romans 12:3-8; I Corinthians 12:4-11;
Ephesians 4:7-16 — NAB). The understanding that is usually regarded as definitive (Sweeney, 1995:47-48) is that of Lumen Gentium, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church promulgated by the Vatican Council:

God distributes special graces among the faithful of every rank. By these gifts he makes them fit and ready to undertake various tasks and offices for the renewal and upbuilding of the Church. Whether these charisms be very remarkable or simple and widely diffused, they are to be received with thanksgiving and consolation since they are fitting and useful for the needs of the Church (LG#12, in Abbott, 1966)

It was this Pauline understanding of charism which dominated the Council and the emerging thinking of the Church since (Renfo, 1986:521; Ihnatowicz, 1996:3). This has been a recognition of a wide diversity and richness by which people can engage God and be involved in Christian ministry (LG:4,32,41; Gaudium et Spes:29; Apostolicam Actuositatem:3; in Abbott 1996; Evangelica Testificatio:11; Redemptionis Donum:15; Christifideles Laici:20; Tertio Millennio Adveniente:45). Pope John Paul II (1987:24) presents it this way:

The Holy Spirit, while bestowing diverse ministries in the Church communion, enriches it still further with particular gifts or promptings of grace called charisms. They can take a great variety of forms both as a manifestation of the absolute freedom of the Spirit who abundantly supplies them, and as a response to the varied needs of the Church in history

Whereas there may have been a large degree of homogeneity in the western Church’s understanding of religious orders and their works prior to the Council, the years since have rediscovered their variety and encouraged their expression of their particular gift for the service of the Church (Renfo, 1986:524; Sheeran, 1988:165; Nassal, 1994:840).

Two key concepts are contained in these understandings. A charism is, first, an accessible and Spirit-given way for people to engage the life of the Church, a way of being Christian that is appropriate to them as individuals and groups, and suits the needs and imperatives of their personal and societal situations. Second, charisms have a purpose beyond those who share in them: they exist for the purpose of empowering people to further the mission of the Church (Renfo,
Boroden (1996) summarises this mission as threefold:

i. Evangelisation: announcing of the gospel of Jesus Christ

ii. Sanctification: helping all Christian people to live by this gospel

iii. Renewal of the temporal order: bringing all things — moral, economic and physical — into right order and proper relationship, as created and intended by God.

Charisms can be understood to be the way in which the Spirit enlivens people to participate in each of these dimensions of Christianity.

"Charism" is thus a way of giving the Christian faith a context in the physical world: in actual people, in time and place. Indeed, the Christian faith is essentially incarnational. A charism is understood to be a particular way of incarnating, of living, the Christian faith — a way that may be incarnated in a particular person, a particular lifestyle, a particular ministry, or a particular tradition in the Church. In discussing the Marist charism, for example, Larkin (1995) describes it as one particular way of living the gospel. It was this incarnational sense of charism that led Simms (1997) to understand it as a sociological construct as well as a theological one. Yet, as Dominic (1994) argues, it must be understood to have an essentially spiritual root — a way of reflecting Christ. It is important not to confuse or to replace a charism with its temporal expressions.

Charisms may be both "simple" and "remarkable", allowing every person to live his or her individual life as a Christian, or facilitating important movements of renewal or mission (LG: 12). It has been to religious institutes, especially in the person and heritage of their founders, that some of the best known charisms of the Church have been given (Paul VI, 1971:11; John Paul II, 1996:1,4). The Church has encouraged the nurturance and continuance of such charisms so as to
give vitality to its mission. Indeed, it has understood that it is primarily through authentic charisms that the work of the Church is able to be undertaken:

The apostolate is always born from that particular gift of your founders, which received from God and approved by the Church, has become a charism for the whole community. That gift corresponds to the different needs of the Church and the world at particular moments of history, and in its turn it is extended and strengthened in the life of religious communities as one of the enduring elements of the Church's life and apostolate (John Paul II, 1984:15)

In theological terms, Marcellin Champagnat is understood to have received a charism. This gift found expression in the distinctive ways in which he lived, founded communities, and adopted a particular pedagogy and approach to education. This inspiration and action of Champagnat in nineteenth century France led to the growth of the present international network of institutions which bear the name Marist. The charism of Champagnat spored various cultural manifestations of a distinctive approach to education, including that of the Australian Marist secondary school. That is, once introduced into the life of the Church, charisms are understood to continue to give shape and focus for the Christian lives of people in successive generations, as long as it remains relevant to them or they chose to accept it as their way of engaging the Gospel. Pope Paul VI (1971:12) proposed that charisms retain a "constancy of orientation" while allowing for continual "growth and change".

Charisms are thus dynamic phenomena, adapting and renewing according to time and circumstance, as the Spirit continues to enliven them (Mayer, 1994:452; Stevens, 1994:850; John Paul II, 1996:54-55). The present time is witnessing a broadening of the base in which charisms initially shared solely by members of the religious orders, are now being engaged by other people, particularly those who share directly or vicariously in the work of a particular religious order (Starratt, 1973; Kurimay, 1988; Salm, 1988; Coughlin, 1989; Flynn, 1989; Harmer, 1994;
Finn, 1995; Robinson, 1996; John Paul II, 1996:54; Boroden, 1996; Hilton, 1997). To continue to be authentic, charisms are challenged to remain congruent with their founding spirit as well as to be relevant to their present circumstances (John Paul II, 1987:24; Sheeran, 1988:169; Lee, 1989:30; Dominic, 1994:52; Nassal, 1994:840). *Vita Consecrata* used the term “creative fidelity” to capture the sense in which a group which has inherited a charism needs not only to be faithful to its founding time, but also to read and respond to the signs of the present time (John Paul II, 1994:46; 1996:37). An imperative of the present time is the emergence of an understanding of the Church as communion, and with it a more inclusive approach to ministry, which was discussed above. It is to this contemporary movement which Champagnat’s charism is called to respond.

The original contribution of this study is to bring together the two concepts of *organisational culture* and *charism*. It proposes that, in the organisational culture of a school, the Christian faith can find distinctive expression. The charism of a particular tradition acquires, over time, a cultural expression. To the extent that this expression is faithful to its founding charism and to the Gospel, remains vital and relevant for its present-day protagonists and circumstances, and to the extent that the culture has all the usually accepted elements of a strong and functional organisational culture, then the school could be said to have a *charismatic culture*. It would be a place where the Gospel can be incarnated.

### 1.3 Parameters of the Study

There were a number of assumptions under which the study was conducted and several ways in which it was delimited. First, the study was undertaken and reported within a Christian framework. The research was delimited by its working within the beliefs, doctrine,
language and mission of the Catholic tradition of the Christian faith. Its use of the theological concept of charism was within this context, as were its references to God, the Church, and the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Second, the study was undertaken within the Marist Province of Sydney. Its conclusions, while of interest to Marist schools more broadly, are not presented as general for them. Third, the study did not attempt to describe all the dimensions of the cultures operating in the schools chosen. *Culture* is a metaphor that has a wide embrace of the expression, values, mores, customs and meanings within a school. Australian secondary schools share much of their culture in common, and Catholic secondary schools in this country also have many common cultural underpinnings. It is self-evident that all the elements of the culture of a Marist school are not going to be found to be unique. There are, however, some aspects that are *distinctive*. The identification of these was the focus of the research.

1.4 APPROACH AND STRUCTURE

The study was undertaken using a grounded theory methodology which is described and justified in Chapter Four. Chapters Two and Three define the context in which the field research was undertaken. Chapter Two proposes a basis for understanding the metaphor of culture in organisations, reviews the literature associated with organisational culture, and, on the findings of prior research, identifies the features that would be expected in a strong and functional school culture. Chapter Three represents an important part of the study itself. More than simply a review of Marist literature, it aims to bring together for critical consideration a unique range of research, commentary, and data on Marist education with a view to proposing a description of the qualities that might constitute the charismatic culture of an Australian Marist school. It examines the historical sources and development of Marcellin
Champagnat's charism, scholarship associated with these, contemporary understandings of Marist education, and its development in Australia. The length of the chapter reflects its significance as part of the original contribution of this study.

The data from the field research are presented in Chapters Five and Six. As will be seen in Chapter Four, this research was undertaken in two phases which are respectively reported in these two Chapters. Consistent with the principles of grounded theory methodology, the emerging data helped to shape progressively the synopsis of Marist charismatic culture which is presented at the conclusion of Chapter Six. This crystallisation of the data represents the attainment of a primary purpose of the study: to describe the lived experience of the culture of the Australian Marist school. Finally, in Chapter Seven, this snapshot is considered in terms of the context which was explored in Chapters Two and Three. Although it is not appropriate within a grounded theory methodology to discuss the findings within a pre-determined theoretical framework, this Chapter does attempt to draw some conclusions about strength, functionality, and authenticity of the charismatic culture. It also proposes aspects of the culture which, if the charism is to continue to be vital and relevant in Marist schools, may require attention or change.
Chapter Two

ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE
AND SCHOOLS

A review of the literature

In the last analysis, it’s really about culture... Culture is
the hardest stuff around. T.J. Peters and R.H. Waterman

This chapter provides a critical analysis of the literature of organisational
culture as it has emerged over the last two decades and as it relates to
schooling. It first discusses a basis for defining and understanding the
metaphor of culture in organisations. A review of research which has
shaped the excellence movement is then presented, highlighting the role
of culture as a critical factor in organisations and identifying the
constituent features of a strong organisational culture. The links between
organisational culture and school effectiveness are discussed before a
more comprehensive view of goodness in schools is explored. On the
basis of this critical review, a synthesis of the culture of good schools is
constructed and a theoretical context for researching culture in schools is
proposed.

2.1 CULTURE AND ORGANISATIONS
2.1.1 Bases for an understanding of “organisational culture”
There is no definitive understanding of culture. In the end, it is a
construct, a metaphor for organising and integrating perceptions of
aspects human behaviour and meaning-making, and for attempting to
achieve some coherent understanding of them. Depending on the academic orientation in which they are situated or the purposes of a particular study, researchers focus on different dimensions of culture. The research into the culture of schools, for example, has been strongly influenced by anthropology (Duignan, 1987a:209). The emphases in the literature, therefore, have been on features such as shared values and beliefs, myths and legends, sagas and heroes, symbols and rituals, customary practices and traditions, icons and sacred sites (Owens, 1987:30-31; Kaye, 1996). Psychology and sociology have brought other emphases such as cultural networks, tribal mentalities, and power relationships.

Taylor’s (1871) classic definition of culture as a complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and other capabilities acquired by man as a member of society has been considerably developed and refined during this century to a more actional concept. Although many favour the body of knowledge approach to some degree (e.g. Deal, 1985:602; Kilman, 1985:5; Sathe, 1985; Schein, 1985a:19-20; Beare et al.1989:173; Owens, 1987:30; Sackman, 1991), most do not see culture as an inert phenomenon, as received wisdom, as something that a person or group can have or can acquire, or as something which has a life independent of people who are members of it. Those who understand culture from a largely phenomenological point of view tend to have a more instrumentalist approach to its role in organisations, an approach more common in the business literature than in the school literature although some of the school effectiveness literature has been criticised negatively for this reason. Kilman et al.(1985) typify this understanding. Such an observation may also be made of Deal and Kennedy (1982) who offer an accessible and attractive but perhaps simplistic definition of culture, developing the words of Bower (1966), in understanding it as “the way we do things around here.” The danger in this approach is that the focus of understanding is
simply on action—on *what* is done—rather than on meaning and purpose: on *why* it is done, and how the members of the organisation *feel* about the things that are done. If culture is limited only to Deal and Kennedy's understanding, it risks the organisation's becoming stagnant and introspective (Kaye, 1996).

Sackman (1991) identifies four kinds of "cultural knowledge" or sense-making mechanisms which complemented the structural aspects of culture. The highest form of knowledge was "axiomatic knowledge", knowing *why* things happen in the organisation the way they do. Other forms of knowledge—"dictionary knowledge", "directory knowledge", "recipe knowledge"—were concerned with knowing what happens, how it happens, and what should happen.

Flynn (1993), although attracted somewhat by Deal and Kennedy's definition, emphasises the fundamental importance of values and assumptions. After a search of the whole range of understandings, he identified a four-aspect model for understanding culture in the Australian Catholic school: core beliefs and values; expressive symbols; traditions; and patterns of behaviour. Stolp and Smith (1994:1) understand it in a similar way but do not see the same discrete categories:

> [School culture is] the historically transmitted patterns of meaning that include the norms, values, beliefs, ceremonies, rituals, traditions, and myths understood, maybe in varying degrees by members of the school community.

Researchers associated exclusively with schools, rather than with the production-oriented cultures of business, seem to emphasise more strongly the place of underlying values and beliefs and give some sense of hierarchical or centrifugal importance to them. For Beare (1989:112) this is the heart of culture in a school; for Duignan (1987:208) and Bell (1996:21) the essential elements of a school's culture are the beliefs and value system as well as the vision that is implicit in these values. Deal (1985), on the other hand, has a more phenomenological approach,
understanding shared meanings in an organisation to derive more from the elements of culture, rather than the reverse.

Sergiovanni, in his extensive research into the working of culture in organisations, particularly schools, provides a useful understanding of the centrifugal nature of the components of culture, at least a functional culture. Sergiovanni and Starratt’s (1993) “onion skin” model puts culture at the centre and understands it as as the belief system and basic assumptions of the organisation. The outer skins represent the value system, the norms and standards, and finally the patterns of behaviour and artefacts that are shared. Dyer (1985), in dealing with organisations in general, proposes an almost identical structure for considering four levels of culture: artefacts, perspectives, values, and assumptions. Schein’s (1985b) three level model of artifacts, espoused values and underlying assumptions represents the same line of theorising. This is reflected to some extent in Millikan’s (1987) consideration of an inner core of the foundational intangibles (values, philosophy and ideology) and an outer core of expressions, behaviours and symbols. He considers school culture from an anthropological and sociological standpoint to be

that system of shared meanings, cognitions, symbols and experiences which are expressed in the behaviours and practices of the members of an affiliated group, and which give them both social definition and sense of association (1987:42)

It is a definition resonant of Geertz (1975) who defined culture as historically transmitted patterns of meaning, expressed explicitly in symbols and implicitly in taken-for-granted beliefs, and consistent with much of the literature on school culture (Stolp, 1994). Within Millikan’s model, the system of shared meanings, cognitions and symbols is in a continual state of flux. In it there are two broad categories of characteristics: the intangible foundations, and the visible expressions. He emphasises the importance of the intangibles, and criticises the more positivistic approaches to organisational research which focus only on the quantifiable and easily measurable features which could be objectively observed. The intangible foundations at the centre of his
scheme include the shared values, philosophy and ideology of the organisation. These are expressed through three categories of tangible expressions and symbolism: the conceptual/verbalised expressions; the visual/material expressions; and the enacted/behavioural expressions. Everything in the school, from curriculum, to organisational structures, to uniforms, to rules and regulations, can be included in this scheme.

Flynn's (1993) scheme is similar to this, although perhaps less explicitly sensitive to the interactive nature of the components of culture and the external milieu in which it is situated. On the basis of his longitudinal study of Catholic schools, he concludes that all schools have a culture and, even when poorly articulated or fragmented, this culture has "a far-reaching influence on students, staff and parents and, in a real sense, the Christian message as experienced by the school community" (1993:38-39). Flynn sees core values and beliefs as the primary determinants of a school's culture. These are represented in expressive symbols, traditions, and patterns of behaviour. Flynn's exemplification of these four dimensions parallels the categories of Millikan in many respects except for the stronger emphasis on the religious elements. The risk in both approaches is the possible implication that a school is monocultural, or even that school culture is a monolithic concept. Both researchers claim otherwise, Millikan in particular. It is a caution that is also given by Sarason (1971), although his discussion of schools often implied a high degree of commonality among them.

The school's culture is the "gestalt" of all of the characteristics of its expressive and inner life (Beare et al., 1991:199), in their dynamic interaction with each other and, importantly, with the outside community. The culture of schools can be seen, therefore, as a multifaceted phenomenon, rooted in the ways in which its people make meaning, share values and purposes, believe, judge, and perceive. From these, schools will have their formal and informal rituals and customs,
expressed in the ways its members interact with one another, in the ways they speak, dress, and relate to the stated purposes of the school. The members of the school will have those of their number they choose to honour, the stories they most often re-tell, and the words by which they typically describe themselves. The figurative concept of culture provides a comprehensive way of integrating all of this.

From the insights of Sergiovanni’s (1992; 1994; 1996) and Starratt’s (1993a; 1993b; 1994) later work with their increasing focus on the moral worth and purposes of schooling, it can be suggested that, at least in relation to schools, organisational culture is best understood primarily from a hermeneutic rather than a phenomenological point of view. This is not to undervalue the significance of the more tangible and quantifiable expressions of culture, nor to deny that changes in less important normative behaviours can have an impact on inner values and beliefs. The best models are interactive, such as the one proposed by Maxwell and Thomas (1991), with the weight of attention determined by the purposes of the organisation. Where the organisation is more concerned with enhancing productivity, there may be more focus on the tangible expressions of belief and value, than where the purpose of the organisation is, for example, holistic education of young people.

Any understanding of culture in organisations should not lose sight of its essentially metaphorical dimension. Culture is a way of coming to terms with aspects of reality through a construct, borrowed largely from anthropology. Organisational culture is thus simultaneously real and fictional (Alevsson, 1993:12). Other metaphors have been used for organisations, for example machinery, personality, community, organism, jungle, family, ship (cf. Jelinek et al, 1983; Smircich, 1983). All are necessarily limited to some extent and, as with all figurative devices, care must be taken to ensure each metaphor is not reductionist to such an extent that it misrepresents or over-simplifies the reality. One
limitation of the culture metaphor, particularly with regard to production-oriented business, is to underemphasise the goals of the company — which may be simply to make money — because the community aspects of the organisation are being highlighted. Alvesson and Berg (1991) called this the "folklore trap." Nevertheless, humans understand and engage their world view metaphorically, through language and symbol, and the role of a root metaphor for describing this understanding and engagement is attractive. The key issue is the authenticity of the metaphor; culture appears to provide that.

Although its imagery and language was borrowed initially from anthropology, and influenced by sociology and psychology, the metaphor has taken a conceptual life of its own over the last two decades. An understanding of the metaphor of culture as it applies to organisations, and schools in particular, should not become entangled in anthropologists' debates about the meaning of culture. Organisational culture has long since established itself as a concept in its own right. It is difficult, therefore, to engage conceptual arguments such as that undertaken by Smircich (1983), in deciding whether, for example, an individual organisation should be considered through cognitive anthropology, symbolic anthropology, structural anthropology or psychodynamic anthropology. The metaphor can be employed much more easily than this. It is simply a powerful and insightful metaphor for understanding what happens in organisations, and schools in particular. Its increased popularity has paralleled the decreased satisfaction with the older theories of organisation and management, with their rational and positivist emphases. In the end, culture is an attractive way to describe an organisation because it is a recognition of the primary place of people, and how and why people act, think, perceive, judge, believe, feel, and make meaning. It is a recognition that the best way to understand an organisation is to understand its people.
2.1.2 Culture and the themes of the excellence movement

The original work of Peters and Waterman (1982) and Deal and Kennedy (1982) had a seminal impact on the then conventional approaches to organisation theory with their emphases on the rational, quantifiable, logical, component aspects of an organisation, its processes and purposes. From the time of research into Western Electric's management styles in the 1930s, there has been attention paid to the what Owens described as the "subtle, elusive, intangible, largely unconscious forces that comprise the symbolic side of organisations and shape human thought and behaviour in them." (1987:164). "Ethos", "climate", "personality" were all terms used for some decades but the link with effectiveness was made definitive by Peters and Waterman, and Deal and Kennedy, and the flurry of research they inspired. Beginning not from organisational theory, but by identifying and naming best practice, culture was the obvious metaphor they found to describe the features that the best organisations had in common. Initially suspicious of the "soft" nature of a concept such as culture in the hard-nosed world of business, Peters and Waterman finally concluded that it was in those elements that were intuitive, informal, irrational and intractable that the best predictors of strong and "hard" organisations could be found (1982:11).

Peters and Waterman's eight attributes of America's most successful companies are now well established in the organisational literature. They are worthy of mention:

- a bias for action and experimentation
- closeness to the customer, and sensitivity/responsiveness to local situations
- autonomy, with entrepreneurs and risk-takers nurtured
- people valued: rank and file treated as the primary source of quality
- hands-on/value-driven: management by walking around
- sticking to the knitting: not diversifying services or involvement beyond tested expertise
• simple form/lean staff: few people at the top, very slim management and minimal red tape
• simultaneous loose-tight management: very decentralised and devolved on everything except a few core values about which they were fanatical.

They found that, in the cultures of the market-leading organisations they chose to study, the most jealously prized dimensions were not strategic planning, bottom lines, five-year projections, balanced books, efficient debt-servicing, and functional facilities. Of paramount importance were, first, the values of the organisation and, second, the nurturing of transformational leaders — rather than managers — who would become its heroes. Whereas managers were the professionals, the dispassionate analysts, the facilitators, the referees, and the rationalists, leaders on the other hand were the enthusiasts, the cheerleaders, the dramatists, the motivators, the builders, the poets, the coaches, and the visionaries. There were competent managers within the organisations, but they did not hold the reins. The organisations were led by people who built, consolidated and enhanced culture, often intuitively, and recognised that culture as the source of strength of the organisation.

Deal and Kennedy (1982) also looked at successful companies in terms of the most powerful expressions of culture: their business environment, their central values, their heroes and legends, their rites and rituals, and their cultural networks. They recognised businesses as human institutions, and saw the disposition of people's hearts and minds as the chief factor in determining the direction of an organisation. Values which the people of the organisation held in common — whether or not they were written down — were found to define the fundamental character of the organisation. Those companies with strong cultures had values in sympathy with their stated purposes, usually just a few key values that found repeated expression in the most frequently told stories
and legends of the organisation, and were embodied in its most honoured heroes. Strong cultures nurtured heroes, people who were typically mould-breakers, innovators, people of vision, and initiative. Like Peters and Waterman, they found them to stand in contrast to the "managers" whose concern was with order, procedure, careful planning and neat structure. Companies with strong cultures had expressive events to ritualise their view of themselves, and powerful informal networks to complement the values of the company. In support of Peters and Waterman, they predicted that organisations would grow and prosper if they were able to develop an effective loosely-coupled approach: becoming decentralised in all aspects of their operation but able to retain a very strong, central, cultural system marked by core values and common rituals.

Without dismissing Alvesson’s (1993) justifiable caution about the superficiality and shortcomings of being too instrumentalist in approach, there are nonetheless aspects of strong, functional cultures that are consistently identified and worthy of highlight. They are indicators of successful organisations. Peters and Waterman’s (1982) eight characteristics of excellent and innovative companies have been listed above. They found these attributes to be complemented, “without exception” (1982:75), by the presence of a dominant and coherent culture throughout the organisation. The culture was always augmented by stories, myths and legends about people who personified these cultural norms, often enough the founder of the company. Indeed, they found the presence of “transformational leadership” (a term they borrowed from Burns, 1978) to be a feature of all successful companies they investigated, at least in the early days of the company. For them, a “transformational leader” was one who could lead people to transcend their everyday tasks and see broader meaning or purpose in their jobs, someone who could address people’s fundamental search for meaning (1982:17-18).
Deal and Kennedy's (1982) language enters much more unapologetically into the lexicon of anthropology and even mythology, reflecting their comprehensive embrace of the cultural paradigm. "Heroes" are quite significant for them, filling a similar role to Peters and Waterman's transformational leaders. These are people who move outside the rationalist lines of traditional management theory to be people of vision, experimentation, and celebration. They found heroes in companies — people such as Henry Ford, John D Rockefeller, William Kellogg, Harley Procter, Thomas Watson— to share a number of characteristics: they were right "and right in a big way"; they were persistent, even obsessive; they had a sense of personal responsibility to bring their ideas to fruition (1982:46-47). Just as strong cultures nurture heroes, they found them also to value the "outlaws", people who find new ways of acting and achieving. In weak cultures, they found such people, are not understood, and typically turn against the company, even becoming its whistleblowers (1982:52).

Peters and Waterman (1982) discounted the importance of leadership before their study of the 62 American companies. They had thought that companies' adherence to cultural attributes of outstanding organisations would explain their success, but they found that every excellent company had an extraordinary leader. The essential and central role played by strong, symbolic leadership is a key finding of a study by Wilson and Corcoran (1988) of 571 secondary schools judged by their districts to be "good schools". The importance of cultural or symbolic leadership in schools will be considered in more detail below (2.3.3).

One possible limitation of the culture metaphor is the implication that an organisation's culture needs be homogeneous or pervasive throughout the organisation or at all the different levels of it. It is clearly unlikely that such uniformity would be the case in an organisation of
any size or diversity of operation. Louis (1985), Martin (1992) and Alvesson (1993) are among those critical of a corporate culture approach which is not sensitive to the ambiguities, sub-cultures, or even fragmentation that may exist in an organisation. Martin, in her study of OZCO (a pseudonym), considered the company from three perspectives, looking at the integrating themes, as well as evidence of differentiation, and also fragmentation. While strong cultures are recognised as coherent and cohesive through the organisation, there can also be a place for differential expression of cultural mores, as appropriate to the people, work environments, and the purposes of various sections of the organisations. A culture becomes dysfunctional, or "weak" in Peters and Waterman's terms, when these differential normative behaviours reflect differences in fundamental values and assumptions.

In an interesting study of a Christian Brothers' school in Victoria, Angus (1988) discovered such dysfunctionality to be prevalent. He found evidence of fundamental differences between the lay teachers and the Brothers in the school, not only at the level of practice but at the deeper levels of core values about education, assumptions about schooling, and understandings about goals and purposes. He painted a portrait of an organisation's culture in crisis, crippled by heterogeneity of approach and concentration of power in the hands of the diminishing number of Brothers. There seemed to be little or no attempt to bring the meaning-making of lay teachers and Brothers into sympathy.

Culture, of course, is not static but inevitably evolutionary and interactive. A strong culture is one which is neither too rigid, nor over-flexible (Hodgkinson, 1991:82). Its core assumptions are likely to move little but they must continually find expressions that are accessible, relevant, inclusive and, if necessary, adaptable to all the members of the organisation. In Sackman's (1991) terms, the people responsible for cultural transmission should have a high level of "axiomatic
knowledge”. It could be presumed that in past years in the school studied by Angus (1988) all of the Brothers would have met that requirement easily, given the uniformity and thoroughness of their religious training as Brothers, and the intensity of their monastic living, both formal and informal. The school did not seem to have recognised that now other teachers needed to have access to this inner cultural knowledge, and did not seem to have developed ways of enculturating these teachers, or allowing them to engage the school’s culture at this deeper level.

2.2 ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE IN SCHOOLS
The appropriateness of applying the findings of the organisational culture literature to schools depends on an acceptance of the understanding that schools function as organisations in similar enough ways to other organisations in the corporate world. Handy and Aikten (1986:12) see schools, of their very nature, as such organisations, despite schools’ preference to describe themselves in other terms, such as “partnerships”. For Handy and Aikten, schools bring people together to achieve a purpose and these people need to be organised. Their consideration of schools is largely focussed on the different ways in which purposes and tasks lead to the recruitment, induction, deployment, grouping, functioning, motivation and evaluation of staff. They are much concerned with power, and with sources and exercise of control in their understanding of schools. Although Handy and Aikten do describe organisations in terms of cultures and propose four generic types of culture, they tend to focus predominantly on the political nature of schools. Without denying the role of power in schools — anyone who has been a member of a school common room would attest the often intensely political nature of them — this is only one aspect of culture, and not necessarily at its heart. Of more fundamental
importance are the broader sources of meaning-making that govern and influence the members of the organisation.

Schools are indeed organisations, but organisations of people not of buildings and facilities, or of numbers and dollars, or even of neat lines of management. Only the most dispassionate, rationalist bureaucrat would see schools predominantly in terms of enrolment figures, resource levels, and funding requirements. Anyone with even a passing association with schools would know that they are intensely relational environments, and quite distinctive in the expression of these relationships. Flynn (1985, 1993) has been among those who have shown the defining importance of relationships within schools. It is from this perspective that an understanding of the organisational culture has emerged from the research.

In his later work, Sergiovanni (1996) has cautioned strongly against the applicability to education, particularly educational leadership, of theory and practice from the corporate sector, with its emphases on outcomes and self-interest. He is particularly critical of manipulation of culture to achieve ends which do not emanate from the people involved in an individual organisation, such as he interprets the legacy of Deal and Kennedy, and Peters and Waterman. His warnings are well heeded, and taken by commentators from within the business sector. Alvesson (1993) for example, while recognising the contribution of research in the tradition of Peters and Waterman, and Deal and Kennedy, is critical of attempts to trivialise its findings by establishing causal links between performance and specific components of culture. One expression of such an instrumental approach is the strand of the effective schools movement which is discussed below. In its superficiality, it does not recognise the organic nature of culture and that it is concerned with people's meaning-making, rather than independent and observable phenomena. Harrison (1987) is typical of researchers whose principal
purpose is to achieve a competitive edge and who gives shallow consideration to the role and development of cultural components such as myths, logos, rituals, livery and dress. Alvesson (1993:43) sees such people proceeding from, in Habermasian terms, a technical-cognitive interest, whereas culture works more from the practical-hermeneutic.

It remains, however, that schools, particularly large secondary schools, are large organisations and often enough part of larger systems or networks. That they should be concerned with moral purposes, that the common good be served, that community be sought and learning promoted, are not factors that of themselves negate the validity of culture as a window into understanding and indeed strengthening them.

2.2.1 Links between culture and effectiveness in schools
When "culture" emerged in the 1980s as a popular means of describing the organisational functioning of schools, it subsumed older terms that had been used in the literature (cf. Owens, 1987). Rutter et al. (1979) chose the term "ethos" to describe the pervasive character of spirit of the school which he found to be a key indicator of a school's success. For Flynn (1985) the term "climate" was seen as appropriate to describe the informal curriculum of the school which he found to have a significant correlation with academic success in secondary schools. In doing so he was employing a term that had been used extensively since the work of Likert in the 1950s and 1960s, and Halpin and Croft in the 1960s. Maxwell and Thomas (1991:73) pointed to the inadequacy of the climate metaphor in its implying a reality over which the organisation has little control. When the research of Ouchi (1981), Deal and Kennedy (1982) and Peters and Waterman (1982) cemented the term "culture" in the literature of organisational theory and practice, it was readily adopted in the schools literature, as is exemplified in the change of terms used by researchers such as Sergiovanni and Flynn both of whose work has traversed two decades of research in school effectiveness.
Paralleling its importation from the excellence movement, the growing adoption of the concept of culture in the educational literature was sourced also in the effective schools movement which gathered momentum in the 1980s. For over a decade following the Coleman Report (Coleman et al., 1966) the pendulum representing the factors affecting achievement in school had been positioned strongly on the side of home-based influences such as socio-economic background. Influential studies such as that by Rutter et al. (1979) influenced a reversal of this swing, arguing the case for the autonomous effect of schooling. Studies since that time have attempted not only to validate the importance of schooling, but to identify the characteristics of the schools that effect the best student learning outcomes. Although the movement has had its share of theorists offering attractive but simplistic and emotive answers, often enough masking underlying political or economic agenda (Wayson, et al. 1988:83), the best literature has not proposed quick-fix or shallow solutions, but has described best practice.

There has been a consistently identified set of factors linked to effectiveness in a strand of research similar in methodology and presentation of findings to that of Rutter (e.g. Brookover et al., 1979; Edmonds, 1982; Goodlad, 1984; Finn, 1984; Flynn, 1985; Duignan, 1986). Common characteristics typically included: emphasis on academic achievement; high expectations on students; strong discipline codes and good order; agreed and pervasive ideologies; broad curriculum; inclusive enrolment; warm school climate; strong leadership; collaborative decision-making; and local school autonomy. Leonard’s (1996) extensive review of over 700 similar research projects in the 1990s identified similar factors.

Those with a more instrumentalist approach to school improvement have seized on the results of such research. A Nation at Risk (USA,
in triggering a largely politically driven attempt to enhance school effectiveness, created a temptation for school administrators to adopt a recipe approach to improving their schools or school systems. It was a school of thought that saw no chicken-and-egg ambivalence about the origins of school effectiveness, but assumed that an imposition of the features identified in the research would automatically make schools more effective. The back-to-basics movement found its share of ready proponents. As early as 1982, Purkey and Smith in their survey of the effective schools literature were suspicious of such simplistic approaches to school improvement, and already had identified the broader concept of culture as the key to effectiveness. Yet commentators such as Leonard (1996) are still inclined to this approach. Such shallow understandings of effective schools seems to have been related to the limited scope of the research, often enough based solely on academic success measured on narrow test instruments, and usually limited to primary schools (Duignan, 1995). Even those who recognise the more complex nature of secondary schools (e.g. Wilson and Corcoran, 1988) have been often too ready to identify uncritically the features of effective schools, implying that a simple adoption model will automatically improve quality. McGaw et al. (1992), in their report on the Australian Effective Schools Project took a wider view of the effective school, reflective of a broader vision of the purposes of education and a more comprehensive approach to research of its outcomes.

Ethnographic portraits of individual schools, such as those favoured by Lightfoot (1983; 1986), Wilson and Corcoran (1988), Ramsay and Clark (1990), Wood (1992), Mitchell and Willover (1992), and Sergiovanni (1994), give poignant albeit sometimes imprecise insight into what Lightfoot describes as “goodness” in schools. Increasingly their focus appears to be on the quality of the educative relationships which exist within the schools.
Culture has emerged as a way of linking and indeed understanding the collection of variously expressed characteristics of effective schools. Levine (1986) draws on the findings of Peters and Waterman (1982) to move the largely structuralist analysis of the school improvement literature towards the more organic understanding that the concept of culture provides. A more holistic understanding of school effectiveness, taking into account the deeper moral purposes of a school, appears increasingly to be the direction of the school improvement literature (Sergiovanni, 1996; Cowell, 1996). Such approaches suggest that the demonstrated characteristics of effective schools should not be seen as independent variables that can be differentially implemented, but as expressions of a more fundamental culture of a school or school system.

2.2.2 A deeper understanding of culture

The clear message of the research indicates that when a school’s lived experiences are in sympathy with its stated purposes, then there is a functional culture. When there are adequate levels of resonance, consistency and coherence between the publicly proclaimed values of the school and the experienced reality of its daily life, then the effectiveness of the school as an educative institution is enhanced proportionately. Sergiovanni (1987:58-59) encapsulates it thus:

It is clear from the reviews of successful schools that the building of a culture that promotes and sustains a given school’s conception of success is key... All schools have cultures, but successful schools seem to have strong and functional cultures aligned with a vision of quality in schooling.

As mentioned above, Sergiovanni’s later research and commentary are more definitive and specific about the nature of such vision of quality and much more concerned about the moral dimension of it (also see below 2.3). It is clear, however, that the role played by a strong culture in a school is pivotal and a primary determinant of achieving a “value-added” outcome to schooling (McGaw et al., 1992:67ff; Newton and Tarrant, 1992:223). For Beare (1987:276-77), the effective school

... is, in short, a concentrated culture based on core assumptions about its prime function — instruction and learning. Coherence within subjects, across subjects,
across year groups, among classroom approaches, does not emerge by chance, but is driven by a common vision about education, about the school, and about what the school's programs are for. It comes from a collectivity of people who have derived a collective vision.

Purkey and Smith (1982), in their synthesis of the effective schools literature integrate their listing of the chief features of effective schools by highlighting the primary place of culture. This is the key. Duignan (1995) has more recently restated culture as the most commonly identified factor in effective schooling, linking it explicitly to earlier work of Peters and Waterman. The causal link between higher achievement and good schools is a link between achievement and school culture. Deal (1985) in applying the findings of his research in the corporate world to schools, emphasises that an understanding of the symbolic life of the school, its culture, is a prerequisite for any improvement of effectiveness. He criticises those in the school effectiveness movement who would seek to deconstruct an effective school and adopt individual elements of climate in the hope that it would necessitate improvement. Duignan (1987a), in collapsing Saphier's and King's (1985) 12 norms of effective schools into four critical areas also seems to want to describe the culture as a more organic phenomenon. As pointed out by Hanson (1991:68), consistent with its anthropological sources, culture should not be considered as something that a school has, but what it is (see also Duignan, 1987b:300; Alvesson, 1993:15).

There seems to be one striking difference between the focus of research on organisational culture in the corporate world on the one hand and education on the other. The former is almost entirely concerned with large corporations, with their many branches and networks of franchises; the latter is almost exclusively concerned with individual schools, even single classrooms, and rarely school systems. It is a telling contrast of focus, but one barely commented upon in the literature. The message
from both fields of research, however, is not inconsistent. As pointed out above, the strong finding of both Peters and Waterman (1982) and Deal and Kennedy (1982) is that successful companies are characterised by highly decentralised operations, allowing differential responses to tightly held core values. It is a structural precondition for the development of strong cultures. The same appears to be the case for schools. A high level of autonomy of operation seems to be a central feature of the culture of effective schools (Purkey and Smith, 1982; Lightfoot, 1983; Quinby, 1985; Saphier and King, 1985; Sirotnik and Oakes, 1986; Duignan, 1987a; Beare et al. 1989; Sergiovanni, 1992; Wood, 1992). The school is seen as the basic cultural unit. Attempts by a school system's administrative offices to remedy malaise by central policy directives concerning on-site practice is likely to disempower the local school. In his review of effective schools literature, Finn (1984) concludes there is no prescriptive balance between school-level autonomy and system-wide uniformity, but warns of the

vexing paradox . . . that in seeking to overcome inertial autonomy by tightening the couplings in school systems, policy makers may damage the best schools and not much help the worst ones (1984:520)

The most effective schools are not those so much with high resource levels or even quality programmes of instruction, but those with effective teachers and administrators (McGaw et al., 1992). Culture always appears to come back to people, to their sense of association, and their shared values and commitments.

2.3 THE CULTURE OF GOOD SCHOOLS

2.3.1 From competence to excellence

Few have transferred the learnings of the excellence movement to a schools perspective more effectively than Sergiovanni. He draws a qualitative distinction between what he calls competence and excellence. Excellence is seen as multidimensional and holistic, for example a well
performed piano recital, whereas competence is simply mastery of predetermined, essential fundamentals.

... we know excellent schools when we experience them, despite difficulties in definition. In excellent schools things 'hang together'; a sense of purpose rallies people to a common cause; work has meaning and life is significant; teachers and students work together and with spirit; and accomplishments are readily recognised (1984:4).

Competent schools might meet the expectations of their communities, but excellent schools exceed expectations. Sergiovanni identifies strong, functional culture as the key to such excellence, where a vision of excellence has allowed people to move in a common direction, with norms for how and what to achieve, giving sources of meaning, and emerging through effective leadership (1984:10). Starratt (1993b:111) also warns against confusing the narrow agenda of school effectiveness with the more embracing purposes of pursuit of excellence, a calling of everyone beyond the ordinary.

Beare et al. (1987) are more explicit in situating their review of research in the context of the work of Peters and Waterman, and Deal and Kennedy, and the broader excellence movement with its origins in the corporate world. Again, they see a strong, functional culture as the key to excellence, rather than the sum of individual competent characteristics of effective schools. They agree with Sergiovanni on the fundamental role which a shared vision and ideology play in animating culture. Duignan (1997:1)

For researchers such as these, excellence is not confused with mastery. Although it had a strongly influential effect on educational attitudes and research, the Report of the National Commission on Excellence in Education (USA, 1983) focussed more on mastery, and indeed recommended attention to the so-called "New Basics" (1983:24-29). Without denying a valid place for minimum quality assurance structures and measures, the research literature does not appear to indicate that these are the primary means by which successful
organisations appear to have achieved. Indeed, excellence would appear to be guaranteed only by moving beyond these, and the means to do that is through an organisation’s, or a school’s, culture.

2.3.2 Community
The increasing preference by Sergiovanni and others to focus on and advocate the moral dimensions of school culture, particularly “community”, brings together two overlapping strands of educational research: the general school improvement literature with its focus on broad culture, and the research on Catholic schooling which has emphasised the key role of the communal dimensions of the school. Both strands have highlighted the critical place of shared core values, but there have been different emphases about the expression of these. Since 1979, Flynn’s longitudinal research of Australian Catholic schools has identified the importance of the relational and affective dimensions of their working environments (Flynn, 1979; 1985; 1993). Although they did not explicitly use the concept of “culture”, Coleman and Hoffer (1987), in their study of a large sample of American senior high schools, adopted the term “social capital” to describe the network of relationships surrounding and supporting a student. Outside the family context, they found that social capital was present most strongly in the communities surrounding Catholic schools (1987:225). It was social capital that helped students identify more closely with the aims of the schools and achieve academically within them. They found this to be strongest where this community had a religious basis, as with Catholic schools. This research was supported in a case study of St Mary’s College, Tasmania, by Ramsay and Clarke (1991). In an ethnographic case study of “St Anne’s High School” (a pseudonym for a Catholic high school in an American midwestern city), Lesko (1988) found the quality of care in the relationships of the school to fall well short of the caring environment which was one of its stated values, and to be the chief reason for the alienation of two groups of students and the attendant poor achievement and
disenchantment with school. It is a finding supported strongly by Clark (1988) and Bryk (1996).

The community dimension of Catholic schools is something that, because of their religious affiliation and traditions, they have been able to explicate. Community, and its attendant values, can be made public as both goals and means of education in Catholic schools. Vatican II was clear in its teaching that the Catholic school should see itself as a community rather than an institution (Gravissimum educationis, #8, in Abbot 1966; Congregation for Catholic Education, 1989:31). It is also, of course, a concept which has a rich basis in Christian Scripture. It is not surprising, therefore, that research in and about Catholic schools should identify community-linked factors as central to their cultures. That these factors have been linked to school effectiveness is, of course, welcome findings for these schools. It is more interesting that research outside this sphere should be heading in the same direction, yet this seems to have been one of the emergent themes of the 1990s. Sergiovanni’s definition of communities as he understands them in relation to schools represents this convergence:

“Communities” are collections of individuals who are bonded together by natural will and who are together bound to a set of shared ideas and ideals. This bonding and binding is tight enough to transform them from a collection of “I’s” into a shared “we”. As a “we”, members are part of a tightly knit web of meaningful relationships. This “we” usually shares a common place and over time comes to share common sentiments and traditions that are sustaining (1996:48)

From his own observations and his reflections on Bryk’s (1993) longitudinal research on American Catholic schools, Sergiovanni (1996:80) concludes that Catholic schools are advantaged because they function as the kind of moral enterprises he idealises.

Wood’s (1992) research reflects this move away from the hard-nosed approach of the back-to-basics movement, as typified in A Nation at Risk (USA, 1983) in the United States and Strengthening Australia’s Schools (Dawkins, 1988) in Australia, and often driven by the economic agenda.
In an examination of a number of American schools, Woods (1992:104) concluded that "excellent schools and classrooms are clearly identified by the spirit of community that pervades all they do." His extensive consideration of Central Park East Secondary School (N.Y.) — a poorly resourced school with largely black and Hispanic students — led him to describe the "climate of family" that pervaded it. Community is defined by the nature of relationships, the kinds of relationships found in families and extended families — personal, authentic, caring, and unconditional in acceptence.

Neither Sergiovanni nor Wood proposes his concept of school as community as an unfocussed, ill-defined or excessively affective idea. They do not lose sight of the primary purpose of schools as learning communities. For Sergiovanni, schools must first become "purposeful communities"; they must have core values as the primary bonding that holds members of the school together. Using examples from schools that he sees as having achieved this, Sergiovanni (1994:74) suggests that a school can then realise its purposes by becoming a caring community, a learning community, a professional community, a collegial community, an inclusive community, and an inquiring community. The nature of leadership in such a context is inevitably a service-oriented one.

Although Sergiovanni suggests that "community" has succeeded "culture" as the buzz word in educational research, the terms can be seen as complementary and both remain useful. It is important that their metaphorical sense is not lost. There is a inherent attraction to use "community" as a metaphor for schooling because, at least in a Christian context, it captures something of the purpose and preferred means of educating as well as providing a framework for describing and understanding what is happening. While not denying the insights into good schooling that this term may provide, it seems unjustified to consign "culture" to the scrapyard of educational jargon, and so lose the
valid insights that this metaphor can still provide for integrating an understanding of schooling. The valid caution that Sergiovanni suggests regarding the incompatibility of the business and educational sectors can be accommodated while retaining culture as a root metaphor. "Culture" can still provide a metaphorical richness and depth that encompasses aspects of schooling that "community" can do less adequately. For example the place of symbol, ritual, saga, heroes, networks, story-tellers, clans, sub-cultural mores, and so on are part of the rich palette that culture provides to paint an understanding of school. It is a bigger term, more comprehensive and inclusive, and one that reflects the lived reality that schools are often large and institutional.

2.3.3 Cultural leadership
A frequently identified key factor in the development of strong and functional culture is leadership or, more specifically, cultural leadership. It calls for particular emphasis. The conclusion of Beare et al. (1989:199) is a common one:

A coordinated culture develops from a dynamic combination of strong, imaginative and transforming leadership within a forward looking school community, in which consistent values, philosophy and ideology permeate all decision-making.

In the school setting, it is the principal who is the key player in the shape and direction of culture-building (Purkey and Smith, 1982; Sergiovanni, 1984, 1987, 1990; Millikan, 1987:55; Duignan, 1987b:309; Wilson and Corcoran, 1988; McGaw et al., 1992:79-80; Newton and Tarrant, 1992; Slattery, 1995). Sergiovanni is among those who have researched the role and function of the principal extensively and his concept of excellence in leadership has evolved during the last decade. In terms of excellence, Sergiovanni (1990) sees the school principal as the key to value-added leadership, the key in moving a school from achievement of the ordinary to attainment of the extraordinary. Like others (e.g. Starratt, 1993b; Spiller, 1995; Grace, 1996; Duignan 1997), he is critical of a
management-oriented approach to principalship, and the systemised pre-conditions that would encourage such a style:

Few would argue that schools can work well without the presence of competent management, but too often school officials at both state and local levels provide little else. Consequently, too many schools, school districts and state systems of schooling are overmanaged and underled. This condition leads to an undue emphasis on doing things right rather than doing the right things (1990:16-17)

This parallels the conclusion of Peters and Austin (1985:265; see above 2.1.1) in their research of successful organisations:

For the last twenty-five years we have carried with us a model of manager as cop, referee, devil’s advocate, dispassionate analyst, professional, decision-maker, naysayer, pronouncer. The alternative we now propose is leader (not manager) as cheer-leader, enthusiast, nurturer of champions, hero-finder, wanderer, dramatist, coach, facilitator, builder . . . We’ve learned [in our research] of passion, care, intensity, consistency, attention, drama, of the implicit and explicit use of symbols — in short, leadership.

As part of his proposed nine dimension model for value-added leadership, Sergiovanni contrasts the “calculated leadership” of the competent manager with what he terms the desired “leadership by outrage” that should characterise the passion and risk brought to the role by an excellent leader.

The difference between competence and excellence in a school principal is explained by Sergiovanni (1984), Saphier and King (1985) and Owens (1987) by a consideration of principalship consisting of five forces. For competent school leadership a principal would need to ensure

- *technical leadership* (efficient general organisation),
- *human leadership* (prudent and sensitive human resource management)
- *educational leadership* (provision of effective educational programmes).

Excellence, however, required a further two dimensions:

- *symbolic leadership* – a principal who signals what is important, gives vision, communicates deep purposes, and leads beyond a nuts-and-bolts efficiency
• cultural leadership – a principal who spends time articulating the vision, the mission, uniqueness and purposes of the school socialises others into these, and develops a culture with systems, symbols and rituals to reinforce them. A leader who provides symbolic and cultural leadership, as well as the other dimensions, is more likely to have an organisational culture in the school which will enhance effectiveness.

Flynn (1993) found that of the six scales of measurement in his study of Australian Catholic schools the most significant factor related to students’ religious beliefs and values was their attitude towards their school principals. The best principals embody the values, vision and ideology of the school. Peters and Waterman (1982:26) found that “excellent companies seem to have developed cultures that have incorporated the values and practices of the great leaders.” This finding holds also for schools, but is just as true in the reverse: outstanding principals have a moral basis to their leadership which comes from their personal fidelity to the deepest purposes of their schools. This morality of school leadership is gaining increased acceptance (Starratt, 1993a; 1993b; Sergiovanni 1992, 1996). Duignan (1997:1-3) argues for the applicability of this style of leadership more broadly than school. Research attests not only to the importance of a school’s culture, but the principal’s personal role in developing that culture. At the heart of it are vision and values. Ramsay and Clark (1990) in their own ethnographic research as well as that of Lesko (1988), Lightfoot (1983), Rutter (1979), and Coleman and Hoffer (1987), put “educational vision” as the key ingredient in school improvement, a vision that depends on charismatic leaders fired by vision and values. Beare (1987:325) saw the chief role of the school principal as being responsible for developing the values of the school. This is consistent with the findings of Deal and Kennedy who found that values were the key defining factor in organisations, and it
was the organisation's "heroes" who symbolise these and demonstrate their attainability (1982:23; 39-40).

When it emanates from values and is concerned with promotion of values, school leadership is therefore an essentially moral art (Hodgkinson, 1991:40). From his research into a number of school settings across the United States, Sergiovanni (1992) is drawn to use quasi-religious language to describe the place of values in a good school and the role of the principal in relation to these:

Communities are defined by their centres — repositories of values, sentiments, and beliefs that provide the needed cement for bonding people together in a common cause (1992:47)

The basis of leadership, according to Sergiovanni, is a moral authority which seeks to build a "covenant of shared values", transforming a school from an organisation into a community (1992:15). The leader's "purposing" would, over time, increase the clarity, consensus and commitment with regard to basic values, and therefore involves both vision and covenant (1992:73). The morality of the principalship is founded on the values of the school (1996:91). Referring to his and Sergiovanni's "onion skin" model, Starratt (1993b:62) sees the primary responsibility of the school principal is to the core of the onion — the central mythology of the school. It is from this that a leader is called to build a covenant among the members of the school. This approach to leadership is consistent with the understanding of culture that was developed at the start of the chapter: one rooted in core values, rather than one understood or described by its observable phenomena. Starratt's (1993a) description of the change of leadership styles since the early 1980s from "functional leadership" to "substantive leadership" parallels Duignan's (1997) description of a move from "managerialism" to "authentic leadership". It reflects the parallel movement from the functional, instrumentalist emphases of the early school effectiveness literature to an approach to the role of culture in schools which is
essentially concerned with their deepest centres. It is a maturing of understanding, a move from effectiveness to goodness.

In the end, good school principalship, as a key component of culture building, seems to be about Burns’ (1978) concept of “transformational leadership”. Even more so than in the corporate world, where Peters and Waterman (1982:82) also found it to be the case, schools need the presence of leaders who can help people transcend their everyday work and assist them in contextualising it in the broader and deeper meanings at the heart of their organisation. It is arguably a more appropriate term than Deal and Kennedy’s (1982) “symbolic manager” with its implication of subtle manipulation; it is about authentic and moral leadership. Sergiovanni (1992) and Slattery (1995) capture the moral weight of it as “servant leadership”, a service to the values of the school and to those who share these values. Such a leadership is concerned with purposing and with empowerment of others, and characterised by an “outrage” that is not constrained by bureaucracy and management.

2.4 CONTEXT FOR RESEARCH

From the foregoing critical discussion a context for research into Marist schools emerges. Culture appears to be an appropriate and useful metaphor to describe and integrate an understanding of schools. Its extensive use in the literature of the excellence movement, the effective schools movement, and the literature on authentic leadership, provides a broad base of data from which to identify the key features of the life of a school and make some evaluation of its goodness.

2.4.1 A conceptual understanding of organisational culture

It seems important that organisational culture be considered as an active and changing phenomenon, and primarily understood from the perspective of people, rather than places, buildings, artefacts, rituals,
documents or actions. It is appropriate, therefore, that verbs and gerunds be used to define it, rather than nouns which may connote school culture to be an inert concept, or having a life independent from the people who are part of it.

A three layered understanding presents itself. At the core of a school’s culture are the predominant values and beliefs that people share, the reasons and purposes they have for coming together in that school, and the vision they have for their individual and collective futures, irrespective of the extent to which these are made explicit. This core is then expressed through people’s typical ways of acting, relating, responding, judging, honouring, rewarding, punishing, celebrating, caring, using their time, choosing their membership, and representing themselves, that is the more apparent aspects of the life of the school. The third facet recognises that the school is not an island: the school, each of its members, and various groupings among them, have independent and interconnecting lives outside the school. They are parts of other cultures and sub-cultures. Each of the three facets has a formative influence on the other two.

In a strong culture, the core values, beliefs and purposes would have higher degrees of homogeneity and agreement among members of the school community, so that people within the school make meaning and define their world in largely resonant, though not necessarily identical, ways. This is naturally made considerably more powerful for them if they can verbalise and explicate it, or if they can put it in an ideological framework such as that provided by Christianity or a particular expression of it such as is afforded by the Marist charism. A “virtuous school” (Sergiovanni, 1992) would have a core with an essentially moral basis, and include values that are community-oriented in nature. Although there would be little and slow change to these deeply held beliefs, values, and sense of purpose, they would be affected over time by
both the expressive components of the school’s culture, as well as their interaction with the outside world through people’s experience of this. More changeable, but retaining sufficient structure and sameness to be predictable and distinctive, are the ways in which people act, respond, judge, and so on. These also have more interaction with society’s broader culture and sub-cultures. There would also be varying examples of these cultural expressions among various groups within the school without there necessarily being any conflict with the deeper purposes. For example, different people within the school community may celebrate in different ways. Similarly, different generations may choose quite different ways to express the same values. For example, a school at one stage in its history may emphasise competitive teams sports, or have particular specific expectations about school uniforms, that may not be appropriate at another time because they make less sense in its interaction with the external world of the school. Culture, to be best understood, is accessed at its core. Tangible expressions of it should be regarded as temporal windows into this core.

Within the Catholic school, the cultural core would be expected to be more specific and clearly identifiable. The aim of all Catholic schools is to have the gospel of Jesus Christ at their heart, but this gospel requires a cultural context. A distinctive feature of the Christian faith is its understanding of incarnational God, a God described in St John’s Gospel as one who “pitches his tent in our midst” (John 1:14). It is a God whom Christians attempt to engage in their ordinary lives. They discover and respond to the gospel in human living, in culture and its ordinary manifestations. Indeed, as pointed out in Chapter One, the Gospel needs a cultural context, even a sub-cultural context, to take flesh and become real for Christians.

... faith which does not become culture is faith which is not fully received, not assimilated entirely, not lived faithfully (The Catholic School, #33)
Without a culture, faith remains an interesting and engaging idea, something dismissed in traditional Christian teaching as the heresy of gnosticism. The Catholic school will therefore aim to create a cultural context which is fertile for the growth of the Christian Gospel. The concept of culture as it relates to faith is a central one to understanding and evaluating a Catholic school, and will be the basis of discussion for the next chapter.

Sergiovanni’s understanding of school culture in terms of the five forces of leadership provides a useful way for a further level of exploring the culture of a school: the pivotal role of leadership in shaping and directing culture. The style and content of leadership, and the extent to which symbolic and cultural leadership is given, provide a way of understanding the functionality and worthiness of a school’s culture. Leadership that fosters the growth of community, that pays attention to symbolic forces, that encourages the means by which strong culture grows, and that is marked by service and commitment, is likely to produce school cultures that characterise good schools.

2.4.2 **Pointers to a strong and functional school culture**

It is people who will shape culture, and give it its strength and direction. It is their meaning-making, self-definition, and ways of relating to each other and their world which is the stuff of culture. As found by Sackman (1991) in the corporate world, and Coleman and Hoffer (1987) in the sphere of Catholic schools, when people in an organisation are alienated for whatever reason from the traditional core of the organisation’s culture, then the culture will become confused, will dilute, and ultimately the organisation will lose its vitality, its sense of purpose, and consequently its effectiveness. The literature suggests that the first pointer to a strong culture will be the presence of people — parents, students, teachers, and other stakeholders — who are sufficiently attracted by the same values and beliefs, have ways of
expressing these culturally, and among whom relationships can be authentically described most of the time by the term "community" or even "family". Second, the presence of transformational leaders with moral bases for their authority and a sense of the importance of cultural leadership are necessary to bring this to effect, a task that requires sufficient autonomy operation or at least sufficient delegation or decentralisation that will help create a situation where such leaders can be nurtured and feel empowered.

A critical assessment of the literature therefore suggests that the presence of a strong and functional culture in a school would be reflected in two key factors: the shared sense and explicit expression of purposeful community among the members of the school and those immediately associated with it, and the exercise of visionary, authentic and inspired leadership. An analysis of schools' cultures would need to evaluate the extent to which these two factors are present.
Chapter Three

MARIST EDUCATION: SOURCES OF ITS CHARISM AND CULTURE

Whether we consider the Institute at its origin or at the present day, we find the source of its apostolic finality in the charism of its founder (Our Marist Apostolate, Documents of the 16th General Chapter of the Marist Brothers, 1968:12)

The inspiration and action of Marcellin Champagnat in nineteenth century France have led to the growth of a contemporary international network of institutions which bear the name Marist. The charism of Champagnat has spored various cultural manifestations of a distinctive approach to education, including that of the Australian Marist secondary school. What Marist education has been over these years and how its practitioners have understood the work they do are the foci of this chapter. It is an attempt to explore the sources of Marist education and examine its latter-day understandings with a view to proposing a description of the main elements that might constitute the charismatic culture of an Australian Marist school. Such a consideration is premised on an recognition of charism as a key formative and animating factor in an institution's culture.

The formative influences on nascent Marist education in the nineteenth century are considered first, with particular emphasis given to a critical examination of the life and work of Marcellin Champagnat and the sources of his distinctive educational approach. A critical review of contemporary understandings of Marist education follows, through an examination of institutional and empirical attempts to describe the characteristics of the modern day Marist school. Finally, the shaping
factors on Marist education, as they emerge from the literature, are identified and a context for understanding the culture of the modern Australian Marist school is constructed.

3.1 FOUNDATIONAL INFLUENCES

3.1.1 Marcellin Champagnat

The Second Vatican Council of the Church called religious orders to re-discover and be re-vitalised by their founding charisms (Perfectae Caritas #2, in Abbott, 1966:468). For Marists, this call prompted extensive research into the life and times of Marcellin Champagnat, and a consequently deepened understanding of the underpinnings of Marist education. Any critical examination of the Marist education must begin with this man and the historical context in which he lived for, as Balko (1991b:20) observes, “Everything about the spirit and the mission of the Institute comes from Champagnat.”

Born in the year of the French Revolution, 1789, Champagnat’s boyhood France was a rural commune of the post-revolutionary years, spent amid the upheaval of social and religious order, the conflict of ideologies, the confusion of purpose, and finally the undelivered promises that the Revolution brought. Ordained priest in 1815, his adult life and ministry were spent in the political, economic and social turmoil which followed the Napoleonic ascendancy. He lived in one of the most volatile periods of French and world history, as the modern era suffered its birth pangs. The isolated valleys of south-eastern France were no insulation from these pervasive and defining developments (Lehning, 1995). Champagnat was “irrevocably marked by the Revolution” (Forissier, 1992:47), and developed a great sympathy for the new ideas (Balko, 1991b; Gibson 1995). Although it is unlikely he ever read Rousseau or Montesquieu, the notions of equality and advancement certainly reached him (Forissier, 1992:88), and he was able to accommodate them
comfortably with the religious faith and missionary zeal of an older France.

One of the most significant movements of the first half of the nineteenth century in France was the spread of universal education (McMahon, 1993:116; Lehning, 1980; 1995). Both the revolutionary and Napoleonic governments had aimed to establish compulsory elementary education throughout all regions of France. Farrell (1984) observes, however, that the number of children attending schools was fewer in 1816 than in 1789. Louis XVIII’s Proclamation of 1816, which re-affirmed the goal of universal schooling and re-authorised religious orders to conduct schools came at a time of intense national interest in the issue (Farrell, 1984:63). In the St Etienne district there were many schools before 1816, including three in St Chamond, one run by the Brothers of the Christian Schools.¹ In La Valla itself, the parish to which Champagnat was posted following his ordination and in which he was to spend the rest of his life, there was one school for boys which had been conducted at least since 1807, while the Sisters of St Joseph had been teaching girls in their small convent there since 1533 (Farrell, 1984: ix, 63). Even so, the level of illiteracy in the town was high, since attendance at the schools was relatively low and inconstant (McMahon, 1993:124). Across the country, the provision and quality of schooling were similarly variable and spasmodic. This situation was to be transformed over the next two decades through a plethora of foundations made by new and existing religious orders. The Brothers of the Christian Schools, for example, who numbered 300 in 1815, increased to 1,420 by 1830. Other institutes of Brothers counted for 950, most of whom were members of smaller groups established during the previous twenty years (Farrell, 1984:347).

¹ See Appendix A for a map of the region with which Marcellin Champagnat was associated
Marcellin Champagnat was in the vanguard of this movement. From his seminary days he developed a vision and plan to establish a new group of teaching Brothers who would establish schools in the more remote areas, places which would otherwise find it difficult to attract or to remunerate good teachers.

Marcellin Champagnat belongs to that group of zealous men who knew how to read the signs of the times and who set out to implant the leaven of the gospel into the powerful, historical movements of education. (Balko, 1991a:28)

His own way of receiving, living and promoting this gospel — his charism — can only be understood through a closer examination of the formative influences on the man himself.

The definitive biography of Marcellin Champagnat was prepared by a contemporary who knew him well, Jean-Baptiste Furet (1856). While it remains the chief source of information on Champagnat, modern writers have been critical of the nineteenth century hagiography which limited Furet to writing principally to extol the virtues of his subject and to reveal how a follower of Champagnat, a Marist Brother, should live his life (e.g. Farrell, 1984; Balko, 1991a, 1993; McMahon F, 1989; McMahon J, 1993). Furet's account contains considerable omissions and even errors of fact, as he attempted to filter out some of what may have seemed to a nineteenth century French religious writer to be the more human and less saintly aspects of Champagnat's life and character. Modern research into Champagnat's letters and writings, and examination of accounts by others who knew him have led to a more comprehensive and balanced assessment of the man. While it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to provide a detailed biography or character portrait of Marcellin Champagnat, some key points should be made with regard to each.

Champagnat himself did not enjoy the benefits of structured schooling as a boy. Although he came from "an outstanding rural family" with a tradition of education (Balko, 1991a:30), and lived in one of the most literate communes of rural France (Lehning, 1980:169), Champagnat only
spent one day in the local school. After witnessing an incident of brutality by the teacher on a fellow student, he vowed never to return, and he did not. His early formation was undertaken less formally, principally through his father who was a prominent local citizen and officer of the Revolution — a natural leader, popular and respected with a strong practical wisdom — and his mother, a woman of deep faith and warmth of heart, together with his aunt, a Sister of St Joseph who was forced to leave her convent following the Revolution and lived with the Champagnat family in the hamlet of Le Rosey in the Commune of Marlhes.

He later had considerable difficulty with his academic learning. Having decided to enter the seminary, he was put under the tutelage of a cousin who came to doubt Marcellin's capacity for the study necessary for priesthood, and recommended he return to the simple farming pursuits of his family. Nor did he find his eleven years of seminary training to be easy, especially the early years of the minor seminary at Verrières, a modest institution not particularly well administered or staffed. More disposed to some of the typical distractions of youth than to mastery of his religious and secular subjects, it was some time before Marcellin's deep motivation to be a priest was translated through his determination, faith and generosity, into a mature and focussed approach to his studies and his life's ambitions, something which occurred during his last three years of training at the major seminary of St. Irénée at Lyons. It was here that he came under the influence of some enlightened professors and, more importantly, a group of enthusiastic fellow seminarians who were developing a plan to establish a new religious order, one dedicated to Mary, the mother of Jesus, with a view to renewing the Church in France. Champagnat saw in this society, of which he was to become a co-founder, a way of developing his plan to establish a group of teaching Brothers. The day after their ordinations, twelve young priests formally pledged to form the "Society of Mary", with a grand plan for the new
religious society to follow the structural lines of the great religious orders of the Church — including an order of priests, an order of nuns, and a third order of lay associates. Champagnat's vision for teaching Brothers did not fit neatly into this proposed scheme, but on his insistence it was vaguely included and left to him to bring to effect. As events transpired over the following decades, the "Little Brothers of Mary", or Marist Brothers, were eventually to become an autonomous institute and by far the largest of the orders of "Marists".

Forissier (1992), in his research of the founders of what were to become the several independent branches of the Marists, identified a number of characteristics that were shared by the four main founders, including Champagnat. They held in common a desire to educate, and to do so in a way that was maternal, patient and optimistic, founded on a love for people and a belief in the innate goodness of all people. They also shared a style of ministry that was marked by family spirit, simplicity, discretion, a spirit of work with an associated humour, and a pervasive "God consciousness" which was essential to their "spirituality of action."

On appointment as curate to La Valla, Champagnat quickly set about rebuilding a parish, the spiritual needs of which had been poorly served for some years. He was quick to win over the people through his "bright personality", his "frank, open, simple manner", always good, upright, with a consoling or encouraging word, and "familiar with everyone" (Zind, 1991:191). The event traditionally associated with galvanising his resolve to establish the Brothers was his experience at the bedside of a dying boy, Jean-Baptiste Montagne, in October 1816. Dismayed by the seventeen year-old's apparent ignorance of God and religion, Champagnat set about immediately to recruit two local young men to join him as the first Brothers. Within two years, he had a small band around him in community, and had purchased a house which served as home and school, both run from the start along family lines with
simplicity, hard work and compassion as defining elements (Gibson, 1971:48; McMahon, 1993:127). Orphans and abandoned children were among those afforded special care. By 1821, with fewer than ten Brothers, there were five schools established in hamlets and towns of the region. The Brothers were mainly in their teenage years, Champagnat himself just in his thirties. The speed with which he realised his plans reflects a disposition to practical concern and prompt response that was to become part of the culture of his followers. Gibson (1971:28) notes the sense of urgency that seemed to define his whole life.

In 1824, with himself and the Brothers undertaking much of the work themselves, Champagnat commenced a five-storey stone building on land he and another priest purchased between La Valla and the township of St Chamond. The building was called Notre Dame de l’Hermitage, and remains to this day the Mother House of the Institute of the Marist Brothers. Although plans for a trade-school within the building never came to fruition, “The Hermitage” was home and training centre not only for Brothers, but for other people in need, including relatives and friends of Champagnat and the Brothers. A hospitable spirit of family and a boundless compassion seem to have been foundation stones of the building.

The years that followed carried with them both crises and expansion: desertion, disapproval and rivalry from clerical colleagues; sickness; fatigue; financial difficulties; a sustained but vain bid for government recognition of his fledgling order; and with the 1830 Revolution another round of the anti-church passions that dot French history. Through it Marcellin Champagnat remained resolute, confident, fundamentally optimistic without being arrogant (Balko, 1994:22) — something he would have understood as a Marial attribute (Marist Brothers, 1968:14). The number of recruits grew steadily, and with them the number of establishments. A Rule evolved, a religious costume was adopted, and
vows formalised. By the time of his death in 1841, there were 278 Brothers in 48 schools (Farrell, 1984:2), a number that was soon to rise exponentially, with over 5000 by 1900, and eventually peak in the 1960s at 10,000 situated in 70 countries, placing the Marist Brothers among the largest ten male religious orders in the Church (McMahon, 1993). Furet attributes the early success in the Marist enterprise directly to Champagnat, “his bright, open, friendly and considerate character . . . an unassuming affability, a straight-forwardness and impression of kindliness”, an “equanimity” which was never ruffled through whatever disappointments, trials, sickness or hardships came his way (1856:266). He places particular emphasis on Champagnat’s promotion of a spirit of joy, which he complemented by his spirit of faith and prayer, his simplicity, his love of work, his love for the Brothers and students, his zeal, and his deep compassion. In considering the flourishing of the Marist Brothers into the twentieth century, Coleridge (1992:3-7) also identifies Champagnat as the main reason for the remarkable expansion of the Institute, a person he describes as a man of passion, daring, imagination and persistence, “tough as an old boot” but with an “extraordinary tenderness”, stubborn but flexible, and finally characterised by “simplicity”.

In many ways it was an unlikely success story: a French country priest who had difficulty with learning but founded an organisation of teachers which subsequently assumed the conduct of schools, universities and numerous educational projects in all parts of the world (McMahon, 1993:133), a man who was dismissed by Parisian educational authorities as something of a country bumpkin. Farrell (1984:237) quotes Jean-Claude Colin (a colleague of Champagnat and subsequently recognised as principal founder of the Society of Mary) in a telling comment about Champagnat’s lack of success in his fifteen year struggle to gain government authorisation:

A priest who was interested in our work told me that what had harmed Champagnat in Paris was his plainness, and after having observed him one would
say, 'He is indeed a courageous man, but everything about him is of the country and he lacks the elegant formalities that are customary in Paris.'

The word Farrell translates as "plainness" is the French word simplicité. While Farrell's choice captures something of country ignorance of city etiquette and manners, it perhaps connotes a pejorative sense of this key quality of Champagnat's character. With simplicity comes an absence of pretence or duplicity, a purity of purpose and action, and invariably an openness and sincerity of disposition. It need not imply naivety or lack of wisdom, and it certainly did not for Champagnat. It is a beautiful human attribute, one prized as a gospel value (cf Matthew 5:1-7). Balko (1994:35) gives "simplicity" first place, together with "family spirit" and "devotion to our Good Mother" as the three definitive characteristics of the Marist charisma, and the basis from which a love based on brotherhood can emanate.

A poignant picture of Champagnat emerges from the memories of those who knew him. This sample of recollections gathered some years after his death help to given vitality and flesh to the man Champagnat, despite the inevitable sanitising and romanticising that the intervening years may have brought with them:

In 1852, in Izieux, I saw an old man begin to cry when someone asked him if he had known Father Champagnat. "Did I know Father Champagnat! I certainly did! He was a saint! I never met his equal. He was so good to me! How many times he visited me in my shack to console me and help me in my misery! I will never forget such a good priest. His picture is next to my bed, and when I look at it, I cannot hold back my tears when I remember how good he was to me." (Frère Tite)

A few months after entering the novitiate, I saw Father Champagnat working energetically at the rock-face with a pick. I was so dumb-founded, I stopped dead in my tracks. An older Brother came over to me and said, "You're shocked to see Father doing that? You'll soon get used to it." (Frère Dacien)

All I can tell you about Father Champagnat is that, having had frequent dealings with him, I considered him a peerless man, very strict with himself and strict with others also, but always for their own good. Gentle, affable, always on good terms with everyone. He was the father of the town of La Valla. He did incomparable good through the whole area. Everyone loved and venerated him. (Jean-François Badard)

Mme Moulin from St. Chamond told us that one stormy winter's day, a man came to call Father Champagnat for a sick call a long way from town; he left at once with
his guide. But when they passed Luzemod, the weather became so bad that the
guide could not go on. Father, seeing that he was exhausted, hoisted him on his
own shoulders and carried him for about two kilometres until they reached a house
where the man could regain his strength. (Frère Amphien)

I went to Father Champagnat's catechism lessons, and though I was very young, I
loved to listen to him, and especially to see the church full of grown-ups who
followed his explanations so carefully. He spoke simply, so that the most
uneducated could understand, but he said such beautiful and moving things that he
delighted everyone. People used to say, "Let's go to the catechism lesson; Father
Champagnat is giving it." And the church would be full. (Françoise Baché)

Asking for advice never embarrassed him. More than once he came to me, a young
Brother of twenty, which both surprised and edified me. (Frère Marie-Jubin)

My giddiness earned me repeated and sometimes rather severe reprimands from
him, but knowing the goodness of his heart, I could always accept them with
complete submission. His large, piercing eyes frightened me, but I never read anger
in them. (Frère Dacien)

Father Champagnat was very serious about whatever concerned prayer and duty,
but in recreation and on outings, he was pleasant, and full of humour. I used to play
sport with him.

During Mass, he was no longer on earth; he was totally absorbed in God. It was as
though he saw Our Lord with his own eyes, he was so full of respect, confidence and
love. On Sundays and feast days he always sang High Mass; when he sang the
Preface, it was something delightful and sublime; anyone who heard him never
forgot it. (Frère Aidant)

At the Mother House we still have his old cloak, as coarse as a wagon-driver's, his
hat which is beyond comparison, and his heavy hobnailed boots, like those of the
shepherds in the mountains. (Frère Béritzus)

At five a.m. one Thursday in March, 1837, there was a prolonged ring of the
doorbell, while we were still in bed. (In those days we rose at four a.m.) Brother
Director, half-dressed, hurried to see who was ringing at such an early hour. You
can imagine his surprise to see Father Champagnat! He broke into all sorts of
excuses for the delayed rising, explaining that we all had colds. Father
understood the situation immediately; he knew how regular our Director was. But
much to Brother's dismay, he moved rapidly through the house with his long
strides, visited the kitchen and adjoining rooms, then came upstairs to the
dormitory, where by this time we were nearly dressed. We hurried to greet him
and offer our apologies. After embracing us and asking about our health, he joked a
bit about the surprise he had given us. (Frère Euthyme) Defour (1910) ²
What is strongly evident in these recollections is a man who was a natural leader, an excellent teacher, and a respected priest. He is remembered for his sensitivity, his warmth, his simplicity, his compassion, his holiness, his tenacity, and a rural toughness of mind that was tempered by a gentle heart and ready sense of humour.

Farrell’s (1984) research into Champagnat relies less on secondary sources, and more on Champagnat’s letters, sermon notes and other writings, augmented by two graphological studies on selected specimens of his handwriting. The conclusions he makes, however, only complement and amplify the portrait evident in the above testimonies. Champagnat’s letters (Sester, 1993) reveal a person with a warm and unaffected love for his Brothers, for his family and for anyone in need, a disposition of heart exemplified by an obvious concern for their physical, emotional and spiritual welfare. They reflect someone of sincerity, compassion, determination, firm when he needed to be and gentle when it was called for, and with an absolute trust in the providence of God and the maternal protection of Mary whom he preferred to refer to as notre bonne mère, a simple but popular form of address used by French peasants. “An air of kindliness and warmth is characteristic of his letters” and most of his letters to the Brothers always contained a touch of humour (Farrell, 1984:188-95). Farrell sees Champagnat’s sermons having a down-to-earth style, with a “theological realism”, an “undoubted facility for dialogue with his audience”, and lacking the legal and moral rigorism typical of the clergy of the Restoration period. He was able, rather, to mix a clear personal piety with an evident, deep compassion (1984:201-02). The graphological studies reconstruct an author with a practical mind, a person of action, determined and persevering, anchored in reality and pragmatism, a leader with a strong

(Joseph-Siméon Gros) born 1840; novitiate 1854, Assistant General, died San Andrés de Palomar (Spain) 1909; Fr Euthyme (Claude Collard) born 1821, novitiate 1835, Secretary
will, someone who was able “to go straight to the essentials”, with the ability “to make clear decisions and form strong convictions” (1984:204).

McMahon (1993:120-22) and Forissièr (1992:48-49) support Farrell’s assessment of Champagnat. They identify the shaping influences: the deep faith, Christian sensitivity, mental toughness and simplicity of his mother and aunt; the leadership example, pragmatism, sensitivity to the needy, uncomplicated sense of authority, fearlessness, and Revolutionary idealism of his father; his own struggle to learn and his haunting memory of his one day of school; his horror at seeing a priest ridicule young children and call them names; and his eleven years in seminary training, particularly the Sulpician emphasis on the Eucharist, and the permeating Marial devotion that characterised the spirituality of the Lyons region of France from earliest Christian times (see also Clisby, 1995:19-20). Whatever the factors that shaped the mind and heart of Champagnat, no separation can be made between the man from what he wanted to do and how he went about it. As Huidobro (1993:529) points out, the starting point is his experience of the love of his God:

Champagnat was a man of faith, and in his eyes, the ideal image of the child or young Christian was someone who believed in God, and adapted his life to the values taught in the Gospel.

His conviction was that school was the best place for this religious formation to happen (Marist Brothers, 1968:14), that it needed to be within the context of a broadly-based human formation (Farneda, 1994:60), and that it happened most effectively through teachers who taught love by showing it in the example of their lives and the nature of the educative relationships they established with their students, teachers who were able to incarnate the love of God (Huidobro, 1993:530).

Champagnat’s disposition of being “given passionately to community” (Coleridge, 1993:7) is an important example of how the charism of the

---

General & Assistant General, died St Genis-Laval 1893 (Biographical details from personal notes of Br Leonard Voegtle).
man began to form the culture of the communities and schools he established. In this case it translated into the characteristic "family spirit" which has remained a distinctive and pivotal feature of Marist schools, something that is taken for granted as essential (Howard, 1992:493). In a consideration of the formation which Champagnat gave the first Brothers, Balko (1992:46) returns to his three-factor synopsis of the Champagnat charism already mentioned – the linking of simplicity, family spirit and Marial devotion. He concludes:

The family aspect is perhaps most characteristic of the form of religious life that Father Champagnat started. His active and affectionate character made it come naturally to him . . . The combination of this love [for the Brothers] with the simplicity that characterises the Marist Brothers, creates conditions for family life: mutual openness and kindness. We must add to that the maternal role of the Blessed Virgin for whom the Brothers profess a deeply felt filial devotion.

The distinguishing culture of the Marist school was, from the start, a function of the particular culture of the Marist Brothers community which exclusively staffed it, a community which in turn drew its inspiration and character directly from Champagnat. One encapsulation, from Brother Quentin Duffy at the naming of Place du Marcellin Champagnat in Paris (in Farrell, 1984:238), provides a succinct insight into the essence of this man:

Physically he was a man of the mountains, solid and tenacious, with that quiet strength which is never precipitate but which perseveres. His peasant origin had left him with a sense of the real, a soundness of judgement, an ability to be close to people and to things . . . His heart went out in a special way to the young, whom he understood and could attract, thanks to his innate pedagogical sense.

3.1.2 Sources and characteristics of early Marist education
In engaging a former Brother of the Christian Schools in 1817 to teach in the parish school of La Valla and to provide some training for the first Brothers, Champagnat allied himself to the Méthode des Frères, the pedagogical approach of the Brothers of Jean-Baptiste de la Salle who were by then well established in France and conducted elementary schools with which Champagnat would have had some familiarity. Champagnat himself made no attempt to propose a comprehensive
philosophy of education, despite his vital interest in the conduct of the schools he established (Bergeret, 1992:65). He was content to adopt and adapt slightly the *Conduite des Écoles Chrétiennes*, the compendium used, in various editions, by the Brothers of the Christians Schools since 1720. Balko (1993), in examining a draft of an early (1824) Prospectus of the Institute concludes that it was not education or schooling *per se* that was Champagnat's driving force, but rather *compassion* for the unfortunate, the young, and the abandoned, whom he saw in danger of sin. That the Marist Brothers became involved in schools almost to the exclusion of other activities was the result of the strong demand from dioceses and communes, the preferences of the influential Brothers around Champagnat, and the "great novelty of the time" of establishing universal elementary education (1993:499). It is not surprising, therefore, that Champagnat did not self consciously establish a new approach to education. It was for him an efficacious means to an end.

Some of the essence of Champagnat's motivation, especially his primary orientations of compassion and concern for spiritual welfare, can be gleaned from his own words:

> To bring up children properly, we must love them; we must love them equally. To love children is to devote oneself completely to teaching them and to take all the means that an industrious zeal can think of in order to form them in virtue and piety. We must never forget that children are weak, and in consequence, they must be treated with kindness, charity and indulgence, and must be instructed and trained with the greatest of patience. To love children is to put up with them without complaint, to tolerate their defects, the lack of docility, even their ingratitude. In caring for them we must be motivated by supernatural motivations. (Furet, 1856: 358)

Braniff (1995) agrees that Champagnat did not set about developing an original or full educational philosophy.

> When we add [Champagnat's adoption and minor modification of the *Conduite*] to his exhortation that the Brothers should love their pupils, discipline them gently, supervise them carefully and teach them that God loved them too, we have a successful recipe for founding a network of small elementary schools in rural, Restoration France. We do not, I would argue, have a Champagnat Philosophy of Education. (1995:4)
Whereas Braniff makes distinctions among "charism", "pedagogy" and "educational philosophy", he does not consider the concept of "culture". Given the swift diversification of Marist educational institutions from the 1860s onwards, it would indeed be difficult to sustain an argument supporting the view that there was a single and comprehensive Marist educational approach. Spread over a range of countries, cultures and education systems, at primary, secondary, tertiary levels, in both institutional and non-school settings, Marist education did not take long to become a multi-faceted endeavour. Indeed, it may be argued that the facility with which it could adapt to local circumstances and pragmatically adopt the most effective means of achieving its aims, was of itself a feature of Marist education from the start, something practised by Champagnat himself. Culture, however, is another matter.

One example of an emerging culture was Champagnat's adoption of the méthode simultanée — a central feature of the pedagogical approach of the Conduite (Desimone, 1990) — rather than the méthode mutuelle. The simultaneous method involved the way of conducting a class with which modern western schools are most familiar: a teacher with a group of students where the size of the class was manageable enough for the teacher to instruct the students directly. In the mutual method, on the other hand, the teacher spent the first two hours each morning instructing a select group of moniteurs, the brighter or older students. These monitors were then charged with instructing the other students who were assembled into the one large hall but divided into sections and subsections according to ability and level of progress. The teacher would spend his time wandering the room in a surveillance role, ensuring the students were attentive and well-behaved. The relative merits of the two systems provided the subject of one of the great educational debates of the time (Zind, 1991:360).
The mutual method, strongly promoted by government authorities in Paris from 1815, had been present in French pedagogical practice since Jacques de Bathencourt’s *L’École Paroissale* in the late seventeenth century, a book which was a major source of the *Conduite* although de la Salle rejected its monitorial techniques (Desimone, 1990). The mutual method was a more economical and efficient arrangement: more students could be taught by a single teacher. It was also favoured, naturally enough, by many of the smaller towns and villages which were interested in establishing a school but were limited in their financial resources, the very places for which Marcellin founded his “Little Brothers of Mary”. But, like de la Salle, Champagnat did not support the principles of the *méthode mutuelle*. In his intuitive approach to education, much pivoted on the relationship between the teacher and the student, and the nature and the quality of that relationship. It was “a pedagogy of being close to the children” (Bergeret, 1992:68-69). He saw this not only as the medium of education but also the essential content of it. The teacher had to know each student, spend time with him, take a personal interest in him, care for him. Any structure or arrangement that obstructed this relationship developing was to be avoided. Although he did allow some modification of the simultaneous method by encouraging the Brothers to have the brighter students help the weaker ones (Furet, 1856:524; Zind, 1991), this seems to have been in the interests of better care of them, not enhanced efficiency or economy. It provides a marked contrast to what Farrell (1984:197) describes as the more typical schoolmaster of the Restoration period, “a fearsome figure [with a] style of instruction [that] must have been bombastic: he put great store on noise.”

The simultaneous method, or Champagnat’s modification of it, is significant not so much for its being an element of a particular Marist pedagogy in a given time and place but for what it exemplified about an emerging culture of Marist schooling. There was, by the 1850s, a growing
self-awareness that the schools conducted by the Marist Brothers — all elementary schools and usually located in smaller towns and villages — had developed a distinctive style and there was a call for some formalisation of what had evolved (Ryan, 1989; Farneda, 1994). The Conduite, which had three editions during Champagnat's lifetime (1811, 1828 and 1838), had been the official manual of the Brothers during the first decades. Zind (1991) in his examination of the foundations of early Marist pedagogy, quotes extensively from the Conduite which he saw as the main source of practice for Champagnat and the early Brothers (1991:363). Certainly the importance the Conduite placed on knowledge of individual students, and the promotion of a "big brother, little brother" relationship between teacher and student (Salm, 1988) are Lasallian ideas which Champagnat instinctively adopted and developed. Balko (1991a), however, points to some significant areas of difference between theory and practice. The Conduite, for example, in listing the twelve virtues of good teachers gives "seriousness" pride of place. Balko observes, in contrast, that from the earliest accounts of Champagnat's schools a markedly different pedagogical ambience seemed to have prevailed — a happy atmosphere, a friendly teaching milieu, with "easy and open relationships" within a "welcoming family spirit." "From the very beginning, there was the special cachet in the relationships between teachers and pupils which distinguishes and characterises Marist education" (1991a:36). This was not a chance development, contends Balko, but directly related to the personal style of Champagnat, one which attracted Brothers of similar disposition. One of these men, Brother Avit, had this to say about his contemporaries:

The new teachers trained by the good Father were not learned — but their piety and good example charmed people and attracted numerous pupils. They taught them catechism, love of God and their parents, as well as reading and writing. (in Balko, 1991a:37)

It was, concludes Balko, an educational approach which focussed on simplicity in a family atmosphere. Such is exemplified in one of the oldest extant letters of Champagnat
Things are progressing very nicely at Tarentaise. The pupils agree that Brother Laurent is a "nice guy" but that his successor is "nicer still" (Letter to Br Jean-Marie 1.12.1823, in Sester, 1993:26)

The criterion by which Champagnat judges the success of the new school is the quality of the relationship between the Brother and his students. There would have been other benchmarks that he might have used to evaluate the progress of an educational endeavour. That he chooses such an affective one reveals a great deal about his intuitive sense of the underpinnings of an effective school and the culture that was developing in Marist schools. Balko contends that this element of genuine and open relationships, a deliberate effort to establish a "family-style" milieu within a prevailing religious atmosphere, has been an essential component of Marist education from its inception.

This lively and very human affection excludes "stand-offishness" and the traditional "solemnity" affected by teachers of the day. An artificial pose smothers the joie de vivre and impedes the relationships for which pupils crave (Balko, 1991a:39)

In considering the growing documentation of the Institute it is instructive, therefore, to place less weight on the specifics of the content but to search rather for the cultural assumptions and charismatic imperatives which underpin and inform it. Champagnat gave the Brothers their first full Rule in 1837, the product of twenty years' experience of the Institute to that point. While it reveals some key themes of Champagnat — a primary aim of educating the whole person in his religious, moral and civil dimensions, a special attention to the marginalised, a pedagogy based on presence and good example, a sense of community, and a special quality of boldness and creativity (Bergeret, 1994:67-73) — it did not provide a great amount of detail on the practicalities or emphases of pedagogy or curriculum. This was to happen in 1853 with the formal acceptance by the General Chapter of the Institute of the Guide des Écoles.
Drafted initially by Furet in 1845, just four years after Champagnat's death and modified by some senior Brothers during 1852-53, the Guide has been described by Farneda in his critical historical study of the sources of the document as a "theoretico-practical manual" which guided the teacher training and the educational activity of the Marist Brothers from 1853 until the middle of the twentieth century (1994:49). He sees it not as a pedagogical treatise, but rather something that responded to a need of the Institute at the time to have a practical manual which attempted to establish some methodological unity based on thirty-five years experience of Marist schools (1994:60). Its main source is the Conduite. Like the older manual, it carries very detailed instructions on classroom management, curricular content and general administration, for example the use of silence, organisation of the lesson, rewards and punishments, use of "the signal", and approaches to different subjects (reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic, history and geography) (Zind, 1991:363-405). Through his research of archival material of the Marist Brothers and the Society of Mary, previously unpublished early Marist writings and contemporary educational writings, public and ecclesiastical archives, and earlier drafts of the Guide, Farneda identified further sources of the Guide, including the Ratio Studiorum of the Jesuits, L'École Paroissale by Jaques de Bathencourt and other published pedagogical treatises which were current at that time of the emergence of the French elementary school.

The place of the Guide as a shaping influence on Marist education must be evaluated critically. Although writers such as Ryan (1989), Zind (1991), Bergeret (1993) and to some extent Farneda (1994) have attributed to it a significant role, cautionary notes are sounded by Balko (1991a) and Braniff (1995) in recognising that the Guide is not a compendium of the educational ideas of Marcellin Champagnat. One detects, rather, the strong influence of Furet, a man given more to theory and correctness than Champagnat, a characteristic of Furet already mentioned as amply
evident in his biography of Champagnat. The two chapters in that biography which deal with the educational thought of Champagnat are a mix of the practical wisdom and now-dated classroom practices that later appeared in the Guide. Although in both works Furet includes many of the emphases of Champagnat, they lack some of the down-to-earth simplicity, human warmth, and unaffected vitality that Champagnat might have written into it. The Guide was given much attention by successive General Chapters, and revised in 1907 and 1920, but it was not published in English until 1931 as “The Teacher’s Guide” (McMahon, 1993). Even though the leader of the first Brothers to Australia, Brother Ludovic, claims that it was the subject of the Brothers’ annual retreats in the first years in Australia and no doubt an important element in his training of the first Australian Brothers (Laboureyras, [undated]:52), it should be pointed out that almost all of those first Brothers, both his companions from Europe and the first Australian recruits, were English speakers. The direct influence of the Guide in shaping the culture and pedagogy of Australian Marist schools must have been inevitably limited. Marist education was more of a living phenomenon than a comprehensively written or well articulated one. Its style and form were primarily the function of what was transmitted through practice and interpreted by individual Marists.

The Guide should be considered in conjunction with the other writings that come from the first decades of Marist education and with the influence of the key people of those years, principally Champagnat himself. When examined in the light of later research what emerges is that by the middle of the century there was indeed a characteristic Marist educational style or culture taking clear and obvious shape. Although at the time it was reflected in one kind of institution and the pedagogical approaches appropriate to it — the nineteenth century French elementary school — there was something more deeply founded than just pedagogy, curriculum, or other school practices.
Much of its shape and emphases came from its aims and purposes. "To form good Christians and virtuous citizens" was one way that Champagnat encapsulated his intentions (Furet, 1856: 532; Bergeret, 1992: 65). The first Prospectus of 1824, the Rule of 1837, the Guide of 1853, and much of Champagnat's own writings and statements give first place to catechesis — education in the faith and spiritual formation — but in the context of education of "the whole child", a term used in the Guide. Furet (1856:535-56) reports Champagnat's injunction to the Brothers that they were not secular teachers nor catechists exclusively, but both at the same time. And in order to be effective in this dual role, he quotes Champagnat's instruction:

If we are to do these things, we must be teachers; we must live in the midst of the children; and we must have them with us for a long time

Hence the previously discussed key element of Marist education presents itself once again: the educative relationship, the closeness to children that incarnated a Gospel of love in the concrete situation of the school. For Champagnat, the characteristic spirit of a Marist school should be a "family spirit" (Furet, 1856:530), and for him a good family was where sentiments of respect, love and mutual trust predominate, not fear of punishments. Anger, brutality and harshness are attitudes inspired by the devil in order to destroy the fruits and principles imparted to the child (1856:530)

Balko's survey of the various documents of the period, including the Constitutions of 1854, reveal that the major elements of the spirit with which Champagnat tried to infuse his Brothers and which were central to the received character of the Institute were "humility, simplicity, good will, family spirit, cordiality, fatherly attitude of superiors, love of work and devotedness, filial devotion to our Good Mother" (1992:40). It was also a fundamentally optimistic approach to youth, one which promoted a profound respect for young people and a belief in that which they could become, something born of an attitude of Marial confidence (Balko, 1991a:42; Gibson, 1995:4-8). In practical terms, this approach translated
into such things as always incorporating a playground into schools so there was a place for the Brothers and children to recreate; including singing as part of the curriculum; an abhorrence of corporal punishment (in contrast to the Conduite), name-calling and other practices common at the time which detracted from the dignity of the child; careful supervision; and a thorough training of the Brothers in the craft of teaching (Furet, 1856).

In considering both the aims of Champagnat's educational ideas and the spirit of his approach as it emerges from the documentary evidence, Bergeret (1993) summarises what he sees as the three underlying characteristics on which the tradition of Marist teaching established by Champagnat depend. First, he concludes there is a pedagogy which depends on closeness to the students — a relationship of teacher and students based on love, with presence and good example as its constituent features. Second, he identifies the importance of teamwork in the educational endeavour. In Champagnat's time this was the inherent connectedness between the Brothers' community and the work of the school. Indeed, the 1837 Rule makes little distinction between the life of the community and that of the school. Bergeret cites strong evidence of the level of collaboration and consultation that Champagnat used, and the degree to which he emphasised the family qualities that should exist in community. Zind (1991:73) sees this most powerfully stated in the Spiritual Testament of Marcellin Champagnat:

May you always have but one heart and one mind. May it be said of the Little Brothers of Mary as it was said of the first Christians: see how they love one another. This is the most ardent wish of my heart at this, the last moment of my life (in Furet, 1856:236)

It is a sentiment often echoed in his extensive correspondence to his Brothers, the theme of which was often encouragement:

You are all well aware... that I love you very dearly. I wish, I ardently desire, that we love one another as children of the same Father who is God, and the same Mother, who is holy Church. And firstly, to say it all in one word, Mary is our common Mother; could she look unconcernedly while we harboured something in our heart against one of those whom Mary loves (Letter #168, in Sester, 1993)
This touches on something which Balko (1991a:41) sees as the single most important insight of Champagnat, an efficacious link between simplicity and brotherhood:

The prerogative of simplicity is to be receptive and to relate fraternally with the aspirations of those with whom it comes into contact. This is an essential facet of education, for it allows easy communication with the pupils... It may be that this freshness of compassionate simplicity is the trump card of the Marist educational approach.

It is perhaps a fundamental disposition towards brotherhood, both in lifestyle and pedagogy, that distinguished Marist education from other approaches of the time. One important source of this simplicity and empathy might be considered to be Champagnat's personal origins and those of these first Brothers. Quite unusually for a founder of a teaching order, Champagnat's family circumstances were modest, even difficult. Apart from his obvious personal qualities, his origins and resources were relatively deprived. In contrast, for example, to Jean-Baptiste de la Salle who founded the Brothers of the Christian Schools, or Ignatius of Loyola and the first Jesuits, or in Ireland to Edmund Rice and the Christian Brothers, or Catherine McAuley and the Sisters of Mercy, the first Marist Brothers and their founder were of peasant stock. It was more common among the larger religious institutes and congregations that the original members were people of fortunate circumstance — socially, financially, intellectually, or professionally, or all of these. For both Rice and McAuley, for example, the founding charisms were directed to bringing men and women of social or professional means to boys and girls of poorer circumstance in an effort to "cause a radical shift in the hegemony of those with knowledge, opportunity and power to those dispossessed of land, freedom and their Faith" (Cronin and Hardiman, 1995:17). The nature of the relationship between teacher and student in Rice's schools was modelled on that of the master-to-apprentice, but with an assurance that it be friendly in tone (Cronin and Hardiman).
There is an identifiable difference here from the brotherhood approach of the Marists, something that arguably evolved later into qualitatively different school cultures. The socio-political agenda of Ireland gave birth to subtly different educational approaches between the two institutes, despite their coming to share similar circumstances in Australia from the end of the nineteenth century. Even an order such as the Salesians, which has a stated charism much closer to that of the Marists, based on the spirituality of Francis de Sales and a pedagogy of personal loving encounter (Ayecs, 1991) is nonetheless different from the Marists, largely reflecting the different personal origins and purposes of the two founders, John Bosco and Marcellin Champagnat. While it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to enter into a comparative study of the charisms and cultures of the various major orders which were founded in Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it can be reasonably concluded that the subsequent development of all of them reflected the historical and personal context of their foundations. Marist education cannot be understood without the simple personal circumstances of Marcellin Champagnat and the young men whom he attracted.

The third of Bergeret's characteristics is what he terms créativité et projet, something that does not translate neatly into English but seems to have a sense of daring, creative audacity, and confident enterprise. He cites the building of The Hermitage, a mammoth construction undertaken with few resources and considerable detraction, as one example which was accompanied by "a thousand others." This spirit of optimism and hope, of youthful daring in the face of difficulties, which was to become a defining feature of Marist endeavour, was a quality of Marcellin Champagnat.
In each of the three factors which Bergeret proposes in his description of the features of the Marist teaching tradition, and from the other discussions above, it can be seen that the heart of the culture of early Marist education was a function less of considered scholarship and formal documents and more of the charism of its original protagonists.

3.2 CONTEMPORARY UNDERSTANDINGS OF MARIST EDUCATION

Most of the examples of Marist education at the end of the twentieth century are ostensibly far removed from the country primary schools of nineteenth century France. In western countries, at least, this usually means larger and more complex institutions, staffed mainly by men and women who are not Marist Brothers, influenced by increased government and ecclesiastical bureaucracies and a range of educational trends and pressures, attempting to meet the needs of young people who are growing up within pluralistic if not conflicting cultures. There has been within the last decade a growing movement around the world to seek clearer definition of what constitutes the specific character of Marist education in these changes of time and circumstance (Huidobro, 1993:536; Marist Brothers, 1997:4-5). Several sources of present-day understanding of Marist education will be considered with a view to distilling the essence of the perceived culture of contemporary Marist schools.

3.2.1 The Mind of the Institute

Following the Second Vatican Council, religious orders were urged to review their rules and statutes, with particular reference to their founding charisms and to the changed circumstances of the modern world (Abbott, 1966:468). The Marist Brothers responded to this call through a complete re-writing of their Constitutions or "Rule". At the XVI General Chapter of 1967, a new document was adopted for a twenty-
year trial. In 1986, the XVIII General Chapter of the Institute approved a new book of Constitutions for the Marist Brothers, a document which reflects the distilled wisdom of those two decades, in the light of new research into the life and thought of Marcellin Champagnat and Marist definitive texts (Ryan, 1989:14). It could be described as an encapsulation of the mind and the collective hopes of the Institute.

A central place is afforded in the 1986 Constitutions to Champagnat and the charism which is seen to have been received from him. This charism, which gave birth to the Institute of Marist Brothers, is something considered “forever relevant to the world” (Marist Brothers, 1986:113) and summarised as:

[Champagnat’s] faith and eagerness to do God’s will led him to realise that his mission was ‘to make Jesus Christ known and loved’... It was this attitude that led him to found our Institute for the Christian education of the young, especially those most in need (1986:19)

He saw the mission of the Brother as helping children and young people to become good Christians and good citizens. Being a man of faith, he believed that prayer above all influenced children to become gentle of heart. Good example and constant presence are other important examples of Marist pedagogy which Father Champagnat summarised thus; ‘To bring up a child properly, you must love him’ (1986:36)

The primary role of evangelisation is highlighted but not separated from the particular style in which it is undertaken: that of the relationship between teacher and student. Although the chief purpose is unambiguously religious, it is one anchored firmly in the real world of young people and motivated by a genuine love of them and their world:

The aim of our service of evangelisation is the formation of true disciples of Jesus Christ... We give pride of place to catechesis... We are close to young people in their actual life situations, taking the risk of going into what may be unexplored areas where those in material and spiritual poverty await the revelation of Christ... The Marist school, as envisaged by Father Champagnat, offers families an approach to education which draws faith, culture and life into harmony (1986:59)

The distinctive style of the Brothers’ community and the school community is seen to be a “family spirit”, something which is seen to consist
of love and forgiveness, support and help, forgetfulness of self, openness to others, and joy ... This spirit finds expression and gains strength in a special way in love of work, which has always been one of our characteristic features (1986:15)

In his reflection on the Marist mission — or "apostolate" — to young people, Howard (1990) understands the charism of Champagnat primarily in terms of hope. Fidelity to that charism is not for him a matter of intellectual study, but of "conversion" (1990:245), something that translated into attitudinal dispositions of serenity, patience, audacity, creativity and courage (258-68) and are antithetical to fear, discouragement, complacency, apathy, timidity, and laziness (272). Like the Constitutions, Howard argues for the modern day relevance of the charism:

As a gift to the entire Church, our Founder's charism is something very real for each one of us here and now. Its efficacy in the Church therefore depends on our willingness to continue to make that charism a more and more dynamic element of our own lives and action (1990:237).

Significantly, however, Howard's vision for the charism of Champagnat is not exclusive to the Marist Brothers:

... it is made even more exciting today by the fact that we now have lay people sharing this charism ... In doing so, [the Brothers] are privileged instruments in helping people to come to a greater understanding of this gift of the Spirit in their lives ... We will discover that these lay people will in turn enrich our own understanding of Marcellin, his spirit and his spirituality through the freshness and originality of their own vision and response (1986:238)

The familiar foundations of the charism can be seen to have survived from Champagnat, characteristics such as the primacy of religious formation, family spirit, love of the children and closeness to them, love of work, preference for the most needy, education of the whole child, confidence and boldness of initiative. The observable expression of the charism, however, and consequently the culture of Marist schools is something that is more fluid and developmental, for example in the implications of the relative fewness of Marist Brothers in Marist schools. Ganzaráin (1993:560) offers the view that fidelity to a charism should be
dynamic and creative, not a repetition of the past. Falquetto (1993:50), from a more theological standpoint suggests:

Because it is a gift of the Holy Spirit, the charism will always be dynamic and renewing, rejecting stagnation, routine and rigidity . . . If history and reality change, if Church and society are transformed, the charism evolves, adapts itself, invents new forms of presence, new solutions.

In an attempt to give some definition to the way in which the charism is finding expression in today's world, the International Marist Education Commission (IMEC) since 1995 has been involved in a consultative exercise with Marist institutions around the world. It is a project which IMEC sees as an evolution of the Teacher's Guide of former times (Marist Brothers, 1997:4). Its draft report identifies five descriptors of the Marist school which express the charism of Champagnat in modern education: simplicity, presence, family spirit, love of work, and à la manière de Marie' (1997:21-26). The first three characteristics emphasise and define the centrality and style of the educative relationships in the school: ones that are open, friendly, brotherly, patient, warm, and down-to-earth, seeking to be involved proactively and extensively in their lives of young people. The document reflects an attitude to them which is optimistic, hopeful and premised explicitly on a belief in their goodness. It presents Mary as a model for the Marist educator, highlighting the qualities of commitment, love of the young, perseverance, confidence, courage, patience, respect and faith.

3.2.2 A revision of The Teacher's Guide
A previous attempt to describe Marist education as it operates or sees itself operating in the contemporary world was made by Ryan (1989), a New Zealander writing on behalf of the International Marist education Commission. His intention was to compile a modern version of the Guide, based on the then recently-adopted Constitutions of 1986. Although he recognises that it has been Marist custom to be more concerned with practical aspects of their mission rather than to theorise
it (1989:109), it is also essential for a religious congregation to be conscious of the distinctive elements of its charism otherwise it can have little claim for separate existence (1989:9).

Ryan codifies what he calls the “shape” of Marist education into three basic aims which he accompanies, in the tradition of the Guide, with a large collection of practical strategies for ensuring the aims are achieved. He sees the three essential aims of Marist education as:

i. to have a sense of Jesus and his Church

ii. to have a sense of person, with special love for the most neglected

iii. to have a sense of Mary, and a family-based spirituality. (1989:14)

A “Marist project” for Ryan should be in the first place a Church community “alive with a sense of Jesus”. Secondly it should be supportive of the dignity and development of each person within it, and thirdly it should be conducive to the expression of sound relationships with Mary as model. They appear to be quite broad and somewhat diffuse aims that might characterise any genuine educational effort of the Catholic Church.

This breadth and lack of much which can be seen to be distinctively “Marist” or “Champagnat” is reflected also in Ryan’s profile of the Marist educator in which he follows the same schema. He sees such a person needing to have:

i. a sense of Jesus alive, by accepting Jesus as a real person in his or her life, by knowing Jesus and wanting to share him, by consciously belonging to a church community, and by being committed to the mission of the Church;

ii. a concern for all people but especially the most neglected, by his her own sense of self-worth, by a sense of fulfilment in society and wish to find a fulfilling role for others, by being
socially critical, and by being ready to act and to work for a better society;

iii. an ability to relate to others, by accepting Mary as model and mother, by sound family values, by being able to relate widely, and by living out a family/Marital spirituality.

If his three basic aims can be criticised for their breadth and lack of focus, then the plethora of strategies that accompany them are open to equal criticism for the opposite reason: their specificity. Unfortunately, these strategies are too heavily anchored in a particular educational context: they seem to be most relevant to secondary schools of the late 1980s — particularly to the style of school with which, as a New Zealander, the author might have been most familiar. While, there is nothing in his book with which a Marist educator may feel uncomfortable or disagree, it is arguably a rather fabricated and artificial synopsis which suffers from inadequate focus on one level and too much cultural specificity on another.

3.2.3 A Spanish schema
A more helpful and thorough description of modern Marist education has been written by the Marist Brothers Provinces in Spain (Marist Brothers, Delegaciones Maristas, 1992. See Figure 3.1). It bears little resemblance to that of Ryan. In their attempt to describe the carácter proprio — the special or distinctive character — of Marist education the authors identify its objectivo fundamental as Champagnat's goal to help students to become “good Christians and good citizens”. They propose that this objective translates into a four-dimension style, which is specified further into eight particular approaches, emphases and responses within the school and beyond it. Altogether, twelve essential features of Marist education are isolated, each with its own values, attitudes and implications for educational practice.
Simplicity is the first feature of the Marist style they propose. The authors see this manifesting itself in

a certain ease of interaction in authentic and affectionate relationships, with a vital attitude of good will and reinforced by spontaneous benevolence. (1992:14)

Such simplicity of intention and style leads to a swift connection with students and a immediacy of mutual acceptance in the formation of relationships. In their seeing it "as one of our best treasures, one of our most identifying characteristics as Marists" (1992:14), they are in sympathy with the view of Balko (1992:41) already mentioned, that simplicity is arguably the Marists "trump card" in affecting the minds and hearts of young people.

The second feature of the Marist style is termed presence and closeness, something they see once again as having its source in Marcellin Champagnat's thinking. Champagnat wanted playgrounds, teachers always present in their rooms, and boarders in the Brothers' houses, because of his view that the Brothers had to educate the heart of children and for this to happen best the Brothers had to spend their lives with the children. This has evolved into a present-day style which emphasises physical presence, preventative pedagogy, love which shows itself through the availability of time and a very ready listening ear, and finally a teaching of values with which the student can identify (1992:18).

Work and constancy are the third characteristic, qualities that are revealed not only in the attitudes and work of the teachers, but also in the expectations they place on their students. Persistence, habits of study, careful planning and organisation, and thoroughness reflect the love of work that should characterise Marist education (1992:240).
Finally *Mary* is proposed as the *reference point* for all the educational endeavour. It was Champagnat’s view that the best way to lead children to a love of God was through their love and knowledge of Mary. Mary is thus considered to be a model of the Christian heart, and both students and teachers in a Marist school are enjoined to be close to her so that she is not an appendix to Marist education but at the very centre of it, informing its directions and shape (1992:26).
Within the School, the authors see the above four features present in an additional four ways: in a family spirit, in the involvement of all, in attention to the neediest, and in the proclamation of Jesus and his gospel. Family spirit shows itself through openness, warmth, affection and acceptance. What the Spanish authors call “involvement of all” seems to parallel what other western social commentators understand by the concept of “inclusivity” — a valued place for all students and teachers, and an attitude which respects their individual dignity. A special place for those students most in need or difficulty is understood to be an explicit bias of Marist education. It is in this environment that the proclamation of the gospel — evangelisation — takes place, something that is at its heart, its raison d'etre, “the most profound and essential feature of our schools” (1992:36). This does not just refer to the religious education programme, but an attempt to establish a “faith life” with the school which fosters knowledge and love of God.

Marist education is described also as having a four-dimensional impact beyond the school, all concerned with developing a critical social conscience and a disposition to act from it. Although the authors use four terms — renewing commitment, solidarity, critical sensitivity and service to others — the words struggle to be discrete concepts, at least not to the same degree as the previous four. The qualities carried in them are, nonetheless, quite profound and aimed at involving students in the “constant struggle to achieve a better world” rather than allowing them to fall into a “subservient integration into society as it is” (1992:40). They should feel called and empowered, through their Marist education, to a certain independence of thought and action, determined to work for the common good in a just and more peaceful society as “Christian humanists” (1992:40ff). This is what the authors see would make them “good citizens” in a contemporary application of the Champagnat term. Interestingly, however, they make no mention of their participation in the wider Church — either in worship or in its efforts of social action.
Finally, the authors propose the four qualities that should constitute the profile of the Marist teacher in the modern world (1992:53-56), someone who would be able to bring to effect the schema of Marist education they propose. Such a person should be first a "contemporary person", a person with "feet on the ground", with a sense of history but in touch with the major social and intellectual movements of the day, and forward looking. Second, the person should be a professional, with thorough knowledge of particular disciplines, effective pedagogy, and up-to-date understandings of educational psychology. Third, a Marist teacher needs to have a sense of vocation with respect to teaching, something that manifests itself through a commitment to work and the development of the students, a concern for the nature of the relationship with the students, a concern always to witness to human and Christian values through good example, and an ability to work as a team member. Fourth, the Marist teacher needs gradually to come to know the charism of Marcellin Champagnat to identify with it, to express it in everyday activity, and to integrate it into his or her own life and teaching.

Despite its purpose to describe Marist education in only the Spanish context, there is much that can be universally applied to the Marist educational endeavour in other parts of the world. It manages to escape the limitations of the schema proposed by Ryan (1989) despite its concretisation in a particular cultural context. Of special interest is the way in which the authors bring together the elements of the founding charism with the imperatives of the modern world as they see them.

3.2.4 A contemporary Marist educational vision

A slightly different approach to the question of Marist education is evident in a case study undertaken by McMahon (1993) of three large Marist secondary schools in the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia. McMahon's research focus is vision, the purpose of his study
being to describe a contemporary Marist educational vision, something he does within the perspective of Max Weber’s theory of the sociology of charismatic authority.

Within a Weberian theoretical framework, McMahon considers Marist education as a “charismatic social movement”, with Champagnat as its “charismatic leader”. The historical development of Marist education, both in broad terms and as it is currently exemplified in the three schools chosen for case study, is examined against the Weberian notion of the typical life-cycle of charismatic movements. While McMahon finds evidence in Marist education of the “routinisation” and “bureaucratisation” that is common once the “charisma” of the founder is no longer physically present in a movement, he also proposes that Weber’s exclusively sociological notion of “charismatic” is inadequate when considering a religious movement, especially a religious order, such as that started by Champagnat. This calls for a complementary, theological understanding of "charismatic" as something or someone “moved by the Spirit” (1993:66). Modern theology of charisms appreciates them as a gifts of the Spirit, gifts of grace, which call and enable people to particular activities or ministries (1993:67). McMahon finds strong evidence of the influence of the Champagnat charism still present in Marist schools, despite the many changes of circumstance including the relatively smaller number of Marist Brothers on staff — just one Brother in a non-administrative role in one of the schools studied. He observes, however, that the Marist Brothers are in state of transition and, if they are to follow the pattern of the life-cycle of other religious orders — on which there is an extensive literature — they will have to adapt to changed circumstances and re-interpret their charism to ensure that it is relevant for the present day. Although he focuses exclusively on Marist Brothers for much of his study, the same could be reasonably concluded for all people involved in Marist education and all who see themselves sharing in the Champagnat charism. The first
conclusion of McMahon's study is, therefore, to challenge the concept of "routinisation" in Weberian theory, suggesting that it would benefit from interaction with literature on the experience of religious orders.

The second group of conclusions of McMahon's study summarises a seven-point vision that he finds present in contemporary Marist schools, especially among the Marist Brothers within those schools:

1. Marist Brothers are seen to display or to aspire to:
   - an enthusiasm for educating young people in professional, non-authoritarian and unpretentious ways
   - a genuine love of young people and a ready availability to them
   - an understanding of Mary as a caring woman of faith
   - a respect for and a love of Champagnat as a man of action, determination, and love of work, as a person vitally aware of the presence of God, who had sympathy for youth especially the slow and those who did not know about God
   - an ease about any tension between Champagnat and modern needs

2. Marist Brothers link evangelisation and education, and like to do this in schools

3. Marist Brothers can involve themselves in various ways to make the most impact on the life of the school

4. A school philosophy statement is a useful aspect of any Marist school

5. Marist Brothers acknowledge a preferential option for the poor but this has differing implications in different countries

6. Marist Brothers give a high priority to religious education

7. Marist Brothers need to help lay teachers in Marist schools to see themselves as Champagnat educators. (1993:308-09)

Despite the scant attention given to the last conclusion — one McMahon acknowledges to be critically important for the future — the study is an
instructive one. Although his research focus relates to vision rather than culture, his conclusions are relevant to the latter concept and would strongly inform a contemporary understanding of it. One observation which he might have included in his conclusions, given the apparent importance he attributes to it in another part of his study, is the Marist educational approach understood as "brotherhood": the teacher "being brother" and "relating as a brother" (1993:148).

McMahon's particular contribution is to bring together literature on both sociological and theological understandings of charismatic movements, and on current educational movements, with his own research into the current position of the Institute within its own life-cycle and perceptions of the expressed vision held by Marist Brothers at the present time. He found the Marist educational vision, originally developed by Marcellin Champagnat, later encapsulated to some extent in the various editions of the Guide, but more effectively passed from one generation of Brothers to another as a living tradition, as one which remains alive and relevant but in need of continual renewal.

3.3 TOWARDS A CULTURE OF THE AUSTRALIAN MARIST SCHOOL

3.3.1 Australian expressions of the charism

FORMATIVE INFLUENCES

There is an incident associated with the foundation of Marist education in Australia which provides a instructive insight into the reason for its later direction and shape. On November 1871 Brother Ludovic Laboureyras arrived at the Marist General House at St Genis-Laval in France, having been called from his teaching duties in Dundee, Scotland, to become Director of the first Marist Brothers' school in Australia. For several days he busied himself around the General House with briefings and practical preparations for an expedition to a place which must have
seemed at the end of the earth to the young Frenchman. Before the
twenty-eight year-old returned to London to join his three even younger
confreres and board ship, he did something that could be seen as quite
significant. Setting his preparations aside, Brother Ludovic travelled
down to l'Hermitage near Lavalla. Here he visited and prayed at the
tomb of Marcellin Champagnat, and slept in his bed. He met with the
old Brother François, first Superior General of the Institute, and finally
made his own pilgrimage to pray at the Shrine at Fourvière, site of the
pledge made by the original Marists after their ordination in 1816
(Laboureyras, [undated]:14; Doyle, 1972:29-31).

The episode, small in itself, reveals much. Brother Ludovic was anxious
to absorb as much as he could of the spirit, the person, of Marcellin
Champagnat. It is reasonable to suggest that he would have spoken with
Brothers who had lived with Champagnat, heard their stories, laughed
at their reminiscences, and been inspired by their lives. It was clearly
important to Brother Ludovic that he imbibe and make his own the
charism of Marcellin Champagnat, taking it into the very marrow of his
bones (Green, 1994:1).

Laboureyras must be seen to be a key figure in the development of the
culture of the Australian Marist school. He not only had direction of the
Brothers for the first four years but, as Master of Novices, was almost
solely responsible until 1885 for the training of the first generation of
Australian Marist Brothers, men who were in subsequent decades to
assume responsibility for the leadership and animation of this new
Marist province. Australian recruits were accepted in the first year and
by 1875 of the thirteen brothers and novices teaching in schools, ten were
local recruits. There were at the same time nineteen in the novitiate,
either as novices or postulants, all under Brother Ludovic's direct
influence (Laboureyras, [undated]: 63). Two years later there were forty
Brothers and novices (Laboureyras, [undated]:153). Doyle (1972) attests to
Ludovic's ebullient Gallic temperament, which was complemented by a patent simplicity, deep faith, and warm-hearted sincerity. His own account of the first two decades of the Australian mission (Laboureyras, [undated]) reflect a candid but humane man. His writings, in which he frequently extols the virtues of simplicity and love of work, show evidence of the zeal and indefatigable dedication he brought to this posting. He also had an obvious love for Australia and its people, and adapted readily to their character. His reservations about the first Provincial Superior, Brother John Dullea, an Irishman who was appointed in 1876, may reveal more about Brother Ludovic than Brother John:

It was found that he spoke well and was well educated. His modesty was admired, but secretly they blamed him for his excessive coldness. Australians do not have the English temperament (Laboureyras, [undated]: 146).

It was a view about British-born Brothers shared by another Frenchman, Brother Ange, who commented on his arrival that these men seemed to "lack the openness and effusiveness which the French find so pleasing" (Laboureyras, [undated]:61). Discarding some possible reciprocal Franco-English suspicion, it is important to note the Champagnat-like qualities that are explicitly honoured by the two French Brothers, qualities they found much in evidence in the Australians among whom they worked.

St Patrick's School, established in The Rocks in 1872, was a venture of some challenge for the young Frenchman. Not only, as Doyle (1972:51) graphically describes, were the students more interested in causing mayhem with paper planes and up-turned inkwells than settling down to school work and prayers, but also Ludovic's three confreres were soon to show that they were poorly suited for the life of a Marist Brother or for the style of living required in community and school at the time. By 1876 all three had left, as a result of problems ranging from excessive alcohol consumption to romantic entanglements. That the mission not only survived, but quickly thrived, is something that must have been attributable in large measure to Ludovic himself. It was a success
evident from the start in the school at The Rocks. In a couple of months, an unruly, impious and illiterate band of young urchins was transformed to such an extent that Bishop Quinn remarked, “Devils had been changed into angels or wolves into lambs.” (Doyle, 1972:54-55) It was not a “miracle” as claimed by Bishop Quinn, but the effect of the distinctive style of education that the Marist Brothers brought to the school. Laboureyras’s own pen picks up some of the essence of it in a letter written in December 1872:

> All the people here are astonished at the freedom between the Brothers and pupils, at the affection, so plain to see with which these friendly children surround us. You cannot go along the streets without seeing them running up to take our hands, receive a word or two and a smile. When they are leaving school of an afternoon, all the passers-by stop to see them march past in twos in silence from the school to George Street (Laboureyras, in Doyle, 1972:154)

The love of children and belief in them, the non-fearful and down-to-earth relationships, the good humour, as well as the strong expectations of student conduct, are immediately recognisable as elements of the Marist style that reflect the founding charism of Marcellin Champagnat.

Laboureyras also showed firm leadership when it was required. His dealings with Roger Vaughan, the Co-adjudator Archbishop of Sydney, and other bishops and clergy, reveal a man not ready to compromise autonomy nor what he saw as the distinctively Marist way of conducting a school. He was firm in demanding conditions for accommodation and remuneration, and was resolute in the face of suspicion or pressure from both bishops and priests (Doyle, 1972). While there was always a wish to cooperate with and to be of service to the Church, and in the case of the old Archbishop Polding a genuine fondness for the episcopacy, there was also a reluctance to accept any control which Ludovic saw as a threat to the integrity or conditions of the schools or communities. The disagreement between a later Archbishop of Sydney and the Marist Brothers which led to the Brothers’ withdrawing from their secondary school at St Mary’s Cathedral in 1910 (Doyle, 1972:445ff) was in the same tradition and not out of sympathy with the balance between autonomy.
and service that is evident in the correspondence of Champagnat as he negotiated the terms of engagement for the Brothers with his fellow-priests. Ludovic is also critical in his memoirs of episcopal and clerical attempts to require the use of texts other than those used at that time in Marist Schools (Laboureyras [undated]:51). He is similarly critical of his own French superiors’ tardiness in replying to his requests and suggestions for expansion and new foundations, for he was marked by the Champagnat characteristic of being driven by a sense of urgency and disposition to prompt action. If an institution or movement is indelibly marked by its foundational experiences, Australian Marist schools were permanently affected by Brother Ludovic Laboureyras who as much as anyone brought to this country the particular mix of qualities and biases that reflected the charism of Marcellin Champagnat.

There were inevitable adaptations of the nature of the Marist school in its incarnation in the Australian setting. In his consideration of the development of Marist pedagogy in this country, Braniff (1995) curiously omits reference to Ludovic, but places considerable importance on developments at St Joseph's College at Hunters Hill, a school established by the Brothers in 1881. His conclusions deserve critical attention. Braniff negatively portrays the way in which certain Australian Brothers at St Joseph's led the College to something he sees as an English Public School culture, against the wishes of the French Brothers on the College staff, and away from Champagnat values (1995:4). The College's membership of the Athletics Association of the Great Public Schools (GPS) from the mid 1890s is especially significant for Braniff. Because most of the younger Brothers who were later to found Marist schools throughout Australia were in training or in teaching positions at St Joseph's during this time, Braniff judges this direction of St Joseph's College in the 1880s and 1890s as a formative influence on Australian Marist education.
Braniff's views appear to be based on a selective or at least filtered view of the facts. Through its first fifteen years there did seem to have been some tension between the French Brothers and the locally recruited Brothers, particularly an Irish-born but Australian-trained Brother, Basil Kelly. This man who was prominent in the development of cricket and football in those years and later became Headmaster, is remembered as a natural leader, excellent teacher, whose strong, if at times tactless, presence was influential during the 1880s and 1890s at St Joseph's (Doyle, 1972: 193; Naughtin, 1981:96-100). Braniff seems, however, to overstate the disagreements. Although Kelly did attempt to change a number of French administrative approaches (such as silence and public reading at meals in the students' refectory) to suit them more to an Australian boys secondary school, these seem reasonable initiatives and not a move towards the model of the English public school. The tension seems largely to have been about the place of sport in the College, particularly the game of Rugby football. The Headmaster during the first ten years was a Frenchman, Emilian Pontet. Although, like some others of his French confreres, he did not take active part in team games of English origin, he was wise enough to see a place for them in an Australian school and indeed petitioned his Superiors in France for permission to acquire considerable extra ground for sports fields. He did object to Rugby, as did the "surveillant" of the senior boys, another Frenchman, whose name for the code, "ruggedby", reflects the grounds for his objection — its roughness. He was quite content for the boys to play football by the "Australian rules", although he would have preferred them to take their exercise as he imagined French boys would have done — by walks in the bush (Naughtin, 1981:31; Gray, 1994:2). Other Brothers, both French and local, showed a fondness for games and from the time of the arrival of Ludovic and the first Brothers sought opportunities to play football (soccer) and handball among themselves, with the French Marist Fathers, and with local people (Doyle, 1972:131).
The foundation of Marist education in Australia, and of its flagship St Joseph’s College in particular, coincided with the introduction of compulsory schooling in the Australian colonies and with it the emergence of the norms of Australian schooling. Marist schools were inevitably influenced by the milieu in which they found themselves, and Australian schools — not only the private or more exclusive ones — followed the late nineteenth century custom of English schools to emphasise games in schools (Naughtin, 1981:99). It was not something restricted to schools: the University of Sydney’s and most of the city’s oldest sports clubs were founded at the same time. Although, this might have been a vicarious sharing in the influence of Arnold’s reforms at Rugby School, it would be more reasonable to see it in terms of an emerging national trait or disposition to interest in sporting contest. It is a misrepresentation of developments to suggest that Australian Marist schools aligned themselves with schools in the Arnoldian tradition.

Sherrington, Peterson and Brick (1987:16ff) describe aspects of Australian independent schools established in the this tradition: an emphasis on team sports and sports facilities; a uniform, badge, tie and school motto; an annual magazine; a prefect system “to extend the hegemony of the headmaster”; a house system; corporal punishment; and annual speech nights. Whereas some of these did find their way into the culture of Australian Marist schools, it was neither an uncritical osmosis nor entirely attributable, as Braniff (1992; 1995) suggests, to the directions taken at St Joseph’s College. Corporal punishment, for example, which was something explicitly denounced by Champagnat (Furet, 1856:545), was practised by the British-born Brothers in Australia from the time of the first establishment in 1872. Brother Ludovic was strongly critical of its use by his confreres, a custom he wrote they adopted through their training in England and their teaching in Scotland, and which seemed to be the norm in English schools (Laboureyras, [undated]:63). Experience
in Scotland also led to speech nights and classes divided into “colours” for the purpose of competitions, again from 1872 (Doyle, 1972).

Of interest also are the significant aspects of the Arnoldian tradition which were not adopted by Marist schools. At St Joseph’s College, for example, it was fifty years before a school uniform was adopted, and even twenty-five years before a school badge was used. Two key elements typical of the English public school have never been implemented: the use of prefects and captains, or a structure based on house system. There is no discussion or debate recorded about the merits or otherwise of such structures or positions, in the same way that there was tension over the place of sport. Whereas the reasons for this can only be the subject of conjecture it is not unreasonable to propose that it was based on that foundational element of Marist education given by Champagnat: the relationship between the Brother and the student, a relationship based on love, close presence, and good example. From 1886 until the late 1960s, the College was divided into age-based “divisions”, with the Brother responsible for each group relieved of almost all teaching duties (Doyle, 1972:272). For their recreation, meals and in the dormitory, the boys were therefore accompanied and supervised by a Brother, a responsibility not delegated to student prefects or others. It was a development of the system of horizontally-grouped classes that was found originally in the Conduite and also the Guide, and continued into the first secondary schools established by the Brothers in Australia (Doyle, 1972:134). It contrasts sharply with the house-based prefect systems which were the norm of the Arnoldian tradition.

The influence of Brother Ludovic seems to have been more significant in shaping and adapting the culture of Marist schools. Other adaptations, such as those discussed by Braniff (1992; 1995) appear to have been less substantive, gradual, and not done uncritically. It is reasonable to agree with Doyle (1972:135) that
a reasonably well-defined pattern of the Marist Brothers' method in school emerged at St Patrick's in these early years and became a type of what was to be followed for many years

There is much evidence to show that the essential seeds of the Champagnat charism found firm root in Australian soil.

CONTEMPORARY REFLECTIONS

As part of an extended strategic planning exercise in the late 1980s the Marist Brothers of the Province of Sydney were surveyed on their most cherished beliefs and values, as these might be revealed in their favourite passages from Scripture and in the qualities of their most admired confreres, living or dead. The most popular choices are instructive for the window they provide into the living charism of that group of men, independent from any official text or document. They reveal the extent to which the stated motivations and dispositions of modern day Australian Marist Brothers align with the mind and heart of men such as Marcellin Champagnat and Ludovic Labouryeras. They bear quoting in full. The five most frequently chosen Scriptural quotations are:

- Do not be afraid, I am with you. I have called you by your name, you are mine (Isaiah 43:1-4)
- This is what the Lord asks of you, only this: act justly, love tenderly, and walk humbly with your God (Micah 6:8)
- This is the commandment that I give you: love one another as I have loved you (John 15:12)
- I am the handmaiden of the Lord. Be it done unto me according to your word (Luke 1:38)
- I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full (John 10:10)
(Marist Brothers, 1990: viii)

At the risk of being too reductionist and simplifying the richness of each quotation, what clearly emerges from these choices are: a strong sense of personal call and close personal relationship with God (Isaiah 43:1-4); a sense of spirituality and mission that emphasises the essentials and is concerned with the heart (Micah 6:8 and John 15:12); a desire to have Mary as model (Luke 1:38); and a basic attitude of joy and sense of fulfilment, rooted in the here and now (John 10:10). The quotations are accompanied by the five most frequently nominated Scriptural scenes:
the journey to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-45); the Annunciation (Luke 1:26-38); the Washing of the Feet (John 13:1-20); the parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32); the story of Jesus and the Samaritan Woman at the Well (John 4:1-42). These scenes evoke a strong sense of compassion, of forgiveness, of seeking to engage people at the level of the heart, in simplicity, and without pretence (John 13:11-32, Luke 15:11-32 and John 4:1-42). Again there is a wish to have a Marial attitude (Luke 1:26-38), and to have a close relationship with the Lord, something in this case linked to the Eucharist and to community (Luke 24:13-45).

The Brothers were asked to nominate the ten confreres whom they most admired in their experience as Marists. From these the ten most valued qualities were identified:

- Simplicity — humility, genuineness and frugality, yet men of culture with a love of learning
- Love of work — dedication, commitment, zeal and enthusiasm
- Loving devotion to Mary
- Men of prayer
- Commitment
- Down to earth, "Champagnat men" with common sense and wisdom
- Men of compassion and generosity — gentle, kind, warm and approachable
- Family spirit: joyful, welcoming, happy in community, available, hospitable
- Love of the Brothers and proud of the Institute
- Personal harmony — personal integrity, vitality and confidence
  (Marist Brothers, 1990:x-xi)

The quotations, scenes and qualities informed the composition of more polished statements which were written about the Province's view of its charism, its spirituality and its mission (see Appendix B). The original data have been quoted above, however, because they give a sense of immediacy and direct access to the self-perceptions of the Brothers and, presumably, their hopes for the Marist schools in which they taught.

Some comparison with these data is provided by the views of over 500 participants of a course on Marist spirituality and charism, conducted by the Sydney Province since 1993 (Green, 1997). As one of the exercises on this course, each of the participants (who were teachers in Marist
schools) was asked to choose a Marist educator they admired and to nominate the qualities which made this person distinctively Marist. The 25 most frequently nominated descriptors are represented in Table 3.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Friendly</th>
<th>Patient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Generous</td>
<td>Thorough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warm</td>
<td>Down to earth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard-working</td>
<td>Practical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optimistic</td>
<td>Available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple</td>
<td>Big hearted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of fun</td>
<td>Unpretentious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good teacher</td>
<td>Natural with kids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love of kids</td>
<td>Love of teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trail-blazer</td>
<td>Fondness for the battler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Builder of community</td>
<td>Hospitable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High expectations</td>
<td>Simple faith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always there</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1
*"What makes your hero Marist?"

It is not difficult to recognise the face of Champagnat in the above portrait of admired Marist educators. As with the qualities chosen by the Brothers, the significance of the choices is that they have been made independently of official documents or policies; they emanate from the lived experience of contemporary Marist education in the Australian context. There are other qualities which might have been chosen for people who teach and administer schools, but the distinctive mix that is evident in this table provide some clear pointers for describing the culture of Marist schools.

3.3.2 An understanding of Marist school culture as a context for research

From the foregoing consideration of the sources and understandings of Marist charism and culture, a framework of the key cultural values of the Australian Marist school presents itself. The research tradition of Deal and Kennedy (1982) and Peters and Waterman (1982) identify *key values* as the heart of organisation culture. In a coalescence of the concepts of "charism" and "culture", such values will be the charismatic
qualities which are both faithful to the founding charism of the movement and relevant to its present circumstances, and are intuitively realised by those who see themselves sharing in the charism.

McMahon's (1993) research into Marist education from a Weberian perspective brings attention to the essential fluidity of charism, as it continually finds cultural expression in new and fresh ways. It is likely that something that is inherently charismatic will be naturally resistant to symmetrical form or balanced structure. There must be some scepticism, therefore, about the neat frameworks proposed by Ryan (1989) and the Spanish Provinces (Marist Brothers, 1992). The key values cannot be presumed to be of any definite number or pattern; even the words used to describe them are, in the last analysis, inadequate metaphor. The proposals of Ryan and the Spaniards are, nonetheless, not inconsistent with the views of the other theorists, historians and commentators of Marist education, among whom there is clearly a high degree of commonality in theme and terminology. The Spanish schema, in particular, appears to have influenced the shape of the IMEC draft report. When considered with the emerging themes from the life of Champagnat, the early development of the Institute, its contemporary official texts — especially the draft report of IMEC (Marist Brothers, 1997) — and finally the self-perceptions of modern Australian Marist educators as considered above, it is reasonable to suggest that there is a distinctive Marist cultural style.

A synthesis of seven core values is therefore proposed as the key cultural charismatic underpinnings that would be expected to be found in the Australian Marist school (See Figure 3.2). A brief expansion is offered for each in order to clarify the intent and focus of the value and to link it to the literature from which it has emerged.
- A spirit defined by a sense of FAMILY

The term "family spirit" comes from Champagnat himself, something he hoped would be the single most characteristic feature of the Marist school (Furet 1856). It appears to have been a distinctive feature of Marist undertakings from the time of the first foundation in La Valla (Gibson, 1971; McMahon, 1993), and was strongly evident in the Marist beginnings in Australia (Laboureyras [undated]). Its fundamental place in shaping the style and spirit of Marist education has been strongly emphasised in the literature (e.g. Farrell, 1984; Zind, 1991; Balko, 1991, 1992; Marist Brothers, 1992; Howard 1992; Bergeret, 1993; Farrelly, 1996; Marist Brothers, 1997). It is understood to mean an approach to education and to spirituality that puts primary emphasis on the importance and nature of interpersonal relationships. Closeness, warmth, acceptance, respect, unpretentiousness, optimism, equitable treatment, and a belief in the inherent goodness of each person are all aspects of a way of relating that a Marist school would value. It would be expected that the self perception of the people within a school is that they had a family spirit: they belonged, they felt at home, they related in down-to-earth ways, their behaviour was
guided by a sense of moral authority and respect, and their ways of dealing with the matters among them were intuitively as a good family would. Good families are founded on love. Champagnat's foundational imperative that there must be a prerequisite love of children, a love shared equally, would be expected at the heart of the culture of Marist schools. The schools, therefore, would attempt to be warm, hospitable and friendly places, where people had a deep belief in the worth of each other, especially of the young people, and related to them in down-to-earth, ways. A way of relating to the young as an older brother or sister would be expected to be in evidence.

- *Simplicity*
  Balko (1991, 1992), in particular, emphasises simplicity as a defining feature of Champagnat and of the educational approach he began. It is strongly supported by others (e.g. Furet, 1856; Laboureyras [undated]; Gibson, 1971, 1995; Farrell, 1984; Marist Brothers, 1992; Coleridge, 1992; Bergeret, 1994; Marist Brothers, 1996; Farrelly, 1997.) Simplicity of method, simplicity of expression and, most importantly, simplicity in relationships, is a key to unlocking the cultural expression of Marist schools. A Marist school would be expected to be characterised by a lack of pretence, duplicity and show, and foster sincerity and openness in its relationships. Such would be seen as a way of affecting young people by becoming close to them.

- *Love of work*
  An admiration for enthusiasm, zeal, and the hard work and unstinting generosity on the part of teachers in Marist schools is something honoured in Marist culture (e.g. Furet, 1856; Marist Brothers, 1986; Marist Brothers, 1990; Marist Brothers, 1992; Balko, 1992; Forissier, 1992; Marist Brothers, 1997) This is especially true of work that is unglamorous, done without show, and includes manual work. It translates into a spirit of work among the students in a
school, and the honouring of school environments and teaching practices that are conducive to educational achievement. Such generosity of staff and the purposeful endeavour by students would be expected to be present in a Marist school.

- *God consciousness*
  Furet's (1856) biography of Champagnat is infused with an urgent mood of what would be now described as evangelisation — the work of the Gospel, bringing people to a knowledge and love of Jesus. Clisby (1995), stresses the centrality of the missionary spirit of Champagnat and his contemporaries: they were, before all else, about the work of God. It was not a glib appellation attached to their work, but at its core. Forissier uses the term “God consciousness” to describe what he saw as this spirituality in action. It would be expected, therefore, that the culture of the Marist school would have a pervasive and felt sense of its deeper purposes, an obvious “faith life” (Marist Brothers, 1992). This would also be expected to have a Marial style (Balko, 1992; Marist Brothers, 1992; McMahon, 1993; Marist Brothers, 1997.)

- *Presence and Good Example*
  A pedagogy based on being close to young people (Bergeret, 1992) attends naturally the characteristics of “family spirit” and “simplicity”. “Presence” is a term, originally from Champagnat, which is often cited in Marist education literature (e.g. Farrell, 1984; Marist Brothers, 1992; Balko, 1992; Huidobro, 1993; Bergeret, 1993; Marist Brothers, 1997). It is a dimension of the Marist educational style which sees educators seeking to immerse themselves in the lives of young people, sharing not only time in the classroom but in the other activities and pursuits in which they are engaged. It requires a desire and an ability of educators to relate easily and readily with the young, and presupposes an aim to affect them by the example of such presence. Such an effect
is geared at the whole person, not just intellectually but also spiritually, emotionally, culturally and physically. Once again, it highlights the role of the personal relationship. School cultures would, therefore, be expected to be characterised by extensive involvement of staff with students, and opportunities and attitudes which encourage modelling of the goals of the school.

• *Fondness for those most in need*
  A compassionate and practical care for the less advantaged was, of course, a key factor in the foundation of Marist education by Champagnat (Furet, 1856; McMahon, 1989; Balko, 1991; Marist Brothers, 1997). Its continued role in the culture of Marist schools is strongly advocated (Howard, 1992; Marist Brothers, 1992; Balko, 1993; Bergeret, 1994; Marist Brothers, 1997). It would be therefore expected that a bias of time, talent and resources and, more particularly, a genuine affection, is shown towards those students who are least advantaged materially, intellectually, spiritually and emotionally. Consistent with the style of Champagnat it would be more than a notional thing, but something of the heart, based once again on personal relationship.

• *Daring and confidence; spirit of autonomous enterprise*
  The swiftness with which Champagnat recruited his first teachers and his daring in undertaking the building of The Hermitage were matched in this country by a similar speedy expansion and large-scale planning under Laboureyras. A spirit of resolute confidence, disposition to action, a certain daring and enterprise have been proposed as qualities of leadership in Marist schools emanating from the Champagnat charism (Farrell, 1984; Coleridge, 1992; Bergeret, 1993, 1994; Balko, 1994). The honouring and encouragement of such big-picture thinking, confident planning and efficacious pragmatism would be expected in the culture of a Marist school.
It is not proposed that each of these cultural values would find pristine expression by all members of each Marist school. It is suggested, however, that among those people who self-consciously or even vicariously share in the charism of Marcellin Champagnat, these values would be favoured above others, would be aspired to, and admired. It would be expected that the expressions of organisational culture — elements such as the heroes who are honoured, the legends, the myths, the normal rituals, customs and patterns of behaviour — would all reflect the presence of these values. Based on the conclusions of the previous chapter, it would also be expected that in the schools with the strongest Marist culture, there would be school principals whose cultural leadership give explication, vision and honour to these values, that there would be sufficient autonomy within the school to do this, and that a strong sense of community had grown up based on them.
Chapter Four

METHODOLOGY

This chapter first discusses the appropriateness of researching from a qualitative orientation and outlines the broad structure of the approaches that were followed. The place given in the study to the discussion contained within Chapters Two and Three is presented before a more detailed description of the processes used for collection, reduction, presentation and analysis of the data associated with the field research phases of the study. Finally, the credibility of the methodology is justified and its ethical considerations.

4.1 QUALITATIVE ORIENTATION

The choice of methodology for the study stemmed from purposes of the research and the kind of the research data most appropriate to these purposes. Since the aim of the research was to explore and describe the lived experience of the distinctive culture of Marist schools, the data able to give clearest definition to this were judged to be the subjects' own concepts and meanings, described in their own words. A quantitative approach, which would have involved necessarily a largely pre-determined categorisation, was inappropriate to elicit the kind of data sought. A more qualitative methodology which was able to accommodate the participants' frames of reference was required. Its emphasis was consistent with that proposed by Cohen and Manion (1985:31ff): the interpretative, concerned with understanding people and events from within.
The basic role taken by the researcher was, therefore, that favoured by Ashworth (1993:3) — one of "hearer". The approach to the participants' meaning-making was exploratory and inductive rather than hypothetical or empirical, based largely on the techniques of grounded theory development (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1978; Strauss, 1987; Bryman, 1989; Glaser, 1992; Strauss and Corbin, 1990; 1994; Chamberlain, 1995). The understandings of organisational culture and Marist charism developed in Chapters Two and Three provided a contextual background from which to conduct the study but the research was not built around any hypotheses or theoretical framework which emerged from the critical discussions of these chapters. The identification and description of the distinctive characteristics of the culture of Marist schools were undertaken on their own terms, as part of a process of inductive theory building. There was not an emphasis on collecting quantifiable responses to previously developed questions. The approach was open ended, allowing the emergent data to shape the theory of Marist culture which came to be defined (Bogdan and Bilken, 1982:68; Burgess, 1985:8; Strauss, 1987).

At the heart of the study was the participants' meaning-making. The basic research task of the fieldwork was to elicit their understanding of the essential features of what they understood as "Marist" about the culture of their schools. The study was ethnographic to the extent that it was concerned with describing the perceived culture of these schools (Jacob, 1987:12ff; Fetterman, 1989:11), but it did not attempt a comprehensive or definitive ethnography of any of the schools chosen for study or of the group of schools together. Its approach was more focussed: on the shared and distinctive cultural values, understandings and expressions among the participants, and the degree to which these were at the core of the cultures of the Marist schools with which they had experience.
4.2 RESEARCH STRATEGIES

4.2.1 Overview

As recommended by Miles and Huberman (1994:10) for qualitative study influenced by grounded theory methodology, the research design was reflexive and iterative, with significant interplay among the activities of data collection, reduction, display and analysis. Preceded by, and to some extent informed by, the exploration of the contexts of organisational culture and Marist charism of Chapters Two and Three, and the proposal of the concept of "charismatic culture" which emanated from this discussion, the data gathering, display and analysis took place in two broad phases.

Figure 4.1: Phases of the study

- Definition of the conceptual context
  - Organisational culture
  - Marist charism
  - "Charismatic culture"

- Phase 1
  - Data collection in 5 schools
  - Preliminary data reduction, display and analysis

- Phase 2
  - Formulation of Phase 2 research imperatives
  - Choice of 10 key informants
  - Final data display and analysis

- Conclusions
  - Extent and nature of a charismatic Marist school culture
In Phase 1, five schools were chosen in a limited case study approach. Preliminary analysis of data from this phase of the research informed the shape of Phase 2 which involved a group of ten key informants. Data from this second phase were further interpreted and contributed to a final description of the culture of Marist schools. This description was then considered within the initial conceptual context and conclusions drawn about the extent and nature of a charismatic Marist culture.

4.2.2 Phase 1

CHOICE OF SCHOOLS AND PARTICIPANTS

Five Marist schools were chosen to participate in the first stage of the research. The schools were selected on the basis what Burgess (1984) calls "judgement sampling" or Miles and Huberman term "purposive" rather than random sampling. In the selection, the aim was to maximise the variety of size, style, enrolment pattern, socio-economic profile, geographical location, education system, and age of the schools, and the involvement of Marist Brothers in them. A brief profile is given of each school:

School A was a well-established day and boarding school in Queensland. Its enrolment of 1400 consisted of boys only, from Year 5 to Year 12. It was administered by a Marist Brother principal and had a large community of Brothers in teaching and support roles. The school was non-systemic — owned by the Province and under the direction of the Provincial Council. It was a well-resourced school, with a higher fee structure than the other four schools. Students came from suburban Brisbane, rural areas of Queensland, Papua New Guinea, as well as several other overseas countries.

School B, also in Brisbane, was a small senior high school. The 240 boys and girls who made up its Years 11 and 12 enrolment came mainly from the suburbs surrounding the school. It was 25 years old. Its first four
principals had been Marist Brothers but it was presently under the administration of a lay woman and completely lay staffed. The school was systemic in a diocese with a highly centralised administrative structure.

School C was a long-established systemic boys school in suburban Sydney. It was under its second lay principal and had one Marist Brother as a part-time, non-teaching member of staff. Its enrolment was over 1000, Years 7 to 12, and of a diverse ethnic background. It had previously had a primary department.

School D was just 12 years old, serving the new housing developments of the Macarthur region south west of Sydney. It was coeducational, Years 7 to 12, with an enrolment of 900. It had a large number of students from single-parent families and students with a range of learning difficulties. Each of its three principals had been Marist Brothers. It was systemic, but in a diocese which had a devolved system of administration. Its principal enjoyed a higher level of autonomy than the principals of Schools B, C and E.

School E was over a century old, a small boys-only secondary school in inner Sydney and relatively well-resourced. Its enrolment was 600. The current principal was a Marist Brother, but the school had had two lay principals within the previous 15 years. There had always been Marist Brothers on staff and a Marist Brothers' monastery was situated adjacent to the school.

In each school the choice of participants in the study was made by the principal. The principal was requested to select 12 staff who reflected a range of experience and responsibility within the school, both senior and junior staff, teaching and ancillary, and drawn from all sections of the staff. The principal also chose six Year 12 students, again with the expectation that they represented a range of students within the senior class. The principal of each of the five schools also participated in the study.
DATA COLLECTION

The chief instrument of data collection in Phase 1 was the semi-structured interview, chosen as the most appropriate way to elicit the participants' descriptions of their lived experience of their schools' cultures and their ways meaning-making about these. A tightly structured interview would have suffered from the same inadequacies as a survey or other quantitative instrument: the pre-determination of the way the data are understood and categorised. A completely unstructured interview, on the other hand, may not have provided sufficient focus and purpose. The interviews aimed to strike a balance between keeping within the context suggested by the literature studies of Chapters Two and Three without being too directive and thus stifling the subjects' own words and experience. They were best understood as “conversations with a purpose” (Burgess, 1985:103), with sufficient guidelines to ensure that they were conducted within the theoretical parameters of the study but not too much to prevent the emergence of unexpected findings or nuances (Bryman, 1989:148). King, 1994:19). Since, as Fetterman (1989:13) advocates for ethnographic research, the activities of collection and analysis began simultaneously, the content and direction of each interview was to some extent influenced by those which had proceeded it. Basic schedules of indicative questions were developed (See Appendix C). These provided the focus for the interviews, but no two interviews followed the exactly same sequence or pattern.

While ethnographic research typically uses both interview and extended participant observation in cultural mapping (Jacob, 1992; King, 1994; Miles and Huberman, 1994), the data gathering in this study was a more focussed exercise, centred in the individual and group interviews. This was justified through the researcher's prior knowledge of each of the schools and his involvement in Marist education, using the argument of Fetterman (1989:19) that extended fieldwork was not necessary when research is being undertaken from within one's own culture.
Interviews in Phase 1 were mainly conducted in small groups. In each school, three mixed groups of four staff took part in a group interview with the researcher as chair of the discussion. The students were interviewed in groups of six, while one-on-one interviews were conducted with each of the principals. Group interviews were chosen for several reasons. First, it was hoped that the mix of people in the group would provide mutual stimulus for discussion of the open-ended promptings of the researcher and thus produce a richer source of data (Burgess, 1984). Second, there would be some immediate validation of the data, as participants were encouraged not only to tease out and develop each other’s ideas but also, if necessary, to challenge them. The approach of the interviewer was to ascertain whether or not there was consensus on data before they were taken any further (Fontana and Fry, 1994:366). Third, the group interview allowed for a larger number of people to participate in the study. There were, of course, dangers of which to be aware in the group interview situation: the loss of individual expression and the development of a “group think”, the dominance of the loudest or most articulate, and the intrusion of sometimes unstated political or personality conflicts which may inhibit the open discussion (Sarantakos, 1993:253; Fontana and Fry, 1994). It was hoped that awareness of these potential drawbacks as well the holding of several staff small-group interviews on each site, and separate interviews with the principal and with students, would minimise them.

Interviews were held on the same or consecutive days of a single visit to each school. They were held on-site, during the school day. Each lasted for 45 to 50 minutes. Interviews were taped and later transcribed in full.

Preliminary Data Reduction, Presentation and Analysis

The processes of data reduction, presentation and analysis took place in a loosely sequential fashion. Although formal reduction and presentation were left until the conclusion of the Phase 1 interviews, emergent
themes and understandings were noted from the outset and, consistent with Glaser's and Strauss's "theoretical sampling" approach (Glaser, 1978; Strauss, 1987), included in a sensitive and non-directive ways in later interviews.

Several broad themes, including one core metaphor, were strongly evident in the early school visits. These provided a basis from which to develop an initial coding scheme which was subsequently expanded and schematised. Once all the transcriptions were completed, they were comprehensively coded according to this scheme. A total of 133 codings was developed. As much as possible, the code names incorporated the words and phrases that came from the interviews, following Strauss's (1987) preference for "in vivo" codings rather than "sociologically constructed" terms. Patterns and links were noted and ten thematic clusters developed, each containing between four and ten sub-themes. Each of the codings was aligned to one of the sub-themes, with some further collapsing and renaming. Finally eight thematic groups were defined, each with between three and seven sub-themes. All pertinent aspects of the content of the interviews were able to be accommodated within this thematic structure, although there was a variety of intensity and a range of agreement or disagreement among participants and schools with respect to some of the third tier themes. The themes were not of equal significance in the culture of the schools.

Following the recommended approaches of Miles and Huberman (1994) and Sarantakos (1993), a series of matrices was generated, one for each of the major thematic groups. Within each matrix, each remaining coded theme was itemised (98 in all; see Table 5.1), with an indication of the level of intensity of its presence in each of the five schools, and also among each of the three groups — staff, students and principals. Within each coded item, several quoted examples from the transcriptions were included, with the intention that the original words of the participants
would give authenticity and clarity to the name which had been ascribed
to each coded theme, and so the reader would be able "almost literally
[to] see and hear its people" (Glaser and Strauss, 1967:228). The "level of
intensity" was not quantified, but described with symbols. Given the
nature of open-ended discussions, and the variety of ways in which
participants approached the various cultural themes, it was not judged
appropriate or useful to undertake a detailed textual data analysis or any
quasi-statistical method to identify the themes or quantify the recurrence
or patterns within the transcribed interviews (King, 1994:20ff).

The matrices were a transitional way of reducing and organising the
data; they were not the means by which the data would be presented.
The method chosen for the presentation of the data was extended
narrative text. Despite Miles and Huberman's (1994:12) caution that such
a method may prove cumbersome, it was judged that this was the way
which would best serve the purposes of the study: to describe the lived
experience of Marist school culture in the words of those within it. A
"thick" descriptive approach was therefore chosen in which verbatim
quotations, built around the thematic structure, presented the data in a
coherent way but one which was neither diluted nor homogenised
(Fetterman, 1989; Janesick, 1994; Coffey, Holbrook and Atkinson, 1996).
An analysis of this presentation (see 6.1) was the basis for framing the
interviews of Phase 2 of the study.

4.2.3 Phase 2

CHOICE OF KEY INFORMANTS

The aims of the Phase 2 interviews were twofold: first, to validate the
synthesis of the emergent themes from Phase 1; and second, to draw out
and clarify any themes which were inadequately or ambiguously
developed in that phase. The interviews were structured around the
eight thematic groups (see 6.1), testing the interviewees acceptance or
otherwise of these broad themes, and exploring the areas in which there
was apparent confusion, inconsistency, or insufficient treatment in
Phase 1. The choice of interviewees was left until this interview
structure and focus had been developed, so that those selected, through
"discriminate sampling" process (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, 1994;
Chamberlain 1995), would be people who would be best suited to discuss,
support, challenge or develop the emerging theory.

The ten informants came from ten different settings, some in Marist
schools and others not, bringing a wide range of perspectives to this stage
of the study. None was from the five schools of Phase 1. Informant 1
was currently a principal of a non-metropolitan boarding school in north
Queensland with a strong Aboriginal and Islander enrolment. This was
his second appointment as principal of a Marist school. Informant 2 was
a retired principal, with over fifty years experience of Marist schools in
Australia and Papua New Guinea, including forty years in leadership
positions. Informant 3 was principal of a Catholic school of non-Marist
tradition. He had previously had experience as a Marist principal and as
an area administrator with a Catholic Education Office where he had
responsibility for a cluster of Catholic secondary schools, some Marist but
most not. Informant 4 was a deputy principal of a large boys-only Marist
school in western Sydney, and had teaching experience in three other
Marist schools. Informant 5 was involved in supervision of Marist
schools in the Province of Sydney, a role which took him into all schools
of the Province and consultancy work for all their principals. Informant
6 was new to her current school and had not previously held an
appointment in a Marist school. Informant 7 was a Religious Education
Coordinator in a Marist school and had held leadership and teaching
positions in other Catholic schools. Informant 8 was principal of a
medium-sized coeducational Marist school in Sydney. Informant 9 was
a counsellor in a large secondary girls school. She had previously held an
appointment as school counsellor in a boys-only Marist school. Informant 10 was a former teacher and principal in Marist schools but
was now involved in the administration of youth and family welfare in non-school settings.

DATA COLLECTION
The interviews were once again exploratory in approach but more directed than in Phase 1. An interview schedule was used, based on the purposes of Phase 2 as presented above, and the directions suggested by the preliminary analysis. Although closed-ended or quantifiable responses to pre-determined questions were not sought, there was inevitably less open-ended discussion and more consistency about the pattern of the interviews than in Phase 1. As the interviews were progressively completed, and certain themes became more strongly confirmed, later interviews were able to be more concerned with elements of the emerging theory that were less clear or about which they was particular inconsistency or confusion. There was also an attempt, in each interview, to create an environment that was conducive to original contribution on the part of the interviewee.

Fifty-minute interviews were held with each key informant. The interviews were taped and fully transcribed.

DATA SYNTHESIS AND ANALYSIS
Since the Phase 2 interviews did not prompt any major revision of the eight-theme schema previously developed, the data from the interviews were used only to make modifications to this structure. The transcripts were coded, using a simplified version of the original coding system, with the inclusion of new or re-named codes as they suggested themselves. They were then arranged in tabular form in the same fashion as the Phase 1 transcripts, according to theme and sub-theme, with the level of intensity noted. The method of presentation was once again in the form of narrative text with extended verbatim quotations.
A final crystallisation of the findings was then developed and is included at the conclusion of Chapter 6. This synopsis was constructed as a short narrative piece, as faithful as possible to the words, phrases and patterns that presented themselves through the interviews.

4.3 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

4.3.1 Credibility
There is a variety of approaches in qualitative research to the questions of validity, reliability and issues usually associated with them. In this study, they are considered under the broader term “credibility” (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Guba and Lincoln, 1981; Sarantakos, 1993; Janesick, 1994; Miles and Huberman, 1994). The research design included a number of strategies to maximise the degree to which the study was a demonstrably credible exercise in fulfilling its objectives and achieving its core research tasks, one in which the research strategies were clear, appropriate and replicable. In particular, the various “tactics” suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994) were included as appropriate, and their “relevant questions” for objectivity, auditability and validity were easily answered by the research process.

As discussed above, the use of interviews as the principal research strategy was chosen since it was the best way of eliciting, in a non-directive way, the patterns of cultural meaning-making that existed among the people within the settings of Marist schools. In addition to a strategy that was conducive to genuine and full expression of this meaning, it was also essential that the meaning which was spoken by the participants was truly heard and faithfully recorded. Several means were included to ensure this. First, the group dynamic of the interview allowed for important on-the-spot validation of meaning, as issues were teased out, challenged, fed back to the group members, and finally consensus reached before the conclusion of the interview. Second, in
Phase 1, a broad-basing of the findings was achieved through there being several interviews held in each school, and there being five schools included in the study. The five schools were chosen for their diversity, and the people interviewed were selected for their range of perspectives and experience. Third, further triangulation of the data was introduced through the Phase 2 interviews, each interview with a person outside the original five schools, and each interviewee with a peculiar association with the culture of Marist schools and consequently his or her own perspective on it. This was judged a better way to ensure the credibility of the Phase 1 findings than a simple participant agreement exercise because, as pointed out by Ashworth (1993:9ff), it would not have been possible to dismiss the degree to which interviewees may have been over-eager to please the researcher on the one hand or instinctively resistant on the other.

The position of the researcher as an insider within the culture of Marist schools was considered carefully. Inevitably, there was some degree of subjectivity about the collection and further filtering of the data, because of the closeness of the researcher to it. Such subjectivity and closeness was not, however, judged to compromise the integrity of the study. As pointed out by Hammersley and Atkinson (1983:14-15), no researcher, using whichever methodology, can ever really be divorced from the data, because researchers are always part of the social world they are researching. In this study, the researcher’s own knowledge and experience was used to help validate and contextualise the data. The prior knowledge allowed for the easy establishment of an empathetic relationship of the interviewer and interviewee, and was conducive to immediate teasing out of ideas that emerged (Burgess, 1984:105). It also helped to guard against the study’s becoming removed from its real-life situation, and therefore enhanced the validity of the data. The large number of people interviewed, the open nature of the discussions, the high level of their articulation and readiness to challenge ideas, and the
grounded theory approach all served to diminish insider bias or filtering of the data through predetermined and selective categories of meaning.

Consistent with the aims of the study and faithful to its qualitative methodology, screening and filtering of the data were kept to a minimum. To enhance validity, the data were left in context as much as possible. It was for this reason that the method of data display was constructed around the actual words of the participants, so that the clarity and richness of this expression were not diluted by artificial categorisation or paraphrasing. The validity of the abstraction and theory building was based, as suggested by Miles and Huberman, on identification of the strongest patterns, repetitions, convergence of data, and the most intensely expressed ideas. The Phase 2 interviews allowed for progressive testing of the emerging theory, and the discussion of Chapter Seven provided the opportunity to compare the findings of this study with those of other Marist and school culture settings.

The level of “theoretical sensitivity” (Glaser, 1978; Strauss and Corbin, 1990), so important for demonstrating the credibility of a grounded theory methodology, was therefore maximised. The four sources of theoretical sensitivity (Strauss and Corbin, 1990:42-3) were strongly present in the study to allow for a demonstrably credible collection, sorting, and interpretation of the data: the use of literature to provide both a context and a source of validation, the professional experience and the personal experience of the researcher, and the analytical process itself.

4.3.2 Ethical parameters
The study was carried out within the ethical protocols of the University of Sydney for research involving human beings; its design was formally approved by the Ethics Committee of the University before being undertaken. The study was also approved and supported by the Marist
Brothers' Province of Sydney. Permission to interview in each school was obtained from the Marist Brothers' Province Administration and from the principal of each school.

All participants in the study were involved on a voluntary basis. Participation was by invitation, either directly from the researcher or indirectly through the principal of the school. In every case, prospective participants were given written invitations and provided with background information on the aims and nature of the study. All people invited to participate accepted, generally with apparent enthusiasm.

The research design pivoted on the honest and open involvement of people in their work situations, and the use of their own words, phrases and conceptualisations. A balance had to be struck, therefore, between a sufficient degree of confidentiality to encourage open and free expression on the one hand, and permission to quote on the other. To achieve this, all participants were assured of anonymity; neither names of people nor names of schools were used. Quotations from interview transcripts were included without being attributed to individuals. Permission to do this was obtained prior to the commencement of each interview, as was permission to tape-record the interview.
Chapter Five

THE CULTURE OF FIVE MARIST SCHOOLS

"If Marcellin came into our school today, he'd have a ball." A Year 12 student.

5.1 INTRODUCTION
This chapter presents the findings which emerged from the initial stage of interviews with staff, students and principals. The data are organised into eight thematic groupings within which a hierarchy of themes is presented (Table 5.1): relational, pastoral, attitudinal, actional, spiritual, ritual, directional, and purposeful. This thematic structure was generated from the data and draws its validity primarily from the content of the interviews.

The relational themes are concerned with the nature, quality and style of interpersonal relationships, and their importance and role within the culture of the schools. The pastoral themes deal with the ways in which care is expressed. The attitudinal themes group the participants' key attitudes about their schools, noting both convergence and divergence. The actional themes describe patterns of behaviour and preferred ways of expressing core cultural values. The spiritual themes identify the specifically religious priorities and practices within the schools' cultures, while the ritual themes deal more broadly with the levels of cultural knowledge in the schools, their symbolic life and the ways in which their shared meanings are ritualised. The directional themes describe the
values reflected in the exercise of leadership in the schools. The *purposeful themes* report the participants’ views on the core goals and purposes of the schools. These groupings do not attempt to present discrete categories but to provide a way of organising the interview data that is both faithful to the data themselves and also allows some further analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thematic group</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Sub-theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relational themes</strong></td>
<td>Family Spirit</td>
<td>Informality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Spontaneity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Warmth &amp; Friendliness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Openness &amp; Genuineness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Affectivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ease of relationships</td>
<td>Respect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Valuing of the other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Integrity of relationships</td>
<td>Equal treatment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Egalitarianism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Inclusivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Equity of relationships</td>
<td>Sense of bonding &amp; unity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Strength &amp; durability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Priority of relationships</td>
<td>Practical concern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mutual support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hospitality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Welcome/induction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pastoral themes</strong></td>
<td>Style of student care</td>
<td>Primary place of pastoral care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Knowledge of individual students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Presence in the midst of students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Discipline without tension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Belief in students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Openness to all students</td>
<td>Non selectivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Second chance” mentality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Care of less advantaged students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Balance between pastoral concern and high expectation</td>
<td>Culture of nurture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attitudinal themes</strong></td>
<td>Shared values</td>
<td>Internalisation of Marist values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sense of vocation by staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Non-dependence on Brothers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positive disposition to school</td>
<td>School spirit, school pride</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Enjoyment of school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Optimism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Presence of feminine qualities</td>
<td>Influence of feminine qualities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nurturing of feminine qualities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Chauvinism and competitiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spirit of work</td>
<td>Disposition to practical action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Generosity and involvement of staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Extensive involvement of students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Simplicity</td>
<td>Simple, no-nonsense attitudes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>lack of pretence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>lack of rigorous legalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Innovation /risk</td>
<td>Openness to taking a risk with students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Openness to challenge and change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sense of autonomous enterprise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actional themes</td>
<td>Connectedness</td>
<td>Involvement with wider community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Simplicity</td>
<td>Insularity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good order</td>
<td>Calm and well-ordered school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good example</td>
<td>Sense of the importance of modelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Co-curricular programmes</td>
<td>Modelling of good relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Witness of the Brothers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rewards &amp; recognition</td>
<td>Importance of holistic education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Importance of sport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Community service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual themes</td>
<td>Priority of evangelisation</td>
<td>Importance attached to the mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Relevance/appropriateness of RE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Visible practice of the presence of God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Explicit reference to Mary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Liturgy</td>
<td>Emphasis on good liturgy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Strong staff/student involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Positive disposition of students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Family celebration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Staff spirituality</td>
<td>Attention to spiritual needs of staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ritual themes</td>
<td>Cultural knowledge</td>
<td>Knowledge of Marcellin Champagnat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Knowledge of school's history</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Respect for the school's heroes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Icons</td>
<td>Presence/appreciation of cultural icons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Naming/honouring of the past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ritualisation of shared meanings</td>
<td>Liturgical celebrations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rites of passage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Days/events of cultural celebration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directional themes</td>
<td>Walkabout leadership</td>
<td>Personal knowledge of students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Presence among students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strength of Leadership</td>
<td>Strong articulation of high expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Compassion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Big and creative thinking with disposition for action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sense of autonomous enterprise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cultural leadership</td>
<td>Articulation of Marist values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Commitment to Marist values and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Promotion of staff enculturation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Promotion of cultural expression and ritual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Integrity</td>
<td>Personal internalisation and modelling of Marist values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purposeful themes</td>
<td>Sense of self-worth</td>
<td>Self esteem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sense of hope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sense of purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Disposition to work and achieve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Integrity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Integration and balance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sense of social responsibility</td>
<td>Care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Respect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Social conscience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Critical awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sense of spirituality</td>
<td>Active Christianity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sense of being spiritual</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2 GENERAL COMMENTS

Three general observations from the interviews deserve comment before the themes and sub-themes are presented in more detail. This
will help to frame the context in which the thematic analysis of the interviews should be considered.

5.2.1 Self-identity as Marist

The outstanding finding of the interviews was that the participants from all schools had a perception of a culture in their schools that they explicitly identified as “Marist” and with which they were strongly, sometimes passionately, associated. They appeared to be keenly aware of the core cultural features and central values of the school, and were able to articulate them in remarkably consistent ways. This consistency of expression was evident among members of the individual schools, among the schools themselves, and among each of the three groups which were interviewed — staff, students and principals. One of the principals put it this way in opening his description of the school:

The Marist character is in the air you breathe here. It is a Marist school. It’s well ordered, simple, down to earth, practical, not showy, interested in the ordinary kid, and family is very much real here. Parents are very obvious in their involvement here. What they want for their kids is something plain, ordinary and good. Family spirit predominates. Good order. Kids are respectful and happy. High standards without being snobbish about it.

The readiness and facility with which participants entered into a discussion of the “Marist” nature of their school demand early highlight. Although the structure of the interviews was carefully open-ended, use of the descriptor “Marist” was brought quickly and easily into almost every conversation by someone other than the interviewer. In no instance was it challenged or indeed questioned. Participants had a clear view of what they thought it meant to be a “Marist school” and were able to express it concisely in such as expressions as:

A Marist school should have a family spirit, done in the way of Mary, sense of hard work, a plain and ordinary way of doing things.

Family, simplicity and generosity are what being Marist is all about.

Marcellin would like they way we do it here: the natural way we relate to kids, the quality of the teaching, the hard work of the staff, and the place we give to liturgy.
Although there was a realistic sense of the gap between the ideal and their lived experience, there was a common view that, by and large, they could validly use the term "Marist" to describe themselves. The following comment from a teacher at one of the lay-administered schools says it clearly:

When staff leave to go for promotions, they always say, "I won't be long out of a Marist school." There is a strong perception among staff that there is a difference between a Marist school and [other Catholic] schools. There are differences, and for one reason or another we are attracted to the Marist way. It's our way.

All those who were interviewed used the first person to describe their schools, indicative of a high level of identification with the mission of the school. Although there was an inevitable spectrum of association and bonding, there was no evidence at all, in any school or in any group, of a significant sub-culture that was alienated from or in conflict with the culture based around the core values of the school. The strength and consistency of cultural knowledge and bonding among participants stood out as the single most notable feature of the research.

5.2.2 Relational language and themes

In exploring the characteristics of the Marist culture of the school the content of discussion was concerned predominantly with relational themes. The language used to explain the distinctive Marist character appeared to be dominated instinctively by descriptions of the nature, quality, style and significance of the interpersonal relationships among the members of the school. Other aspects of the school such as curriculum, religious education, teaching and learning programmes, symbolism and ritual, administrative structures, and plant and resources, were all accorded significantly less time and importance than relational issues in each interview, or were discussed in terms of relational themes. This comment by one teacher with several years' experience in his present school was typical of attempts to describe what was distinctive in his experience of Marist education:
The great difference between this and [my previous schools] is this “family” concept. You feel welcome. It’s not just a job for staff, or a place to go to school for students. You feel welcome here and you feel as if you belong. It’s an inclusive place and family place. Administratively, or from the point of view of curriculum, or sport, or most other things, there may not seem to be not a lot of difference. But once you’ve been here a while you see there’s a great deal of difference. That Marist thing of making it like a family, of caring like a family, is really manifest here. Its not just words. I thought it was when I arrived. I was sceptical, coming from a state school. But, no, it’s very much here. The other thing I noticed is the attitude of the kids. Like, I’m the same teacher I’ve always been, but here you can’t walk five paces along the corridor without kids wanting to say “G’day.” They just really want to be with you, and speak with you. I’ve never struck anything like that before, that ease of relationship, lack of inhibition that’s genuine and still respectful. This is what is marked about this place, what makes it different.

The first two thematic groupings below (5.3 and 5.5) present a synthesis of this relational dimension of the culture of the schools.

5.2.3 Tone

Without exception, there was an immediate and easy rapport in each interview. Each was conducted in an atmosphere of warmth, humour and openness. The topic of the discussion was one into which all participants entered quickly and willingly. It was obvious that not only did they want to talk about their school but they enjoyed doing so. Their manner was always sincere, friendly, unaffected, and with a good measure of mirth. There was no sense of defensiveness, or inhibition, nor a wish to gloss over the less attractive elements of their experience of their schools. While they held no utopian illusions about their schools, they were universally well disposed towards them, what they were trying to achieve in them, and the ways in which they were going about that. That this was the case with each group in each school is a statement about the common cultural expression that they share, and amplifies the relational emphases that appeared to underpin it. The open and sincere atmosphere which characterised all of the interviews also enhanced their validity.
5.3 RELATIONAL THEMES

Table 5.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thematic group</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Sub-theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relational themes</td>
<td>Family Spirit</td>
<td>Informality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Spontaneity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Warmth &amp; Friendliness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Openness &amp; Genuineness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Affectivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ease of relationships</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Integrity of relationships</td>
<td>Respect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Valuing of the other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity of relationships</td>
<td></td>
<td>Equal treatment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Egalitarianism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Inclusivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority of relationships</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sense of bonding &amp; unity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Strength &amp; durability</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.3.1 Family spirit

There was no single concept that was more frequently expressed in interviews than that of "family spirit". Participants saw their way of relating with each other, their ways of judging, acting and reacting, and creating their ideal style of school in terms of "family". It was clearly a defining feature of the culture of the schools, a value to which all of them aspired and to a large extent claimed to be achieving.

Here the kids are not by themselves. And that is what a good family is: ultimately a kid is not by himself, whatever he does.

"Family" means a sense of belonging, a sense of being able to be yourself and not be rejected, a sense of being accepted as a person of worth, someone who's known and loved.

Right from the start, this was our school family. I've had exposure to several religious teaching orders, but not the sense of family that is here. I have never found this lovely, friendly spirit. I feel very strongly about that. I have an adult family now, and that's just the sort of feeling I have had here over the last twenty-four years.

The key to understanding what was meant by "family spirit" was the way in which members of the school chose to relate to each other, particularly the relationship between teachers and students. The most commonly identified dimensions of these relationships were: extensive personal knowledge of people; genuine and practical concern for each
student and a belief in his or her goodness and potential; proactive care; lack of pretence; openness and sincerity; a loyalty to each other; and an empathy for and accommodation of each other. It was understood to be a way of relating that resembled more the way in which members of a functional and loving family would relate to each other, than members of an institution or larger organisation:

It's a style of relating.

There's something natural and chatty and unpretentiously warm about the way we relate here that says "This is home."

There's not a lot of difference about the way I act and relate here and the way I do it when I'm at home. There's not a pretence; I don't play out someone I'm not.

The idea of the schools' being described as "home" was emphasised by one long-serving teacher with almost fifty years in a number of Marist schools:

There's always been a real "homeliness" about our schools. There's something that's down-to-earth, that kids like, somewhere where they know they belong, they can enjoy and feel comfortable, be themselves. Be themselves with us, and we can be ourselves with them.

Perhaps it was said most strongly by one member of the ancillary staff in her observations of the way in which teachers relate with students and vice versa:

I realised as I went along that this was in fact how the place was [like a family], and I could tap into it. It was exactly Marist "family" because I saw teachers acting like older brothers and sisters, or as parents would. I can see it now. It's what makes this place special for me.

Each staff group and principal, and most of the student groups, explicitly identified "family" as a pervasive feature of their schools. Those who did not used resonant language: strongly relational and evocative of family style relationships. Several students used explanations such as:

The easiest way I can really describe it, is that I went to a really small school till Grade 10. This is a big school, but it feels like a small school.

The analogy of family was an attractive one to many because it accommodated the mundane life of the school and the reality that the
lived experience of the secondary school often fell short of the ideals that may be espoused in its official documentation where terms such as “Christian community” may be found.

Things aren’t perfect by any means, but we seem to find ways of dealing with problems — like a family would. We’ve become very accommodating sorts of people.

We are not a perfect family, or the only family, but striving to be a family is important for us.

There was felt to be an unpretentiousness and groundedness about the concept of family that encapsulated the style of community that characterised the school and the importance given to interpersonal relationships within the culture of the school. “It’s a ‘real’ word,” said one teacher. “What does ‘community’ mean? I don’t know. But ‘family’ I understand. Yes, that captures it best for me.”

In several interviews a difference in understanding about “family spirit” was voiced. Interestingly, in the three instances that this different meaning emerged, it was suggested by teachers who shared many years of experience in another particular Catholic teaching tradition. Their understanding of their present schools’ emphasis on “family spirit” was that it was supportive of the families from which the students came, or sought to involve the whole family in the life of the school. They did not understand it to be a way of describing the style of relationships within the school itself. In each case, this view was challenged by other members of those groups.

The concept of “family” is woven through each of the following relational and pastoral themes and is exemplified further in them. They are to a large extent, an amplification of how the school culture expresses the core value of family. The root concept is, nonetheless, worthy of separate highlight given the frequency and consistency with which it was identified by participants in each of the five schools.
There appeared to be several constituent elements of the nature of relationships within the culture of the schools. These have been grouped as: ease of relationships, integrity of relationships, equity of relationships, and priority of relationships. In this thematic group there was strongly consistent expression of each of these across all five schools and each of the three groups of interviewees.

5.3.2 Ease of relationships

Relationships were said to be characterised by a certain informality, but one which did not compromise any sense of due respect. Both teachers and students valued this aspect of their relationships:

The relationships we have with the boys are generally quite casual and friendly. I've never been in a school before where there wasn't a real "them-and-us" culture like here.

There's a good amount of friendship between us and our teachers, but there's also respect. There's an easy-goingness in most classrooms, but kids also know they're here for a purpose. It's just not a stress at all, talking with teachers, and joking around with them.

In one school, this informality was expressed through the custom of students' use of teachers' first names in normal interaction in and out of the classroom. Both staff and students saw the practice as an important element of the culture of the school. In another, larger and more traditionally-structured school, where the use of teachers' first names would not have been considered, the same informality was evident and was also valued:

The thing I appreciate most about here is the sense that everyone's at ease. Particularly in the boarding school, it's very informal. There's no feeling that the supervisors are there as the ogres or the disciplinarians, yet there is strong discipline in the boarding house. But obviously the boys are very much at ease being there, at ease with each other, at ease with the supervisors. They enjoy the supervisors' company. There are obviously some clashes now and then, but generally they love to have a chat. There would very rarely be a time in the boarding house when a boy would walk past and not stop to speak with you.

In each school the spontaneity with which students would speak with staff in the day-to-day life of the school was pointed out by both groups:

Kids want to chat about anything. That's the family thing for me.
There's a real spontaneity and ease of relating. You can't walk through the yard without every other boy saying "G'day, Miss."

It's okay here for the boys to talk to the teachers. There's no group dynamic that judges kids who are seen to be "sucking up" to teachers.

The readiness to engage staff in conversation was not restricted to the school setting. In each of the four day schools, staff described the facility with which students and former students would speak with staff in non-school situations:

My husband is sick of coming shopping with me. There's always — no exaggeration — twenty ex-students as well as other present students who call out "Hello". It's a special relationship. We become their friends. It's just the way we do it here, the way we are.

One of the most frequently cited aspects of the nature of the relationships was their genuine warmth and friendliness. One of the principals contrasted his experience of his present school with other Catholic schools which he knew:

Despite the fact that this is a somewhat big place and has the private school aura to some extent, yet it is a very very different feel to walk into here than [another school]. Yeah, there's an intangible sort of warmth. In practical ways, like the kids always speak to you. Everyone speaks to everyone. You can't go across the yard without kids saying hello to you. While working with the Catholic Education Office, I went into many schools where you were just ignored. But here the kids don't turn away simply because the boss is walking across the yard

Across all participants the general tenor of friendliness was evident:

The teachers are just like our friends. They are our friends. We trust them. Like, you'd go to a teacher about anything, really. There's an invisible line, sure, that you don't cross, but you can joke and mess around with them and stuff, just like you would with your friends.

The kids did a survey recently on what they valued most about the school. The most commonly recorded thing was the friendliness of the teacher/student relationships. They are simple, warm and unaffected relationships by and large.

One teacher commented on the French origin of the Marists and contrasted their style of Catholicism with that of the Irish. It is an idea that arose in each school in a range of contexts and will be taken further in later discussion;
The thing that most struck me when I came here was the warmth of the relationships. I struck a similar thing in my time at [another Catholic school]. Both orders are French traditions, interestingly enough. It is quite a contrast to my experience with the two Irish orders I worked with. There was much more reserve and distance in the way people related with them, a more austere Catholicism, like everyone had to prove something to each other.

The qualities of openness and genuineness were usually aligned with this warmth and friendliness. The preferred style of relating, both on the part of teachers and of students, was one that reflected the kind of inhibition that would be expected from people who knew each other well.

There's no need to play out power roles in this place. We just relate to the kids as ourselves, and they reciprocate in kind. The relationships are up-front and without duplicity.

This would have to be the friendliest school I've taught in. The staff, the kids, there's just an openness and friendliness that pervades the place.

I find the boys here to be extraordinarily open and friendly. They speak to you like they would to one of their mates, or probably more like their older brother. It's not like they would speak to their parents, and certainly not like they would speak to teachers in other schools that I know of.

As one teacher put it, reflecting on his career in many kinds of schools, the open and free tone was a natural consequence of a genuine mutual affection:

I've never seen a place where staff and students get on so well. The kids really like the staff and the teachers really do like the kids.

It was a view reciprocated in each of the five groups of students.

This dimension of affectivity in the relationships was marked. People spoke of a climate that was not simply cordial, polite and cheery, but something that was deeper. "My best friends are here on this staff," said one teacher. "We really do like each other — teachers, students," said another, "Like, we enjoy one another's company. We do form relationships that go a long way beyond what you might expect in a school. Not with everyone, of course, but there's a lot of friendship around here." A number of groups, both in schools where Marist Brothers were present and in the two under lay administration, reserved
their strongest affection for the Brothers, both as people and for what they modelled:

The Marist Brothers loved us to death when they were here.

I have a great affection for the Brothers. I fitted so well in here because I was welcomed by them. They made me feel at home here, very quickly. I can't say enough about my great personal regard for those men.

I really miss the Brothers.

The Brothers also looked after my spiritual and personal life. I've had some ups and downs during my time on this staff, and the Brothers were always there. They came to my home, to the hospital. I was always welcome in the monastery. There was a loving, genuine, caring thing about them.

5.3.3 Integrity of relationships

The recurring use of the word respect as a descriptor of both a goal and a means towards that goal showed this quality to be a core aspect of the nature of relationships within the schools and therefore an important part of their cultures. The students spoke strongly of the degree to which they felt known, respected and treated fairly by their teachers:

Most teachers don't treat you like a lower form of life. They're on a level with you. They talk to you like you're a friend and help you out with stuff.

Generally they're like one of your fellow school mates. They don't come down on you like they're a superior being or something.

You have your clashes, but here they don't treat you like a bar-code, like other schools I've been in.

One teacher rejoiced in what he saw as a latter day improvement in teachers' attitude to their students within Marist schools:

Students are dealt with with dignity. It hasn't always been like that, but I see it now. Virtually without exception, teachers treat the students with respect.

Such a respect gave natural encouragement to a significant level of mutual trust among the members of the school and a sense in which the contribution of each person was valued. "You trust them with your troubles," said one student in a commonly expressed sentiment. "You feel comfortable whenever you have a problem going to them and talking to them about personal stuff." One teacher reflected on her
decision to remain at her present school and turn down the offer of another appointment:

At the end of last year I was looking at going to another school with better pay and better conditions, but the thing that stopped me in the end, I thought I’d miss the way it happens here. I’d miss the compassion of the Brothers. The respect and dignity that is accorded everyone who works here, and the kids

A number of staff groups commented on the way their principals had given them a level of autonomy and entrusted them with a level of responsibility that initially surprised them. They interpreted it as a trust of them and a belief in them, and they saw it as characteristic of their school.

Although the data gathering was undertaken at a time when physical and sexual abuse by teachers and clergy was being frequently reported by the print and electronic media, the issue was not brought up by the participants in any interview. When asked by the interviewer what impact such reports were having on the nature of the relationships in Marist schools, both teachers and students saw the issue as something removed from their own experience. “Kids know what they know,” said one teacher. “They judge from what they see around them here and now.”

5.3.4 Equity of relationships
There was a strong perception from students that they received equal treatment from their teachers:

Teachers here speak to you as individuals as well as a group. They go around the class, and go to everyone not just a select group.

There was no evidence of favouritism or any sense of preferential or exclusive treatment of students by teachers. There was also a strongly egalitarian sense about each school, a perceived lack of much hierarchy. Students appeared to be most alert to this:

At my friends’ school the teachers are up there, and they keep to themselves. And the students are, like, down here. But things aren’t separated at our school. We are all on the same level.
There's no elitism in this place. It doesn't matter if you're in the Firsts or College Captain or whatever. Kids aren't like stuck-up.

The egalitarian sense was valued by staff particularly in the way all staff felt included on the one level.

There's never been any barriers here between ancillary staff and teaching staff; we're all staff together. You don't feel like a second class citizen.

There was an obvious inclusivity about the schools, both among students and staff. For both groups, it showed itself in the readiness of the welcome that new members experienced:

There aren't groups in this school like there was in my old school. Kids have their friends and that, but no one is like ostracised. Like, when I came here, guys went out of their way to make me welcome and include me.

Why? Just everyone is willing to make an effort to get to know each other. I've been to every kind of high school you can just about think of, both as boarder and day boy, and in them there were groups. Everyone got into groups and the groups were sort of walled off from each other. Here the lines are kind of blurred really between teachers and groups and everyone. Everyone knows everyone.

For some, however, there has been some sense of segregation:

I felt some sense of exclusion when I came, and this pained me because it was not consistent with family.

The size of staff is something that makes it a bit harder. Our staff is a bit fragmented, not antagonistic, but fragmented because of the very size of the place. In my previous [Marist] school which was much smaller, the staff often went out to dinner together, and almost all came to staff drinks. That's what should happen here.

In each case, it is significant that, although the teacher's experience has been partly a negative one, it is regarded as something that should characterise the school, and therefore reflects the same base value.

5.3.5 Priority of relationships

The primary place of the quality and nature of personal relationships was a feature of each school which drew much comment. For one teacher it was at the heart if the school as he saw it:

The most defining thing about this school and its best feature is the relationships you can establish with students inside and outside the classroom.

The sense of bonding and unity that resulted made for schools that were not without their disagreements and personal conflict, but ones in which
these did not appear to be unhealthily divisive or enduring. One summarised it in terms of the sense of belonging that has been identified as a family-style trait:

The sense of belonging among staff and students is the most characteristic feature of this school. We have our problems, as all schools do, but the students and staff here but we try to sort them out amongst ourselves. I enjoy the people here, their friendliness.

Or, as a long-serving teacher in another school put it, with some emotion:

Some of our ex-students have landed in jail, and the teachers and Brothers have gone to visit them. The wardens were astounded. They’d never seen it before. But because they belonged to this school, of course we went. They still belong.

Such durability and strength in relationships suggest a depth to the experience that is beyond just a professional courtesy. There was something of the heart in the relationships of these schools.

5.4 PASTORAL THEMES

The care offered to staff and students was the second most strongly evident theme to emerge from the interviews. The practical nature of this, its distinctive style, and the way in which it was able to be a priority in the schools without compromising their other goals were the key features of this theme.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thematic group</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Sub-theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pastoral themes</td>
<td>Practical concern</td>
<td>Mutual support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hospitality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Welcome/induction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Style of student care</td>
<td>Primary place of pastoral care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Knowledge of individual students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Presence in the midst of students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Discipline without tension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Belief in students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Openness to all students</td>
<td>Non selectivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Second chance” mentality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Balance between pastoral</td>
<td>Care of less advantaged students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>concern and high expectation</td>
<td>Culture of nurture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.4.1 Pastoral concern

A spirit of practical concern was clearly present in each school. It was evident in the mutual support that was described to be a feature of each school, both among staff and students.

When I came here, people couldn’t do enough for me. I was a beginning teacher so I didn’t have anything to compare it with, and I thought it was normal. But the experience of some of my friends at other places was very different.

The staff also have a real sense of caring about each other. There’s no real acrimony on staff: disagreements from time to time, but we look out for each other. My wife finds it extraordinary.

A school secretary was able to comment on one example of this:

One thing that has always struck me here working in the office is that in twenty years I’ve never seen anyone who is sick come to the office alone. They always come with one of their friends. Either staff or students. And they’d stay till the student was being attended to.

A male student in a one of the coeducational schools valued the support he found from other students:

We also help each other a whole lot, too. We’re not, like, all competitive against each other. Well, we are a bit. But if someone’s really stressed out, or can’t understand something, or behind in their work, then someone always helps them out. They’re not left to cope on their own.

There was more evidence of a competitive edge to student life in the boys’ schools, particularly one of them. This is discussed in another context below (5.5.3).

Hospitality was identified as a key feature of the practical concern of the schools. A teacher in one of the lay-administered schools attributed this to the spirit of the Marist Brothers:

Marists have always struck me as hospitable. It’s one thing that I think is really characteristic of Marist schools and Marist Brothers, their welcome of people, wanting people to feel at home, feel wanted, feel like they should be there.

It was something that seemed to be readily transferred to the way new students and staff were welcomed and inducted into the school. One principal highlighted the school’s approach to Year 7, in particular:

The Year 7 parents often comment on the family feel of the place, how easy it was for their sons to fit in. We just do that subconsciously, it’s our enculturated way of doing things.
5.4.2 Style of student care

A distinctive feature of the schools which staff, in particular, identified, especially those with experience of other schools, was the primary place given to pastoral care.

The teachers who fit in best here are people who are generous and really care about kids. That’s not a unique Marist thing; I’ve seen such people in all the schools I’ve taught in. The difference here, or the two differences, is that it is expected from all teachers — it’s not just a happy accident when it happens. And secondly, the whole school is structured to support it, I mean the pastoral structures. The whole place pivots on care of kids.

Some staff commented on the “pecking order” of the staff: those with pastoral care positions such as Year Coordinators were seen to be of more influence and importance in the eyes of both staff and students than those with responsibility for curriculum leadership. Similarly, in each case it was the deputy principal of the school who had leadership of student welfare while a second or third assistant usually had leadership of studies. Several of the schools had in recent years substantially restructured their administrative and pastoral units with the sole aim of enhancing their capacity to offer care for students. Staff readily used the word “love” in explaining their approach, something they quoted easily from the approach of Marcellin Champagnat:

I don’t want to sugarcoat it, and we’re far from perfect, but it’s valid to say that staff love the kids here. That’s just the way that this school does it. Anyone who has another approach is out of tune. There are a couple around, but they don’t carry much weight either with the staff or the kids.

Marcellin’s thought that “first you must love them before you can teach them” is really true here.

Teachers who see education as just providing a professional service, however competently, rather than a way to be with kids won’t fit in here. They’ll be teaching subjects instead of kids.

Our Marist ethos has always been reflected in our policies here: the way we discipline, the way we give kids a second chance. Marcellin would have wanted to do it that way. Many of the decisions we have taken here about kids have been explicitly taken with that thinking in mind: loving them and loving them equally. Will so and so be expelled? allowed to go to the formal? be punished? That’s been a very good basis for us. [The Principal] has really relied on that.
This primacy of care was undertaken again in a typically Champagnat way which placed personal knowledge of individual students and presence in their midst as the chief means of expressing care. It was something that students commented on in all the schools:

You never feel like your just another name on their roll.

They say ‘Hi’ and they say your name, so you think, ‘Yeah, they’re okay.’

Teachers spoke of their style as being one of “immersion” in the students lives, a “meeting them in their own space”:

The teacher who fits in best here is someone who is prepared to see the boys as part of their life.

The relationships between staff, between staff and students is what characterises our version of Marist education. I have a way of describing it: the kids allow us into their lives and we allow them into ours. They are part of what we are.

In contrasting his own experience of the style of care in two traditions of Catholic education, one teacher traced it to the founder of each:

I see a difference between Edmund Rice and Marcellin Champagnat. Rice wanted teachers to care for kids, Champagnat’s style was to care with kids. Both are equally fine and good, but they make for different styles of schools.

Teachers attributed the relative calm and orderliness of the school to this intuitive understanding of young people that came from active involvement and continual presence. They valued the level of discipline they were able to achieve without tension, or at least without the level of tension and acrimony that they had experienced in some other schools.

The relationships are by and large enjoyable. Like, it’s not a stressful thing by and large. There is a mutual respect, but a casualness, and a bit of mutual stirring, that I wouldn’t have got away with as a teacher in any other school I’ve been in.

There’s something in the air here: this is a place where you do the right thing. This is a place where good things happen. It’s part of the tradition that kids just grow into.
I'm not pretending that we don't have our troubles and sometimes quite serious troubles. Kids are kids, and many of them have quite broken lives. But, basically, most of the kids here do the right thing most of the time. There's no big drama about it. There's a strong sense of what's expected, and the kids don't resist that too much.

The students saw it in similar ways

The teachers here are not super strict but teach us in a way that's sort of laid back and easy to get on with, but still get us to work. They win our respect without coming down on us all the time. Like, the classroom is a friendly place to be, and we can have a joke but still do our work.

Such an environment of relative calm in a secondary school was seen to be a product of schools with clear but not unreasonable boundaries which gave security to students and staff who reflected by their actions an obvious belief in the their students.

One thing we do provide here is a safe place to be. That's so important for a lot of our kids. They don't get it elsewhere.

The predictability, security and stability of this school's environment is an important part of the service we offer. The rules help that, too, of course. The kids know where they stand, and by and large, they feel quite comfortable with that. Adults are adults for them, doing what adults are supposed to do with young people. We give them the message that they're okay, they're worth something, and we're not ambivalent in our dealings with them.

I hope that every boy leaving here would believe in himself, and would know that because we've believed in him, and that therefore his priority might be other people. That's what I hope.

5.4.3 Openness to all students

"We're not selective," said one teacher, with some conviction. "We are open to all kids. That's a very important part of what we're on about. There's something about us here that means we'll take on any boy. We're not elite." It was a view, common among the schools, that seemed to represent more than a statement of fact about the comprehensiveness of their enrolment, but more a desire to reach out to young people from all circumstances so as to give them the best chance in life.

There's something about Marist schools that they have always given the ordinary kid from the ordinary home a lift up into life. They've always been much more concerned about what they put out after Year 12 than what they take in in Year 7.
For two of the schools, in particular, this was expressed through an explicit emphasis on providing a "second chance" to students, not only present students but those who came to them after a poor record at their previous schools.

I think Marcellin would be very pleased to see how many chances we give kids who are in trouble.

Yes, that’s very much the Marist philosophy. We really do. And we have some wonderful success stories. Some apparent failures, too, but you never know the long-term good you might be doing a kid if you just give him that message that he’s okay, worth believing in.

It’s the way we deal with the bad apples here that’s really important: we don’t throw them out, we try to make them good apples.

The general view that students who were less advantaged should be given special care was common to all five schools, and strongly expressed. The source of their disadvantage may have been intellectual, to do with learning history or their family, or it may have been material, physical, emotional or spiritual.

Marcellin’d be pleased with the way we have identified the problems of kids in this area, and are trying to address them. Information on kids’ needs is well circulated, but sensitively, to all who need to have it, so they can be helped, and allowances made.

What would please Champagnat is the care, the extraordinary care, for kids at the lower end of the learning spectrum. Care for kids generally, but there is some very Marist embracing of those kids, be they aboriginal kids who come here with almost no backgrounds, the boys from PNG, all the country kids we have. I think he would be struck by that.

That this aspect of the schools’ approaches was associated so explicitly with Marcellin Champagnat is indicative of how it was understood as a central feature of the Marist way. There was, nonetheless, some ambivalence and even some evidence of tension with the extent to which the schools were accommodating students in greater need and the effect this was having on the tone of the school. One senior member of staff, with many years of experience in several Marist schools, lamented what he saw as a trend among teachers, young teachers in particular, to misunderstand the students who found school most difficult.
It was always a feature of our Marist way that there was a fondness for the "rogues", the "boyos". Yes, they got into a bit of trouble but we accommodated that. They often turned out to be some of our loyalist old boys. I now see these sorts of kids put on detention, or on suspension, by teachers who just back them into a corner. They don't seem to have the affection for these kids that they should in a Marist school, and they certainly don't know how to relate to them. They can't or won't walk in their shoes.

The key point about this comment is not that the success of these teachers is not seen in terms of the standards they expect of students but value of empathy in the approach of teachers, to be able to "walk in their shoes".

5.4.4 Balance between pastoral concern and high expectation

It emerged early in the interview process that Marist educators prized the way in which they were able to mix such empathy with high expectations of student achievement, conduct, participation and commitment to excellence. Both teachers and students spoke frequently about the standards that were taken for granted in their schools:

The expectations on discipline are so high. It was really freaky when I came to teach here to see all the kids doing all the little things right, and that's what year coordinators and homeroom teachers talked about. In other places they were on about the big issues, but here the big issues seemed just to take care of themselves.

In the three Marist schools I've been in, there's an intangible spirit that mixes a really deep care of kids with a certain toughness — that has in the past been too vicious — but it does challenge the kids to grow and be better people. People take time with discipline. That's what's distinctive about our schools. Marcellin would want that because it's a way of showing love.

I've read two lives of Marcellin Champagnat and attended Sharing Our Call. Two things stand out: the quality of the relationships, yet still an academically demanding school. It's always a fine balance, but both are very important here.

A way of understanding this dimension of the culture of the schools is to see them as fundamentally nurturing cultures. There was a manifestly "maternal" sense about the care: one that actively fostered growth but did not confuse the worth of the goal with the worth of the person: if a conflict of purpose arose, it was the person who was paramount.

This place is different from other Catholic schools I've been in. It's a curious thing, really, and you don't understand it till you're in it. Our expectations on students are higher, yet we're far less legalistic about it. There's more of a
freedom; it’s less sharp than [another Catholic tradition]. Even with Br X [former principal] who was very tough, there was always that ability to let go of the letter of the law. His rules were strict, but kids always came before rules. That’s because you know them, and therefore you understand them. Yes, you want the best for them, but you don’t alienate them in getting it.

One teacher interpreted a bias for paternalism, even indulgence, as a singularly Marist quality:

I taught in two of their [another religious order’s] schools. I wasn’t comfortable in either of those places. Since I came here, I found something different, very different. And perhaps it’s the way staff support one another, and the witness of the Brothers. They have a more simple approach, more down to earth. We really look after the students, perhaps we even mother them too much — that’s how we interpret the Marist way.

Another teacher saw it as a loyalty to and persistence with students that, again, was essentially maternal:

The difference between [this school] and [another school] is that here a student is wrapped around in a total cocoon of care, like a mother would, but over there, even though it is a very good school, the care wasn’t there because ultimately the girls were by themselves. Kids are not by themselves here. We would have a real sense of failure if a kid were to feel that.

Students put it more simply, but no less powerfully:

I went to [another private Catholic school] for two years, and they have just absolutely brilliant facilities, but that’s it. It’s so segregated. Teachers don’t talk to you, they just treat you like barcodes. The atmosphere’s really stuffed. I’m the sort of kid that needs to be kicked occasionally, and there I could sit in the back of the class and do absolutely nothing, and nobody would care. Like, here they don’t neglect anything, like, if you’re not putting in. And now I just feel a whole lot better about who I am and where I’m going.

5.5 ATTITUDINAL THEMES

Several core attitudes were evident in largely similar ways in the different schools.

Table 5.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thematic group</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Sub-theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attitudinal themes</td>
<td>Shared values</td>
<td>Internalisation of Marist values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sense of vocation by staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Non-dependence on Brothers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive disposition to school</td>
<td>School spirit, school pride</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Enjoyment of school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Optimism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence of feminine qualities</td>
<td>Influence of feminine qualities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nurturing of feminine qualities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chauvinism and competitiveness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spirit of work</td>
<td>Disposition to practical action</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Generosity and involvement of staff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Extensive involvement of students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simplicity</td>
<td>Simple, no-nonsense attitudes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>lack of pretence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>lack of rigorous legalism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation /risk</td>
<td>Openness to taking a risk with students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Openness to challenge and change</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sense of autonomous enterprise</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connectedness</td>
<td>Involvement with wider community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Insularity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 5.5.1 Shared values

It was evident in the relational and pastoral themes of the previous sections that a key reference point for the principals and members of staff was Marcellin Champagnat. It was to him that they continually referred in explaining and justifying their priorities and cultural style. Indeed, there appeared to be widespread **internalisation of Marist values** amongst members of staff.

> If you are not prepared to think about Marist education, its particular foci, if you're not interested in that or support it, then this place is not for you.

I went to a Marist school as a boy, and I've most of my teaching in Marist schools, and I don't think I'd ever want to leave, because this suits me. The Marist way is my way, it's what I'm comfortable with. I belong. I very much feel part of the family, and the extended family — well outside this school. It's hard to describe, but I like the genuineness that seems to be there with Marist people.

> It gives us a focal point to develop our own way of approaching kids, giving meaning to what we do.

In each of the two schools without Marist Brothers present, the school staff's self-identification was articulated with more clarity; in the others it appeared to be no less present, but more taken for granted.

The policy-making here has a Marist base to it. When we have a problem, that's what we go back to. During the first year after the Brothers we had to recognise that, and then we consciously chose it. It's certainly a Marist school. In fact, it's more self-consciously Marist than it was before. It's definitely a Marist school.

> There is something of the convert, the reformed smoker, here. Since the Brothers left, the Marist way has been taken on with more vigour and purpose. Much is made of it.
It’s a process of osmosis of values, but something not forced. It is worn comfortably here.

To consider it at a deeper level, there was clear evidence of a perceived sense of vocation by members of staff, of a calling for them to recognise themselves as Marist educators.

It really strikes me how staff are so willing to take up the Marist spirit, and identify with it. It’s not a thing that’s imposed from the top. Not like that at all. Not at all. I think it is actually allowing staff to give shape to their own preferred ways of doing things, and what I find encouraging is that the staff as a whole shares this Marist way.

The students, while not necessarily in touch with the deeper motivations of their teachers, were certainly aware and appreciative of the expression of them in what they saw as extra commitment:

Most of the teachers in this College are more than willing to give up their own time to help the students who are struggling, or, you know, getting into extra-curricular activities. Like, it’s much more than just a job to them. It’s their life.

The sort of teachers who wouldn’t fit in here are those who just play it from the base line, just do it as a job

Each school claimed that the degree to which the staff was self-consciously Marist was something that had been enhanced in recent years. There was also a greater sense of shared responsibility for developing the Marist charism in the school, where previously this had been seen as the prerogative of the Brothers.

People are now able to say and articulate how and why we do things. Sharing Our Call has really helped. Now we can get up and publicly say these things. And we speak to the students about it often, and they know what we’re saying, and where we’re coming from. We do it much more than we did before. Our confidence in ourselves as Marists has grown in the last two years. We used to rely on the Brothers to do that for us and we just went along, but now we’ve had to make the decision that this is our way, we want to own it and take it forward in this College.

I feel a member of a family, and I know if its going to keep going then I’ve got to help keep it going. And we’re doing that at this school.

Both these comments came from the lay-administered schools. Non-dependence on the Brothers was less strong in the two schools which had only ever had Brothers as principals. Indeed, in each of these schools there was some sense of passivity of lay teachers with regard to
animation and articulation of the specifically charismatic dimensions of the culture. “We rely on the Brothers too much,” claimed one teacher, “and many of them are happy for it to stay that way. But things are definitely changing.”

There was a clear sense that the culture of the schools, a Marist culture, was based on a set of shared working assumptions that had an existence and influence beyond the people who happened to occupy positions of influence at any one time. There was a continuity of expectation that was not an exclusive function of the attitudes of individual principals or members of staff. These comments from separate schools capture the essence of it.

In the state schools I’ve been in, the values or tone seemed to depend on individuals: who is running them at any one particular time, their values, personalities and priorities. But this school has a shared and explicit set of values, therefore they are more likely to be consistently expressed and nurtured.

I’ve been in five different Marist schools so I guess I have a good basis to comment from. Even though they were schools in different states, serving different socio-economic groups, of different size, different in lots of ways on the surface, they were still all essentially the same. They were Marist. When I started at each one, I felt immediately at home. All my principals have been very different kinds of men, with different ways of doing things and different priorities, yet somehow the schools have a life that’s bigger than them.

What we talk about here — the generosity of staff, their great relationship with kids, the good discipline, the bonhomie, the extra involvement, and so on — I’ve seen all that elsewhere in other teachers in other schools. What gives this place strength is the expectation that this is what all teachers should do. And the strength of that expectation is even more so because it is largely unstated. It’s just the way it happens. You get caught up in it.

This perception of a shared sense of meaning and value was one of the strongest pointers to the identification of a distinctive Marist culture across the schools.

5.5.2 Positive disposition to school
The schools were patently happy places. What might be traditionally termed “school spirit” — an ownership of the school and pride in it — was obvious in both staff and students. Staff commented on it in terms of shared responsibility for the life of the school:
There is a tremendous sense of ownership of the College by the staff. Even when things are going wrong, staff see it as their problem, not the administration’s.

You can’t sit on the touchlines here as a sideline commentator and watch the world go by. People won’t let you do that.

For students, the spirit was seen more in terms of involvement and pride. Indeed, it was impossible to elicit any negative criticism of significance from any student who participated in the study:

You can’t really put it into a few words, but everything that happens here makes [this school] just an excellent place to grow up in, to go through your teenage years. You work hard at your study and everything else. And great mates. And when you leave take all of it with you and put it into your life.

This is just the best school I’ve been to. And I’ve been to a few.

At my other school, I thought things were okay but I didn’t have any point of comparison, but when I got here I went, “Wow! This is so excellent!”

There was, therefore, a manifestly positive disposition to what was happening in each school, a most refreshing enjoyment of school. For teachers, job satisfaction was clearly high:

I love the place. It’s always been a very happy place. Right from the beginning, everyone has been valued.

I go home each night and talk about what’s happening at the place and how I feel and my wife says, “You’re just so happy there.” It’s just the best school I know. We sent our own son here just for that reason, even though we’re not Catholic.

I love working here. I’m already 66, but I’ll be well over 120 by the time I hate it.

We have a happy place here. Visitors often comment on it. There’s an obvious sense of friendliness. That’s been the case in all the Marist schools I’ve taught in. People seem to bounce back through the tough times, put up with things that don’t go as planned, the trouble that kids get into, and keep laughing.

The prevalent attitude was reported as being one of optimism, at least with regard to students. This was especially the case with the older and more experienced teachers. One of them cautioned that this quality was an important feature of Marist schools and teachers needed to develop it in their approach to young people:

Our schools also have an optimism about them. We have to keep watching that, to keep that optimism, that encouragement. It is so important for us to boost kids up.
5.5.3 Presence of feminine qualities

The culture of nurture presented above was one aspect of a more broadly feminine dimension to Marist schools which evoked comment in four of the five schools, and all of the boys’ schools. Again, one principal related it to the Champagnat legacy.

Another thing that Champagnat would recognise is the feminine quality here. There’s a nurturing, accepting, warm, call it Marial, call it what you will. But at [X school] and [Y school], my sense is that it is very masculine. There is a harder edge to Irish Catholicism.

Others recognised that it was a softness and balance that had not always characterised Marist schools. They welcomed the re-emergence of something they regarded as an element of an authentically “Marist” or “Marial” spirit:

There’s a spirit here. When I arrived twenty years ago I thought it was football, maths and the rosary, but it’s a lot different now.

I think the old thing of kids in straight lines and Brother saying “Jump!” and the kids saying “How high?” — a lot of that has been tempered, and it has been tempered, I think, by women in the Marist organisation. They have challenged that way of doing it. There’s a real gentleness in this place and I think Marcellin would be very happy with that.

The connection was once again drawn with the French spirituality of the Marists, in contrast to the origin of other Catholic traditions

I came here after teaching in [X] & [Y] schools. Yes, the Marist spirit is very evident here. And it’s different, it’s a more human and understanding kind of Catholicism than I grew up on — I think it might have something to do with the French spirituality of the Marists.

From my own reading of the origins of our spirituality, I think Marcellin’s approach to Mary is very telling. It was a peasant spirituality and so we have that preferred term of his “Our Good Mother”. As a result, I think we have inherited a very human, maternal thing that as men we need to recognise and celebrate.

A number of teachers commented favourably on the contrast of their present school with boys’ schools in which they had previously taught:

I thought I was coming to a school that was ostensibly very similar to the one I was at previously. But this is a much nicer place; there is a softness here, a gentleness, yes, a niceness, that I didn’t expect in a boys’ school.

There was, nonetheless, a degree of male chauvinism and over-competitiveness reported in two of the schools — ones, ironically, from which the above comments had also come.
Women teachers, when respected, are seen as "honorary men" here. That's their way of accepting you. Gradually, it's being turned around. The most recent middle management appointments have gone to women.

Young men teachers fit in best in this place.

Marcellin would be horrified by the competitiveness promoted in this place.

Again, it is pointed that the point of reference is Marcellin Champagnat. That there was any male chauvinism or unbalanced toughness was seen as a value that was non-Marist.

5.5.4 Spirit of work

Among the most cherished stories recounted in the interviews were those of school "heroes" who were extraordinarily generous in spirit and disposed to practical action. They were people who had been seized by the urgency and the worth of the work at hand and gave themselves to it with some sacrifice. At times this was judged to be excessive and at a personal cost that was seen to be too high, a kind of "workaholism". Nonetheless, these were the people who were remembered and honoured, and therefore provide a window into a core value of the culture of the schools. Teachers showed an appreciation of the past and present colleagues and saw their disposition to work as part of their being Marist:

The Champagnat charism to me is about a spirit of work, that's what has built up this place, people like Brother Ignatius and Brother Cyprian and Brother Francis. That "get and do the job" spirit is what makes the best teachers here. The worst are those who arrive at 8.30 and leave at 3.30. But we haven't had many of them. There's been such a long history here of people working hard, not just in teaching, but in manual work.

[Teacher X] is the quintessential Marist: he does things. He is uncomfortable with bookish things. Marists have an engaging simplicity about them.

There appeared to be an expectation of generosity on the part of staff that most people accepted as part of the culture of the school:

When they were at this school, the Marist Brothers showed us how to have a generosity of heart and that has been a feature of the staff of this place, how we do things around here. We are and we show the kids how to be generous and ready to share. That's a Marist thing.
The things that have struck me in being here over the last year are the cohesiveness of the staff and the generosity of the staff. I've worked in a lot of places where there are generous people. But here it seems just to be expected, a way of life. That's the most outstanding difference.

You have to conform here — not in terms of the way you think, but in terms of your time commitment to the boys. Otherwise you just won't fit in.

If you're a 9 to 3 man or woman this place wouldn't suit you. It's a choice you make. Weekends and after school. Teachers who don't have the time or inclination for that, this is not the place for them.

It was something that students' saw their teachers model for them and a spirit of their schools that was compelling. The ready involvement of students across the spectrum of activity in the life of the schools was reported as a feature:

There's just so much energy that's put into everything here. And we get that from the teachers here. They really do lead by example. They actually get in and do it: they give up time, like after school and weekends. They don't say, "Well I've got a life," and leave at 3.30 pm. Like they care about us, so they give us their time.

Involvement here is huge. Whether it's rugby or Expressive Arts Week or walkathon or whatever. You just, like, get caught up in it.

Any kid can fit in here, as long as he is willing to make friends and get in and be involved in the place.

In two schools there was evidence of resistance to the expectation that staff be involved extensively in extra-curricular activity. While it appeared to be a present but not influential undercurrent in one of these schools, in the other it appeared to be an issue. For some newer members of staff there was an open questioning of the expectation and a measuring of the personal cost involved; for longer serving members of staff, there was a lament that an essentially Marist quality was at risk:

It's becoming harder to get staff to take teams than it was in the past. The same with debating, the rock elisteddfod, and other special activities. People just seem to be busier these days.

You do a lot here for no remuneration. I think people will jack up on that eventually. It's happening already. Too much is falling back to too few. That's not the attitude that made this school what it is. We need to address this issue.
In the same school, there was less enthusiasm also among the students for involvement in the co-curricular life of the school.

5.5.5 Simplicity

The simple, no-nonsense attitudes that were reported to influence the tone of the schools were valued by staff who all obviously shared a preference for this approach to organisational culture.

When I came from a state school to my first Marist school, I found it remarkably informal — with staff, in administrative procedures, and with kids. I was blown away with the openness and, I guess, simplicity.

Our kids are simple kids. They are good kids. And it’s a simple school. We keep it simple.

Of specific importance for them was the lack of pretence that they judged to characterise their relationships with each at all levels, the relationship with their students, and their general approach to education and schooling:

My first experience with Marist Brothers was of a very simple, unpretentious, down to earth, hands-on place. A very close relationship between the Brothers and the other teachers. My first impression of the Brothers was that they were very open. I then went to teach at another two Catholic schools, and I didn’t like it; I didn’t like the way they did things.

Marcellin would like that we’ve kept our fees down, and not gone after a GPS image, to be seen as a “better private school”. Chasing an upmarket image is somehow repugnant. That’s totally against what we’re on about.

Students, also, valued what they saw as an authenticity about their schools, even if their judgment of other schools appeared to suffer from a degree of adolescent severity:

It’s so superficial at other schools. Like, the school’s reputation is all they care about, but it’s so hollow because there’s nothing inside. Like, they don’t have any spirit, or they don’t know each other, or they’re not really proud of their school. Like, it’s not genuine. We don’t have that superficiality here. Like, for example, here we stress relationships and friendship and it’s real. Other schools say it that but they don’t do it.

A strong theme was the lack of rigorous legalism in dealing with students and interpreting Christianity, something that was also linked with a base disposition of simplicity which was able to distil the core from the peripheral:
In my experience of both, the Marist spirit tends to be more flexible than the rigid and closed Irish spirit of [another religious order]. That's reflected in the classroom and in spirituality. Relationships are less formalised and spirituality is less structured and by-the-book. The Marist spirit is more akin to normal living, more simple and unaffected, more down-to-earth.

5.5.6 Innovation / risk

Although not as strongly expressed as some other attitudes, there was evidence in each of the schools, and among all of the principals, of a readiness to take risks, to be innovative, and to take decisions that others may judge as bold. As one teacher put it, a willingness to take audacious steps was one of the great legacies of the Marist pioneers of the province:

Just look around you. This place is the result of big thinking, often done against the wishes of the powers that be.

Each school seemed to have a record of taking risks with students, for example, by enrolling at-risk students, by accepting students who may not have met the criteria for entry into other schools, or by devising innovative programmes to suit the needs of particular groups of students.

We'll often take on a kid here who wouldn't get into another Catholic school. Most of the time it pays off.

We're on about giving kids a go. We hope that they will develop that attitude in themselves — having a go.

A spirit of innovation was evident, but not as strongly as may have been expected by people who saw themselves as wanting to respond to the special needs of students in the most appropriate ways. Some staff spoke nostalgically of teachers and principals in the past who were outstanding examples of quite daring innovation. They did not see themselves in the same category. Nonetheless, three schools spoke with enthusiasm about projects that were being currently trialled. One older teacher commented:

There's always a new idea in the air here: how can we better meet the needs of these kids. Some might react cynically to it — interestingly, not usually the older members of staff — but most will always be open to giving things a go.
The spirit would therefore more accurately described as an openness to challenge and change. In at least four of the schools, teachers reported frequent school-driven change and a generally positive engagement by staff:

You see the strength of this school when you look at how much we’ve changed over the years. If you’re not comfortable with change then this is not the school for you.

Change is a way of life here; we’re used to it. Even though we have a very stable staff, I don’t think we’d let each other get into a rut, or let the school slide into a rut. No, I think we’re still fresh and open, even though there are a good few more grey hairs around the staff room than there were 12 years ago when I came.

There was among some of the teachers and all of the principals a sense of autonomous enterprise that most of them felt was unable to be fully expressed. The longer-serving members of staff were more sure of their ground, as is typified by this comment from a Religious Education coordinator:

The CEO doesn’t like our RE program, but we do it anyway. I think they’ve given up, now, trying to bring us to heel. We do it our way because we know that’s where the kids are, that’s what they need. And the CEO can’t argue with us because we’ve got the most highly qualified RE staff in the diocese.

There was quite negative criticism of the influence of Catholic Education Offices which were seen to be “intrusive, bureaucratic and the very antithesis of imagination”, and of the more general growth of educational bureaucracy and centralised accountability:

The administration of education can take away the natural and spontaneous response to kids and their needs. How much are we going down the path of the state system, meeting the dictates of the government and bureaucrats? Let’s just get on with it.

The cynical undertone of the above comment was present in most comments about the Catholic Education Offices of the dioceses in which the schools were situated. Three of the principals reserved some of the strongest comments of their interviews for the CEOs:

They have a very much “Big Brother” attitude. When you need their help they’re nowhere to be seen. When you don’t need them, they’re meddling.

It’s all about power. They’ve just got to have the power.
They used to be content with just providing a service, and they were good at that. Now they regard us as their functionaries. The whole thing's inside out. They are there to serve us, not the other way round.

I've simply become good at making the right noises at the right time, and they go away happy. But it's hardly the kind of administration that's helpful to empowering a school principal to be a leader of a community.

There was a clear sense of frustration among the systemic school principals who appeared to some extent to have had their instinctive creativity stifled to some extent, but there was an obvious disposition to bend rules and work at the limits of the centrally-set parameters.

5.5.7 Connectedness
One of the least consistently reported themes was the way in which the school interacted with its broader context, with particularly parents and the local church. The extent to which there was involvement with the wider community was not clearly evident. In two schools, principals and staff reported a high degree of parental involvement, particularly in the form of working bees, parents and friends organisations, advisory committees, and support for functions, meetings and events. Staff in these schools had opportunity for personal and professional contact with the majority of parents of their students, and reported a high level of knowledge of them. In the other three schools, there was far less evidence of strong parental involvement and, indeed, a sense in which there was only spasmodic connection between parents and staff, and little involvement of parents in the life of the school. There was, however, no evidence of an antipathy but rather a disconnectedness. Two principals commented on their experience of this:

It's really hard to get parents to come to P and F meetings, and the only staff who attend are me, and sometimes one or two others when invited either by me or the P and F. I sometimes feel that the staff and the parents are moving in non-intersecting circles. There's so much goodwill and generosity in both groups, but they don't connect.

Amid all the good that's happened with the increase in lay staff and the enriching of the Marist charism and so on, one casualty of the fewness of Brothers is the extent to which the school identifies with its local people. When there was a large Brothers' community here, and they were essentially
the staff of the school, then they worshipped in this parish church, they lived in this suburb, and they walked these streets. They were around and available. It was much easier for them to identify with the local people and vice-versa. It’s much more disparate now.

On the other hand, staff in one of the day schools commented strongly on the way parents were connected with the school:

There’s so much on here. It’s not unusual to have well over 100 parents at a P & F meeting, and we only have 600 kids in the school, maybe 400 families, I guess. And there are cocktail parties for each year group, always well attended. Staff always show up. It’s a big commitment, but it’s expected and you just get used to it.

All schools reported a large degree of disconnectedness, also, from their local churches. Despite some involvement of local clergy in the school, some programmes and initiatives which linked the schools and their parishes, and generally cordial relations, the schools and parishes did not have extensive contact. This situation, and that of the preference for autonomy identified in 5.5.6, suggest a sense of insularity about the culture of Marist schools.

### 5.6 ACTIONAL THEMES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thematic group</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Sub-theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Actional themes</td>
<td>Simplicity</td>
<td>Simple teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Simple procedures, ways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good order</td>
<td>Calm and well-ordered school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Competent teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good example</td>
<td>Sense of the importance of modelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Modelling of good relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Witness of the Brothers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Co-curricular programmes</td>
<td>Importance of holistic education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Importance of sport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Community service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rewards &amp; recognition</td>
<td>Recognition of merit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 5.6.1 Simplicity

The attitudinal preference for simplicity described above (5.5.5) found strong expression in the preferred ways of acting in the schools. Those teachers most honoured in stories were those not only who achieved
highly with their students or related well with them, but those who had a reputation for teaching with simplicity. "A good teacher," said one student in a typical description, "is someone who makes it simple, makes it fun, and makes it interesting." Teachers valued what they described as "uncomplicated" schools, where people "concentrated on the trees rather than the leaves" when it came to administration, organisation and expectation. One principal described his induction to a Marist school as its deputy:

My first introduction to a Marist school, after all my life in [another Catholic] background, was old Brother X who gave me a little thing to read, and the phrase that struck me and has remained with me was "Marist Education is simple. It is simply to do with treating kids equally, making them feel welcome, doing it under the patronage of Mary, and a few other things. But it was simple. I love that idea.

Some incidents were related of teachers, particularly those in middle management, who had experienced resistance from their colleagues by adopting methods and personal styles that were not simple:

We had one senior member of staff here a few years back. Very intelligent and, I suppose, quite competent. But her way was not the Marist way. Everything was a big deal. There were systems for this and proformas for that and five-phase procedures for something else. People around here just like it to be simple, without all the paper warfare, none of that administration by memo and handbook. Not sloppy or disorganised, but simple and no-nonsense. She eventually got frustrated and moved on. I believe she’s doing well somewhere else, but it wasn’t our scene.

The clear preference was for a culture that had simple procedures and ways of operating.

5.6.2 Good order

A preference for a calm and well ordered school was valued by many staff groups, in each of the five schools, although not mentioned by students and principals. Each comment on this theme was attended, however, by another which emphasised the largely non-fearful context of the environment. There was no sense in which the good order had a military or straight-jacketed flavour:

Even though we’re just ten years old, this is a good, old fashioned school. The kids sit down, they listen, they have respect for teachers, there’s good order and discipline. But it’s not a fearful place.
Somehow we've got to a situation here over the years, that you don't have to
direct and push kids to help or to behave. It just seems to happen. There seems
to be an acceptance — they accept that we are on their side.

In three of the schools the daily discipline matters were reported as
relatively minor issues:

At a student leaders' camp, kids from other schools were talking about drugs,
and violence and vandalism, big things like that. When it came the turn of our
captains to share their biggest problem, all they could think of was litter in the
playground.

One teacher explained the climate of good order with the mix of high
expectation and pastoral concern, relating it once again to what would be
expected of a family:

I have found the family spirit I have seen here to also have been in another
Catholic school in which I taught, interestingly enough also run by a French
order. But they didn't have the same sense of order and expectations on students
that is here. Also the staff here are more open and cohesive.

For a large number of others, both staff and students, it was the extent of
competent teaching in the school that was an important element to the
overall tone.

5.6.3 Good example

There was a consistent view among staff in all but one of the schools of
the importance of modelling the kinds of values, attitudes and
behaviours that they were attempting to develop in the students.

If you don't have teachers who have a sense of social justice, who don't have
Christ at the centre of their own lives, and make that explicit to the students,
then I think you've got a school population, a clientele, that will go out into the
world with this place not having touched them nearly as much as it could have
touched them.

The staff should model what we expect a Grade 12 graduate to be.

For me, one of the most important things in a Marist school is modelling.
Modelling the sorts of things that Marcellin was saying. There is, naturally
enough, a chauvinism in the College as a boys' school and staff need to model
something different.

The kind of modelling that was most emphasised was that to do with the
values which reflected the Christian purposes of the schools. The most
commonly expressed need was the importance of **modelling of good relationships**:

We are conscious that how we relate to each other, and most particularly how we relate to the students, is a more powerful model for them than anything we might say or teach.

In four of the schools, specific mention was made by lay staff about the **witness of the Brothers** on staff or in leadership. They attributed the tone of staff and often much of the credibility of staff in the eyes of the students to the modelling of the Brothers. One teacher used the example of the **style of relationships prevalent** in the school as attributable to the community of Brothers present in the school:

If you trace back to why people are so free to be open with each other, I think it’s the Marist Brothers. They are very tolerant people. Even when it comes down to religion. Everyone has their own points of view. There’s no Marist Brothers’ party line at all. And that I guess has opened the door for people to be open and friendly.

### 5.6.4 Co-curricular programmes

Programmes and strategies which provided a well-rounded, **holistic education** were present in all the schools and strongly supported by staff and students. Significantly, they were seen as ways of extending the amount of contact staff had with students; this was reported as their main contribution.

The co-curricular stuff is so important. You get to know the kids in the musical and the debating teams really well. I’m sure the rugby coaches do also.

The big music and drama programme here is important, and those boys are seen of no less value than the sportsmen.

We do so much, I guess, because we like what we do, and we judge it important to get to know the kids outside the classroom. You can only go so far in establishing relationships just as a classroom teacher. It’s often hard to go much beyond just a good rapport. But contact outside the classroom, particularly in something that both you and the kids are interested in, and enjoy, and work at together — yes, that’s when you really get to know kids and form relationships with them, and affect them in ways that will stay with them.

Among the extra-mural activities, the **importance of sport** was emphasised, especially by the students. Even in schools where staff did not make specific mention of sport, the students emphasised its place in
their school lives. This was the case in both the boys and the coeducational schools, and by girls as much as boys.

Here sport is a great passion. I was at [another school] for a couple of years and they talk about a great tradition, but you look at it and a lot of it's compulsory. It looks good to everyone else but you don't know the background. You're forced, but here you're not forced, but so many go along anyway to support the First Fifteen.

The thing I have enjoyed most, I think, was being chosen to represent my school. Like, the whole experience of the season. It was excellent. The team-spirit that we built up with Miss [X] and the other girls was great.

There was no school, however, where the students did not point out the balance of their extra-curricular programme and the value that they placed on this balance. This was particularly the case in the boys' schools, and in each there was a feeling that significant gains had been made in this area in recent years.

Sport's really good and the last few years it's been strong because so many people get in and support it, but there's a lot more than sport. There's more cultural aspects pushed. Academic has always been a strong point of the College and now with music and art, the whole College is supporting that.

Of less significance in each school, but commented on in four of them, was the place of community service. It was usually mentioned by staff rather than students, and put in the context of developing attitudes of social responsibility:

Community service has always been a strong part of what we do with kids here. It's a key ingredient in what we're trying to do with them, or lead them to: a sense of social justice, and their part in achieving a more just and fair society.

5.6.5 Rewards and recognition
A feature of the culture of each school was the extent to which effort and achievement, particularly of students but also of staff, were recognised and rewarded. Schemes of merit certificates, awards ceremonies, honour pockets, honour boards, trophies and prizes were all present and valued by students. Particularly in the boys' schools it was seen to be very important. Teachers and principals commented on their strategies to create a climate that was conducive to boys' academic and creative achievement. One teacher summarised the view of many:
This whole boys' education agenda is something we have taken on here. So much of what you read in the paper about boys not achieving, not getting into the drama or the debating, or the leadership, is just not true of this school. I think that's largely because we reinforce the message that all of that is okay. We are very public about positive messages and rewards we give to boys who try in those areas.

Staff, also, reported recognition of their efforts, done through service awards, public thanks, gifts, and "thank-you dinners."

5.7 SPIRITUAL THEMES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thematic group</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Sub-theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual themes</td>
<td>Priority of evangelisation</td>
<td>Importance attached to the mission RE Visible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Relevance/appropriateness of RE Visible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>practice of the presence of God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Explicit reference to Mary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liturgy</td>
<td></td>
<td>Emphasis on good liturgy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Strong staff/student involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Positive disposition of students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Family celebration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious education</td>
<td></td>
<td>Attention to spiritual needs of staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff spirituality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The religious dimension of schools' cultures was reported reasonably consistently across the schools but, except for the place of liturgy in the cultural lives of the schools, it was not a theme as strongly expressed as those already presented.

5.7.1 Priority of evangelisation

Although it did not occupy a large proportion of any discussion, there was a clear and uncontested importance attached to the mission of the Gospel within each school, that is to make Jesus Christ known and loved. There was frequent reference by staff and principals to the way in which the school was the main experience of church for most students, if not their only one. They had a shared sense of their responsibility to present the Gospel in ways that engaged the students.

What we're about here is sharing our faith, making Jesus known and loved, in simple ways. That was Champagnat's way.
The religious education programme in each school was described favourably by both staff and students. Staff reported the effort that went into ensuring the programme was something that was taught well, was relevant and appropriate. No staff group was entirely satisfied with its efforts, an indication of both the priority placed on religious education and the challenge it presented. Nevertheless, comments such as this were made in several schools:

In RE we make a strong point of tapping into the kids’ experience, meeting them where they are. We tend to talk about their spirituality rather than their religion and we find them to be very receptive by and large.

A belief in the spirituality of young people and a recognition of their openness to spiritual and religious experiences was common to all schools. One principal remarked that:

There is a prayerfulness in the kids here that is quite extraordinary, quite extraordinary. The boarders attendance at Mass here is quite remarkable. A great sense of the sacred. And I do talk a lot about that with the boys: the chapel as our sacred place. It touches into the aboriginal and PNG kids especially. There is a tradition here of the kids visiting the chapel.

Another commented that

Visitors have been struck by how quiet a thousand kids can be at Assembly during the prayer time. They say, “That’s not normal, that kids could be that quiet.”

The place of student retreats, particularly the senior retreat, was specifically highlighted. “We gear the whole year around the Year 12 retreat,” was the simple statement of the head of religious education in one school. The students were effusive in their comments of their retreat experience, consistently rating it among the most memorable and positive of their time at school:

We came back just floating from our retreat; it was great. Everyone got into it, and kids were really positive. It was just an excellent experience.

It was a really special time for me, and for all the kids in our form.

The religious education programmes, retreats and liturgical events were conducted within school environments which were rich with religious symbolism and iconography. Within each school there were many signs
and customs indicating they were religious institutions. This had the
effect, as one principal put it, of encouraging the “visible practice of the
presence of God”. Statues around the school, crucifixes and religious
pictures in each room, school chapels, prayers at the beginning and end
of classes, names on buildings, mottoes and school badges, all served to
express the purposes of the schools. Principals, in particular, pointed to
the importance of these expressive symbols in the culture of the schools:

   Everything speaks of the sacredness of the place — all the symbols around the
   College. And the chapel is perfectly situated, at the very heart of the school.
   You can’t avoid it wherever you walk. And obviously my predecessors have
   stressed that.

   The whole “presence of God” thing that Champagnat was on about is here. And
   that rubs off in care for each other and the dignity of each other, and a place for
   everyone

The place of Mary as a point of reference or a focus of modelling or
devotion, features which might have been expected in Marist schools,
was not strongly in evidence. Indeed, apart from religious symbols and
names, the only occasions when explicit reference to Mary was made was
by the school principals. In those instances it was her example that was
highlighted. One principal put it this way:

   Father Champagnat would want to see us give a special place given to Mary,
   the first disciple, a model for us on how to live our lives, on how to say “yes” to
   God, saying “yes” to life, to the ordinary circumstances of every day. And it
   would please him if the kids were saying “yes” to life. They mightn’t put it in
   Marial terms here, but they do say “yes”.

5.7.2 Liturgy

Without exception among the schools, and in four of them very
strongly, there was an emphasis on good liturgy, where considerable
time and effort went into its preparation, where there was the
expectation of strong involvement by staff and students, and where high
levels of liturgical expertise and creativity were invested. Time taken for
singing practices, and for preparation of readers, dramatists, dancers,
acolytes, musicians was taken for granted in the life of the school. As
one teacher put it:
They are more than just customary things to do — that all schools do or all Marist schools do — although there is a value at that level, too. But they are more than that. We go to a lot of trouble to put into ritual what we hold most sacred, the values that we share: our belief in Jesus, our honouring of Champagnat, academic endeavour, the pursuit of excellence, our multi-cultural heritage, whatever. These are the values and purposes that we share; that’s what we include in our liturgy and rituals.

5.9 DIRECTIONAL THEMES

Table 5.8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thematic group</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Sub-theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Directional themes</td>
<td>Walkabout leadership</td>
<td>Personal knowledge of students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Presence among students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strength of Leadership</td>
<td>Strong articulation of high expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Compassion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Big and creative thinking with disposition for action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sense of autonomous enterprise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cultural leadership</td>
<td>Articulation of Marist values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Commitment to Marist values and style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Promotion of staff enculturation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Promotion of cultural expression and ritual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Integrity</td>
<td>Personal internalisation and modelling of Marist values</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.9.1 Walkabout leadership

The principals of the each of the five schools, and their predecessors, were presented as the antithesis of the desk-bound administrator. The most commonly admired qualities of their leadership were their personal knowledge of the students and their physical presence among the students. It is a statement both of the cultural priorities of the school communities as well as of the principals themselves that these two characteristics of leadership should be the most highly prized of all the expectations of the school principal. “The kids would have a real sense that the principal knows them and cares for them,” said one teacher. It was a view frequently echoed:

Br X [former principal] was a legend. He took playground on his own, came up on the weekend to do the mowing; he’d know everyone by name. He wasn’t someone out there, he was someone they could talk to, even just to say hello. He modelled a style of relating to kids; he was a good example to the teachers. He really valued the kids. Each kid.
I've been in several Marist schools. In each one the Principal has had an extraordinary relationship with the students. They've always felt comfortable with him, a real warmth.

I've seen very different principals here over the long time I've been here. They've all had their "thing", their particular priorities, from sport to cleanliness to curriculum, but they had some things in common: they were always available to kids, and the smallest boy in the school was as important as anyone else. They have all been approachable.

5.9.2 Strength of leadership

A quality which also drew a strong and consistent amount of appreciation was concerned with the strength of leadership and the particular style in which that strength was exercised. Principals were usually seen to be people with high expectations of their school community, and had the ability to articulate these with strength and clarity. They were seen typically as unambiguous leaders who had high standards for both students and staff. That they were usually successful in having people reach these standards was based on the relationship they had with the members of their schools.

The Principal at the Marist school I was at before this was incredible with the kids: tough as buggery in some ways but he had an extraordinarily friendly relationship with them. He took them with him, a real leader.

Some teachers were critical of the "benevolent dictator" style of leadership they had known and sought a more democratic approach:

We've had strong leaders and Marcellin would have approved of that, but I think he would have also wanted to see a bit more collaboration.

One group saw it in terms of family. They described the ideal of leadership as not the family of the "Victorian era":

We need to keep talking about Marcellin Champagnat and the family concept, and renewing it because it can bog down into an old-fashioned model. We need to develop a bit more the model we have of family. If it is one of a father who knows best, looking after the children (as it may have been in the past) then that is not best for today. There is an implication for leadership here. The model I'd prefer to see is of a mature family, sitting around a table like this: a model of an adult family.

This was not a strongly expressed view, evident only in two schools and cited once in each case. More common was the report that principals
were able to show compassion in their leadership, not compromising their care of students in pursuit of the other expectations:

Nothing that Br X ever says or does, no matter how strict he might seem to be, ever is more important than his sensitivity to the needs of individual kids.

There are all kinds of allowances made here in the interests of kids. We don’t see them as compromise, but as empathy.

The strength of leadership was also expressed through the bigness and creativity of the ideas that principals brought to their planning. Staff and students, as well as incumbent principals, recognised that they were the beneficiaries of “big-picture people” who also had a disposition for action and could bring their plans to effect.

Our principals have been people of grand vision and more than a touch of the entrepreneur. They’ve had a can-do attitude in the best sense of that. They’ve been people to shun pettiness and bureaucratic bullshit and do what needs to be done, and do it well. Just look at the buildings on this campus.

Some flavour of a sense of autonomous enterprise which was suspicious and intolerant of bureaucratic interference and sceptical of outside authority was frequently mentioned. It was a source of confidence for staff and a badge of pride for some of the principals.

We feel confident with [the present principal] because we know he will do what needs to be done, say what needs to be said, build what needs to be built, throw out what needs to be thrown out. He’ll do it, as they say, without fear or favour. And that flows on to the rest of us.

5.9.3 Cultural leadership
In all schools staff commented strongly on the way in which the principal gave explicit leadership to the Marist charism and character within the school. Principals were aware of their role in this respect and each of them was able to speak of his or her role as a cultural or symbolic leader. First, principals were reported as people who gave articulation to Marist values. Through such means as their newsletter editorials, addresses at school assemblies and meetings with staff, principals found opportunities to shape the school’s self perception as “Marist”. In speaking of a former lay principal of his school, one teacher commented:
[He] mentioned “Marist” 50,000 times. He said it all the time, and said what it meant. He said it and said it, so much so that it’s just a very natural thing here now.

Principals described their responsibility in terms such as this:

I have a mandate to promote a Marist style spirituality, and for that to rub off on the kids and their future families, on the staff.

It’s very important for the future that our schools be properly Marist. We have a gift to share with the Church and the world. People need to know the gift, be able to recognise the gift, share the gift and promulgate the gift. I feel that I can do that here.

It was an admired quality of present principals and a hope for future ones, especially in the context of greater numbers of lay principals, that they be committed to Marist values and cultural style. One teacher’s comment was typical of many:

We’ve been lucky to have such strong Marist leaders here. It’s just absolutely essential that whoever is principal here in the years ahead is a thoroughly Marist person. We would feel betrayed if that were not the case. And that means lots of preparation.

A key component of their exercise of cultural leadership was the way in which the principals promoted staff enculturation into the Marist way. “There has been a ‘broad-basing’ of the Marist ethos in this school,” said one teacher, “and this has come about through the efforts of [the principal]. Sharing Our Call [a Marist staff development programme] has been very important in that process.” Principals were seen to be giving active leadership in this area, something that was valued by staff and, therefore, an indicator of the principals’ success as cultural leaders.

Also important was the principals’ emphasis on promotion of cultural expression and ritualisation. The principal’s sense of the story of the school, their own respect for its heroes, their ability to organise or sponsor ritual and liturgy which enhanced the sense of shared values, meanings, stories and identity, that brought the whole school community into it, were all themes which both principals and staff identified as characteristic of their own schools.
5.9.4 Integrity

It was the experience and also the expectation of staff and students that their leaders be people who had internalised and were able to model the Marist values they espoused. Without exception, they reported that this was the case, in both present and past principals, with the reservation somewhat in evidence in two schools that the level of collaboration was less than it might have been. Students, in particular, liked their principals. They saw them as people of integrity, people to be admired. While not blind to their human foibles, they respected their sincerity, evenness of temperament, consistency, generosity, hospitality and loyalty. Staff admired also their lack of pretence, their availability, and the way they did not treat people differentially.

We are very lucky here to have two men of such integrity at the top. They are both dispassionate and compassionate as they need to be. They are predictable in their dealings with staff and transparent in their motives. I value it because in other places I have had a quite different experience.

The sense of family is very, very strong here, but depends to some extent on the headmaster of the day. [The headmasters I have known here] have been very, very simple men, who could see through all the hypocrisy and pretence of some people around them, stayed out of any power games and were above any politics on staff. They have been bigger men than that. Real leaders.

5.10 PURPOSEFUL THEMES

Table 5.9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thematic group</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Sub-theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Purposeful themes    | Sense of self-worth | Self esteem
|                      |                     | Sense of hope                                                             |
|                      |                     | Sense of purpose                                                          |
|                      |                     | Disposition to work and achieve                                           |
|                      |                     | Integrity                                                                 |
|                      |                     | Integration and balance                                                  |
| Sense of social responsibility |                     | Care                                                                      |
|                      |                     | Respect                                                                   |
|                      |                     | Social conscience                                                         |
|                      |                     | Critical awareness                                                       |
| Sense of spirituality |                     | Active Christianity                                                      |
|                      |                     | Sense of being spiritual                                                 |
Although expressed in various ways, and without the commonality of phrases that characterised the previous thematic groups, there were several identifiable, consistent themes that were expressed consistently across the schools. Students tended to see the goals of the school in more immediate terms than did staff and principals who more easily took the longer view of the kind of people they hoped their students would become.

5.10.1 Sense of self-worth

Students and staff shared the view that graduates of their schools should leave their schools with a deep sense of their own worth and goodness. Self-esteem was identified by staff as a key goal, particularly among adolescents. “We have a challenge here,” said one teacher, “to give our kids the message that they are people of worth and dignity, and of as much worth and dignity as anyone else.” Teachers linked healthy self-esteem with a sense of hope and a sense of purpose:

Giving young people a reason to believe in themselves and in their futures is at the heart of what we’re about. The world is in need of hope-filled people. That’s a Marist thing, you know, a Marial quality. If people have a genuine Marial spirituality, then they will be believers, optimists, full of reason to live. A Marist school should be known for that sort of spirit.

Students saw worth in “striving for their best”, and being “willing to have a go.” Such a disposition for work and action was an attitude that they thought their school would want them to carry into their future lives. Both staff and students hoped that their graduates would be people of integrity, able to integrate the values learned at school into their future lives.

5.10.2 Sense of social responsibility

There was a clearly held view across the participants that the schools should be leading young people to develop a sense of social responsibility. This was seen to be a key goal of a great number of the programmes and broad thrust of the school. The most frequently mentioned qualities were care and respect. “It all comes down to
respect," said one group of students. "All the rules of this place, all of what they want us to be, it's all about respect." All student groups expressed the view that the worth of their lives would be assessed by the quality of the care and love that marked them. There was an occasional mention of material or career success, but largely in jest. The consistency of the students' articulation of these values was most striking.

Staff in four schools also expressed this purpose in terms of social conscience and a critical awareness of the world, and their church.

If a person leaves this school without having developed a sound social conscience, then I think we have failed. This is part of the culture of Catholic schools in this country and, I hope, should be an important goal of every Marist school. I wonder if it is, sometimes.

I hope our boys will become people who are socially critical. I'd like to think that they'd see that being Catholic is a lot more than writing your name on a document. They have the ability to analyse and judge what is going on in society and the Church. I hope they can have the wherewithal to question and to stand up against the wrong thing. To stand up for justice and equity.

5.10.3 Sense of spirituality
The more explicitly religious goals of the school were not strongly expressed by students outside their manifest openness to the religious education experiences of school and a positive disposition towards things of a spiritual nature. Staff expressed the view that the students would remain open to the spiritual dimension of their lives. They did not tend to put this in terms of traditional Catholic practice, but more in terms of faith development and the practice of an active Christianity which engaged the Church in positive but critical ways. It was a sense of themselves as spiritual people that staff hoped for the young people in their care.
Chapter Six

TOWARDS A SNAPSHOT OF MARIST SCHOOL CULTURE

This chapter discusses the bases for formulation of the second stage of interviews with ten key informants and presents the findings from these interviews. It concludes with a narrative synopsis of the culture of the culture of Marist schools that crystallises the findings of the field research.

6.1 FORMULATION OF PHASE 2 INTERVIEWS
The aims of the Phase 2 interviews were twofold: first, to validate the synthesis of the emergent themes, as summarised in Chapter 5; and second, to draw out and clarify any themes which were inadequately or ambiguously developed in the first stage of interviews. The interviews were structured around the eight thematic groups identified in Phase 1. (See Appendix D). Questions were developed to carry the key words which had been identified around each theme, with the intention of testing the extent to which these words captured the essence of each thematic concept. Further questions explored the areas in which there was apparent confusion, inconsistency, or insufficient treatment in Phase 1. Attention was given to those themes which were most strongly evident as well as those which were less than conclusive in the initial round of interviews and first stage of analysis. Areas of focus for each of the thematic groups are presented below.

6.1.1 Relational themes
The central concept which required validation at this stage of the study was the pivotal role of the quality, style and importance of personal
relationships within the school environments. The use of the analogy of “family” to describe the distinctive characteristics of these relationships in the cultural style of Marist schools was the primary aspect of this validation. It was also necessary to explore further the understanding of “family spirit” since there was some minor ambiguity around this in Phase 1.

6.1.2 Pastoral themes
“Maternalism” or a “culture of nurture” emerged in Phase 1 as possible core descriptors of the style of pastoral care that was distinctive in the culture of Marist schools. This was the focus of further exploration of this theme. There was also the opinion aired in Phase 1 that a significant group of teachers was less able or willing to understand and deal appropriately with reluctant learners. This was also addressed in Phase 2 interviews.

6.1.3 Attitudinal themes
Of the seven shared attitudinal positions identified in the initial interviews, emphasis was given to those around which there was some ambiguity: the level of internalisation of Marist values among staff; the apparent conflict between the encouragement of feminine qualities and the presence of male chauvinism or excessive competitiveness in the culture; and the degree to which there was a diminishing connectedness of the school community with its wider community, specifically with its parent group and its local church. The suggestion that the French origins of Marist education may have given it a particular flavour and cultural style was also discussed.

6.1.4 Actional themes
Each of the five actional themes was mentioned, but the main focus was given to the important Marist priorities of “presence” and “good example” — the extent to which staff were willing and encouraged to be
actively present in the lives of their students with the intention of positive modelling and forming relationships conducive to the students' holistic growth. This was addressed particularly in the context of the personal cost of such involvement that was expressed in two schools in Phase 1.

6.1.5 Spiritual themes
The promotion of good liturgy emerged as a cultural feature of Marist schools in Phase 1. The role this played in the life of the school — the membership of which was also identified as largely unchurched — was a question which required further clarification. Also in need of more discussion from the initial round of interviews were the depth of staff spirituality and the place of explicitly Marist spirituality.

6.1.6 Ritual themes
Since these themes emerged both strongly and consistently across the five schools, they were not developed further in the second round of interviews. The level of cultural knowledge, the presence of cultural icons and the ritualisation of shared meanings — all positive indicators of a strong culture — were briefly presented for validation and developed further only if the interviewee sought to take the discussion in that direction.

6.1.7 Directional themes
Among the directional themes, the topic which most benefited from further exploration was the way in which "strength of leadership" was exercised, specifically the way in which principals were able to balance high expectation with compassion, and autonomy with collaboration. The other themes — walkabout leadership, cultural leadership, and integrity — required only brief mention.
6.1.8 Purposeful themes
The extent to which there was a shared sense of common purpose among the members of Marist schools was the focus of this thematic group. The three themes identified in the five schools — self worth, social responsibility, and spirituality — were put out for response. The third theme was given most attention since there was some evidence of a confusion or lack of precision about the schools’ religious goals in Phase 1.

6.2 FINDINGS

6.2.1 General
For a group which represented a wide spectrum of vantage points on the culture of Marist schools, the ten key informants reflected a consistently strong and clear echo of the findings of Phase 1. Again, there was a ready and consistent identification of a distinctively Marist cultural style and a facility with which it was discussed. The thematic structure given to the Phase 1 data was endorsed, along with its emphases on relational and pastoral themes. Some extra clarity was given to particular areas, especially the directional themes. Some others of the ambiguities, or at least the points of some cultural weakness or confusion, that were present in Phase 1 were similarly expressed in this stage of the study, pointing to possible areas of breakdown between core values and their cultural expression in the schools.

Two themes which emerged more strongly through the Phase 2 conversations were simplicity and the influence of a Marial spirituality. Although the former was not included prominently on the schedule of indicative interview questions it presented itself repeatedly as a key descriptor of the attitudinal, actional and directional themes. It was also understood to be essential within the style of relationships between
teachers and students. It could be seen, therefore, as a core value of the
culture. Similarly, albeit it had less cognisance in the schools, a Marial
orientation clearly emerged as a core cultural value, finding expression
also in the style of approach to young people, the nature of pastoral care,
shape of leadership and, of course, the spirituality of the school. Each of
these is presented in more detail below.

6.2.2 Relational themes
The foundational importance of the quality of interpersonal
relationships and the priority given to them were universally endorsed.
The culture of the schools was seen to have developed around this
pivotal emphasis. A deputy principal with a lengthy background in
Marist schools put it this way, instinctively revealing one of the core
values of his experience of Marist education and a measure of the quality
of a school:

We're not an accountancy firm, we're a school. We are centred on human
relationships. The better the relationships, the better the school.

A person with over fifty years experience of Marist schools, mostly as
principal, summed up the criteria for a genuinely Marist culture:

The first thing that Marcellin would look for if he were to walk into the school
would be the kind of relationships that existed between teachers and students

All interviewees supported the proposition that “family spirit” best
captured the essence of these relationships. Although there had been a
little ambiguity about the term in Phase 1, it was clearly explained by all
interviewees in this phase to describe the way members of the school
responded to each other, related to each other and understood their
positions in the school. All articulated this in consistent ways,
supporting the proposition that the term meant that people were in the
kind of relationship that would be expected in a loving and functional
family. Someone with exposure to many Marist schools summarised it
this way:
Family is a metaphor — it’s a way of describing our style of education: that we try to act as big brothers and big sisters to little brothers and little sisters. That determines the whole way that a school operates: it’s not masters and apprentices, masters and pupils. It’s about walking with, immersing yourself in their lives, with a strong sense of respect, enhancing the dignity of each person, making each young person feel loved in the fullest sense of that word, just like they would be in a good family, that they’re forgiven, that parameters are set for their security and their support, and that it all starts with love.

Others expressed it similarly:

When we were doing our mission statement, the thing that came up in every meeting was this sense of family spirit. By it we meant a sense of belonging, of caring, of valuing each other. It is a core value. It’s also a good metaphor because it doesn’t imply or insist on perfection. In families you have tensions and difficulties and things go wrong and some members of the family let you down. It can accommodate that all of that happens in schools.

Family spirit is first an affirmation of people. It’s saying to people that this is not concerned just with product, with turning out something. No, there is a spirit of genuine concern, so that people are looked after, and genuinely cared about. It’s an inclusive thing: everyone is welcomed, and valued.

Family spirit is about how teachers relate to kids — the older brother, younger brother approach. That happens, it’s not just theory. Some do it better than others, but generally there’s not a sense of master-pupil style relationships. There’s a sense of belonging.

Several made the point that they understood it as a distinctively Marist way of expressing the Christian ideal of community:

“Community” is not a word that best captures what we understand by family. Our language is different: we prefer to describe ourselves as the “school family” rather than the “school community”. There’s a sense of belonging, there’s a style of relating, and it’s a human thing in the sense that families also have squabbles and aren’t always perfect.

Key constituent values of “family spirit” included respect, belief in each person, hospitality, faithfulness to people, ease of relationships, appropriate limits and supports, lack of pretence with each other, lack of distance and a certain egalitarianism. For each interviewee these were at the heart of the school, so intrinsic to its modus operandi that it “was just the air that you breathed.” Those who had had experience of other traditions of Catholic schooling were strongest in their emphasis of the importance of family spirit:

I became so used to the phrase “Marist family” it was only when I came [as principal] to [another Catholic school] and tried to work under the same assumptions about style that I realised how natural it was to Marist schools.
People were just not as close here, or didn't relate in family-type ways or use family-type words about each other. The family thing is so very strong with the Marists. There's no question about it; you feel it in their schools.

The view was expressed by one interviewee with knowledge of Marist schools in other parts of the world, that there was an opinion that Australian Marist schools had developed this aspect of the charism more richly than anywhere else. It is seen to have emerged from the style of community life that grew up in Marist Brothers' monasteries, a view volunteered by three of the informants:

I think the culture has found its source in how Marist Brothers live their community life. It comes down to that, I think. I have always found that their monasteries are first of all homes, not just houses or places to live. They are warm places, very hospitable, places where people want to be. I have always felt extraordinarily welcomed in them, extraordinarily so. They go out of their way to be hospitable to you. I have never felt a gap between me and a Brother just because he is a Brother. It's all very human.

The school has been just an extension of the Brothers' community. They live like a family, relate as a family, share family values, and that's what I see they have taken into their schools. That's where the culture comes from.

6.2.3 Pastoral themes

The primary place given to pastoral care which was evident from the first round of interviews was also strongly present in the second. All agreed that the working assumptions of the schools gave primary place to the pastoral welfare of students, predominantly through a style consistent with the family spirit presented above. One person, with time in senior and middle management in several schools commented:

In each Marist school I've been in, there's been a tension between the pastoral care team and the curriculum people. In each place the pastoral leadership team has been generally perceived as being kind of "more important". People who come from other systems, especially state schools but many Catholic ones also, take some time to get used to this.

This priority was exemplified by one of the interviewees who, as school principal, followed the practice of supervising the weekly detention class:

It allows me to get to know those kids very well, to form a good and open relationship with them, and earn their trust and respect. They develop a real affection for you, and you for them. It's the best thing I do in terms of caring for kids.
Another had the custom of always taking the afternoon bus supervision, while a third was reported as supervising the canteen each lunch-time. In each case there was evidence of the importance attached to knowledge of individuals, presence in the midst of students, discipline without tension and belief in the goodness of students — all expressions of the particular style of pastoral care which presented itself in Phase 1. One person exemplified his experience of it:

A feature of Marist schools is the extraordinary amount of time we give to students outside of class. Of course, we try to teach well and meet all the expectations on us as teachers, but we also give an enormous amount of time to many, many other involvements. And teachers just do it because that's the way it's done. There's no talk of money or remuneration in any form, not here anyway. It's not extra-curricular, it's part of the main game. One of the things that arises out of that is the great relationships between teachers and students — there's a friendliness, warmth, and easiness. Teachers and students talk easily about personal things.

Another qualified his comments, but still held out "presence" as a core cultural value:

Most staff are aware of the Marist emphasis on "presence" and try to do it very well. And most of them do it very well. But in every school there is a group of staff who pooh-pooh the whole thing. It's often just a small group, but they can have some influence because most people find it hard to deal with cynics.

A key idea put up for validation in this phase was the proposal that the cultural style of pastoral care in Marist schools was analogous to that which a mother would provide, an instinctive emphasis on nurture which balanced high hopes and expectations with strong support, love and forgiveness. This hypothesis was supported by the experience of all those interviewed.

Yes, I like the maternal idea. Speaking as a parent, I can see that our approach here is very similar: we want the very best for our kids, but we love them still if they don't fulfil those hopes.

The maternal image is right, but I think it's becoming much better than it was. We have shifted in the way we approach kids. We are more gentle with kids, the move away from corporal punishment, the putting kids into classes and groups where they can be known — they're all maternal things. But also those high expectations — that's a parental thing, too. You want the very best and you give them every opportunity and support to do that. I think the maternal image, and the whole family metaphor, gives us a very integrated view of our approach. It's one with which we are comfortable. It suits us.
In my experience, a great deal of energy was always given to finding any number of ways to allow kids to shine. It could be sport, it could be personal relationships within the form, it could be leadership, it could be study, it could be music. Nurturing self-esteem was so important.

Several interviewees were uneasy with understanding a culture of nurture as an exclusively maternal notion, preferring to see it as more inclusively parental. Each of these people was also a father and reflected on the qualities he brought to this role. The maternal idea was not proposed, however, as a dichotomous mother/father descriptor but rather as a slant or instinctive style around which a culture had developed. In this context it was understood by all as a valid metaphor.

There was also a connection made in a number of interviews between a maternal culture and the Marian focus of Marist spirituality.

I always remember Champagnat’s preference for calling Mary “our Good Mother”. It was the “mother” thing that was important to him, that maternal thing.

I’ve often equated the style of care in Marist schools with Marial qualities, maternal qualities. I think the word “nurture” captures it.

This is developed further below (see 6.2.4 and 6.2.6) in discussing the place of the feminine in Marist culture and the place of Mary in the spiritual dimensions of the culture.

A specific aspect of the Phase 1 data that was put out for further clarification in Phase 2 was the suggestion that a growing number of teachers was less able to relate to or form helpful relationships with reluctant learners and other students with learning difficulties. There was a mixed reaction to this idea. While some interviewees did not see evidence of it, others were in strong support

Caring for the disadvantaged is strong in Marist schools. It is not only an important part of the rhetoric but it was also certainly my experience over eighteen years.

I agree that there are fewer teachers now [able to form appropriate relationships] with the hobes and the rogues. But I wouldn’t limit it to the
rogues. I think there are fewer teachers able to relate to kids generally. But I think they are still very much a minority.

There was strong endorsement, however, that for a school to have a genuinely Marist culture, it should not only be able to accommodate a broad range of students, but do so with some affection and through extended personal contact.

The Marist style is characterised by compassion, by patience, by understanding, by fairness, by not acting hastily when deciding on action for a student, and by forever giving students a chance to start again.

6.2.4 Attitudinal themes

Of the seven attitudinal themes evident in Phase 1, three were part of the interview schedule for this phase: the level of internalisation of Marist values among staff; the apparent conflict between the encouragement of feminine qualities and the presence of male chauvinism or excessive competitiveness in the culture; and the degree of diminishing connectedness between the school and its wider community. In addition, two other themes were raised by interviewees: simplicity and spirit of work.

There was universal support for the view that a high level of internalisation of Marist values had occurred among staff. There were two qualifications offered, however, suggesting that, first, in each school there was a cell of staff which had not embraced these values and, second, much more could and should be done in the area of development of staff spirituality.

There’s a solid core of teachers at the heart of each Marist school who have caught the charism. It’s very strong. They eat, sleep and breathe those aspects of the charism that have been clearly defined. They can articulate it and put it into practice.

There’s a good and strong group in each staff of people who see themselves as Marist. And there’s also a small group who don’t accept it, don’t internalise it, see the Marist thing as being pushed down their throats. They don’t agree, for example, with some of the Marist emphases on loving the kids: they tend to be more black-and-white in their approach, unforgiving and unaccommodating. Or they pick up on the high standards, but not the support and inclusivity.
It was obvious that those who had present or recent contact with Marist schools were more aware of staff self-perception as Marist than those whose experience was even two or three years removed. The articulation and ownership of the Marist charism by staff and students were clearly features of the present-day culture of the schools.

There was no support for the proposal that there was a culture of male chauvinism in Marist schools. The contrary position was strongly put by each of the interviewees, emphasising the presence and encouragement of feminine as well as masculine dispositions among the students and the welcome and appreciated role of women within the school.

I think there's something essentially feminine about the Marist way. There's a heavy emphasis on relational things in the school; there's more greyness rather than black-and-white, a gentleness.

There would be some chauvinists in the schools but I would certainly deny that they are chauvinist places. Sometimes a bit arrogant about their successes, but generally competing and winning were promoted in very healthy ways: achieving your best. I think, too, that where there was that arrogance, it did not exist uncritically. It was challenged by some, and that was a healthy thing.

Even with fanatical rugby league coaches like Brother X, I never found it offensive, chauvinistic, unhealthily competitive or having a negative influence on the culture of the school. No, I never experienced a chauvinism.

There was a recognition, however, that this is a situation that has changed and continues to do so.

One of the good things I've seen over my time in Marist schools is a reduction in the level of chauvinism. It used to be there, but things are very different now. It shows itself in the way the more gentle and respectful way staff relate with students, a more holistic approach to education and growth, a more balanced view of what 'men' should be.

I always try to work against chauvinism. I think a Marist school should be gentle. It's easier here [a coeducational school]. At [X school; a boys' school] I had to work more explicitly against a macho dominance, and I did that particularly through the development of the expressive arts.

Once again, several made a link between the Marial dimension of the Marist way, and the heritage of a French Marial spirituality and style of Catholicism. Interestingly, the point was made most strongly by two of the interviewees with most experience outside Marist schools:
There’s a growing awareness among the schools of the need to express the feminine. We’ve struggled to do it. One of the signs is that we have struggled to teach Mary very effectively in our schools. She’s not deeply, or at least explicitly, embedded in the culture, not yet.

I would strongly endorse the view that because of its French origins, the Marist style has a softer edge to it, but I would go further. I think because of their focus on Mary, Marists have always nurtured their anima as much as their animus. There is much of the feminine in their approach, many qualities that I understand as Marial. Marists have not been so overtly “masculine” in the way I have experienced with some congregations.

Although there was some range of opinion about the level of connectedness that schools presently have with their parental groups and parish communities, there was agreement that making those connections was more difficult than in the past. One former principal reflected warmly and with some affection on the closeness he had experienced to both parents and parish in several schools, an experience that was not repeated by those who had present day experience. One principal and another former principal summarised the current situation as they saw it:

The connections with parish are certainly weaker, although we try hard at it. Connections with parents remain strong here: there are big numbers at working bees [ten a year], and also large numbers of staff. But staff don’t know parents as well as they should. We try to create opportunities, but with limited success.

Yes, the level of connectedness of the school with its local community has dissipated, but the fabric of society has also. Schools are larger, their staffs have trebled or quadrupled. In my experience 75 per cent of families are not going to church. For many, I think most, students, families and staff, the school is the anchor in all of that transience in society. It is where so many relationships and friendships are formed, both kids and adult. It has a clear value system, and it is church for most people — virtually their only experience of church. The school has replaced some of those other primary institutions of church, and parish, and local community.

The view emerged that there was in many schools a three-way breakdown and that the nexus of family-school-church (or parish) was not the reality of most people’s lives, and certainly not the school’s. All agreed that the school had taken on the role of the local church for a majority of students, if not also staff.

I think it’s true that there is less connection with the local church and local community. Although the connection with some families is very strong, with others it’s not. It’s partly related to why parents send their kids to the school.
and that's less and less for religious reasons. The families are not connected with the Church either.

For the majority of kids and even parents, the school is really their parish. It's also the same for a good number of staff. The reasons for parents sending their kids to Catholic schools has changed over time, because many families are not active members of parishes or regular worshippers.

We are the church for most members of the school. I am not really comfortable with that because we are not geared for it. Sure, we do liturgy well and I think we attend to the faith formation and spirituality of adolescents extraordinarily well. But we are not a church community in the same way a parish can be. People don't know each other — parents I mean, and staff knowing parents. We are badly trying to fill a gap caused by forces much bigger than us.

The size, complexity and anonymity of the secondary school in the context of the present realities of church and society were understood to make the customary strong connectedness among school, family and parish harder to achieve.

Within the school, however, there was a generally high level of satisfaction with the experience of unity and community. The importance of simplicity was emphasised here as a key attitudinal value.

I would really stress the simplicity of the way things happen. Look, to put it frankly, there's been an extremely low level of tolerance on the bullshit metre in schools I've been in. The schools have been essentially simple places, and that's why they have been so strong. Relationships have been transparent, purposes have been clear, people have really prized honesty.

Simplicity is expressed through the uncomplicated nature of the schools. Expectations, appreciation, and relationships are all uncomplicated. People are seen for what they are and accepted for what they are.

Those with longer experience of Marist education, who were able to recall a time when Marist Brothers formed the majority or nucleus of a school staff, traced this core simplicity to them. One lay principal remarked:

Marist Brothers seem to be able to form close and deep friendships with people. Even after years away from a Marist school now, some of my most lasting friendships are with Marist Brothers. That is an ability that they took into their relationships with kids, and something that influenced the whole school. What they have is an “extraordinary ordinariness” — that’s not original but I have never forgot it — that ability to be present to people, to be with them person to person.
The last attitudinal theme which was raised in the interviews concerned a spirit of work. One retired principal told a number of stories which reflected the extent to which a zeal and enthusiasm had characterised his own experience of Marist schools:

We worked physically hard [in the Solomon Islands]. We grew all our own food with the boys. We would start school at seven in the morning until midday; we'd have lunch, then go straight out to the food gardens, come back, have a cup of tea and a shower, then have school from four till six. In the first Form 3 exam we had, we got first and third in the whole of Papua New Guinea, and two others in the top ten. That was an extraordinary achievement, because the government schools had everything and we had nothing. But we worked for it, we really had to work. The two Brothers I had with me were prepared to work just as hard as I worked, and of course, the kids responded.

When questioned as to whether these values were still characteristic of the schools' culture, there was a divided response. One view suggested that there was less evidence of it in today's schools:

Hard work has been important for us. I'm concerned that I see that changing, that there mightn't be the same drive and dynamism that was there before.

But this opinion was contested by others. The increased median age of teachers, the higher numbers of married staff with families, and the increase in families with two parents working were all offered as legitimate reasons for a decrease in the time available for staff to spend at school but this was not seen to imply a lessening in generosity or readiness to work hard.

6.2.5 Actional themes

In discussing the actional themes of Phase 1, once again the core value of simplicity was frequently mentioned as being transformed into a preference for simple, no-nonsense ways of operating. A deputy principal put it this way:

The value of simplicity is in our culture in the sense that we try to make things as simple as we can. It's an ideal for us, and we're not always successful. But we like, if we can, to have simple ways of doing things. It comes out of the emphasis on relationships — that people can talk to each other and not smother each other in reams of paper and forms to be filled in. We also like to keep our eyes on the important matters — that is the well-being of the kids — rather than all the technical issues such as Board of Studies requirements or CEO administrivia.
A former principal, now involved in system administration, was typical of others in understanding simplicity as the link value which explained not only ways of relating but also of operating procedures within the school, rituals, buildings and a whole range of actions:

We have a real simplicity which is expressed in a number of ways. I see it first of all in the transparency of relationships between teachers and students. We show it by being honest with students. The schools are simple places, down-to-earth, with an uncomplicated manner. Another thing is that we don't go seeking prestige or building flashiness. We are also modest about what we do, there's a humility about us.

The value of simplicity was amplified by the number of times stories were told of principals and others who had uncomplicated and straightforward understandings of what constituted a good school. Recalling a Brother on whom he claimed to base his own style, one former principal with long experience described an essential simple man:

Br [X] ran an excellent school in every way. He was interested in his students, and knew them all. He insisted on, and achieved, a quiet, well-ordered school, where there was a real effort from all classes to work hard. And the school was spotless. You won't believe this, but every Friday afternoon, we'd sweep our classrooms, get out the bottle of varnish, and varnish the desks, every Friday. And he was prepared to have a go at things, try different ideas.

This encapsulation of a Marist style was echoed by a practising principal describing his colleagues:

All of them [Marist principals I have known] have an emphasis on the basics that are important in a school. A calm feel to the place, and somewhere where kids know they will be happy by and large. A clean, well-run plant, good and defensible disciplinary policies, and things like that.

The other actional theme which was addressed in the Phase 2 interviews was the extent to which the Marist value of "presence" was realised in the lived culture of schools — the degree to which staff did involve themselves in the lives of students and form relationships conducive to their holistic growth. Again, there was not a consistent experience of this among the participants. Most agreed with the view that, as mentioned above (6.2.4) there had been a reduction in the mean time available for staff to be involved outside normal school hours. The
number of teachers involved, for example, in the coaching of weekend
sport or the organisation of weekend or holiday trips with student
groups was less than it was when Brothers were more numerous in
schools. There was also some evidence of a staff attitude that more
closely measured the time given to students but this was not seen as the
prevalent disposition. One person described it this way:

Yes, there would be people counting the cost of their work and working under
stress, but that's the case for the whole workforce. But there is also a whole lot
of people who are attracted to Marist schools because of that extended contact
with kids. They feel that it is important, and they feel that their work is
appreciated.

A large number of examples was quoted of present-day involvement of
staff with students and the readiness of staff to become involved. One
principal cited the example of a "Breakfast Club" in his school which was
voluntarily conducted by staff not only so that they may spend more
time with students but also to cater for the needs of a significant number
of students who normally went without breakfast. Most staff had
volunteered to offer their services. Other examples included the
coaching of debating teams and sports teams, musicals and the "rock
eisteddfod", and the readiness to organise and attend retreats and camps.

6.2.6 Spiritual and ritual themes
The role of liturgy in the life of a school membership largely
disconnected from the institutional Church, the depth of staff
spirituality, and the place of an explicitly Marist spirituality were the foci
of discussion for this thematic group.

As in Phase 1, the liturgical experiences offered by the schools were seen
to be not only well expressed but also very positively received by both
students and staff. Each person spoke of the significance in the lives of
students of liturgical experiences, particularly large scale school
experiences and the more informal and less structured experiences on
school retreats.
There is something obviously attractive about the way we attend to the spiritual needs — can I say hunger — of the kids, and also the teachers. We do it best in Masses and other liturgies. We seem to be able to “hit the spot” so to speak, to engage them in a way that involves them, that they can respond to, and want to respond to.

It’s interesting, really, to see how kids respond at school Masses. On one level many are obviously not even “literate” when it comes to knowing what to do or what to say. But on another level, they look forward to them, they enter into them. They are generally very open to the experience, even though they would have rarely, if ever, darkened the door of their parish church.

The phrases most commonly used were “spirituality”, “spiritual depth” or “spiritual hunger”, again with reference to both students and staff. There was a clear understanding that these were being nourished and nurtured often exclusively by the school and that a high priority was put on it within the cultural life of the school. In a culture that was highly ritualised, liturgical ritual was reported as the most prominent. The style of liturgy, one which was well able to capture in ritual the shared meanings of the school in relevant and engaging ways, was seen as the reason for this. One principal explained it thus:

The liturgical expression in schools has been wonderful. The way it can ritualise the meaning of the school community — not always in traditional liturgical “Catholic” ways, but in ways that are appropriate and enlivening for that school community. There’s something about those Champagnat qualities of simplicity, and clarity, and earthiness that are there. It’s liturgy that’s both accessible but also uplifting.

Whereas the schools were seen to be attending well to the spiritual expectations of students, there was less satisfaction with the way in which staff could meet their spiritual needs when it was within the school context that many of them sought to do so. A majority of interviewees described this as an “urgent” or a “neglected” area.

Consistent with the findings of Phase 1, the role of Mary in the spirituality of the school was not seen to have much explicit expression. It was, however, suggested as being quite significant in a more covert way, through the presence of the feminine and maternal orientations to which reference has been made. One principal explained it this way:
We haven’t really replaced in a concrete way the old May altars and all that external devotion. Perhaps the link now is the way we are now working on developing the feminine values in schools — the way we relate to kids, less emphasis on competitive sport, all those boys education issues. But as far as external devotion, no there’s very little done.

There was general uneasiness with the notion of Mary in the cultural expression of the school. Although there was frequent reference to “Marial qualities” there was little evidence of any identification of Mary as a person of “hero” status in the mythology of the culture, in the same way that Marcellin Champagnat seemed to be so strongly present. One person remarked that

Mary hasn’t evolved in the post-feminist era yet. Mary used to be a model of womanhood that was an oppressive model, that doesn’t suit the present time. So staff don’t identify with her, but I see signs of its returning.

6.2.7 Directional themes

“Brother Provincial gave me a cheque for £50,” related one former principal, “and sent me to open [School X]. When I left the office I asked another Brother if he had an atlas. I told him I had to open a school somewhere in Queensland I didn’t have a clue where it was! I was soon on a train north. I’d spent all the money on bare necessities before I’d left Brisbane.” It was a small but telling incident which revealed much about the style of leadership in Marist culture. In the presentation of the Phase 1 data “strength of leadership” was a name given to one sub-theme; on the basis of the Phase 2 data, it is more adequately understood as “simplicity of leadership”. One of the interviewees, now away from Marist schools understood it this way:

There’s a strongly ‘can-do’ attitude with Marist leaders that doesn’t always go down easily with the bodies that they’re accountable to. Some of most endearing myths of the Province are about people who have had that approach to leadership and to building. It’s an audacity and a daring, yes an imagination, and a preference for the big ideas. It’s also a belief in the worth of the Marist enterprise and a confidence — a positive self-image about their work, who they are and what they’re about.

It was described as an ability to see clearly, to act decisively and to lead unambiguously with a view fixed on what were seen as the important matters. A certain fearlessness, an obvious clarity of purpose, and ability
to bring goals to effect while still retaining a pervasive compassion and concern for individuals were typical of the qualities identified by the participants. One expressed it thus:

Marist leaders, virtually without exception in my experience, have that ability to see the fire and not be blinded or put off by the swirling smoke. And the fire has been knowing people well, doing the right thing by all those in their care, running a good school, demanding the best, building for the future, things like that. And, of course, articulating it. [Principals] who have been timid or ambivalent or just concerned with keeping the powers-that-be happy have never held much sway in this Province.

Another person, also now outside the Marist system, commented:

There's also a bit of roguery in them. If they can get away with something that the Provincial or the CEO doesn't know about, then they will — if their school is going to be better off because of it. They all have a strong sense of being Marist and a strong sense of belonging, but that doesn't stop a bit of independent action. In fact, [a former Marist Provincial] once told me that he "expected every boss to be a bit of a bloody crook."

A disposition to autonomous action was something that most commented upon, particularly in the context of the influence of outside bureaucracy. The point was made repeatedly and was seen as an aspect of the culture which was harder to exercise in the present day:

The autonomy of the principal is an issue. You get the message very strongly [from Catholic Education Offices] that you are not trusted in being able to do the job, and that doesn't make for strong leaders. Despite all the rhetoric about collegiality and so on that CEOs go on with, my experience has been different. CEOs should be there for support and consultancy, and for wise selection of principals. But once selected, they shouldn't intrude.

The sense of autonomy is different with Marist lay leaders and Marist religious leaders. The religious have been able to exercise more autonomy over the direction of their schools. That's because of the influence of the CEOs over appointments.

The simplicity of focus, the instinct to act transparently and directly, did not imply any coldness or remove from the personal needs of people within the school. In describing the typical feature of Marist principals, all interviewees listed compassion and accessibility among their first responses.

You could be the greatest principal in the world in terms of efficiency, organisation, educational programmes, have all those things that TQM would say you need, you can have all that, but you won't be a good Marist leader unless your feet are on the ground and you can relate in a personal way with students, staff and parents. Sure, the competence must be there, certainly, but you must
have an ability to relate, and to do so with integrity and transparency. The thing that will set you apart as a Marist leader are those Champagnat qualities of simplicity, family spirit, ordinariness, being in touch with people.

... it’s important that people know who’s the boss, but a boss who is accessible and has a relationship with students which is open and friendly. And someone they can trust.

The principal is crucial. First of all he has to be a compassionate person, and accessible. Second he has to recognise the ability of his staff and allow them to shine. And if you give them a job to do, then they must feel trusted; you keep out of it and let them carry it through.

Above all, principals were reported as being people of integrity, a personal quality which could again be seen as an expression of an essential simplicity.

All the Marist principals I’ve worked with have embodied the Marist values we’ve been talking about. They are the ones who have led the idea that “This school is about relationships; that pastoral care of kids is more important than Board of Studies requirements.”

Marist principals model well the qualities that we know as Marist. By and large they are Marial people; they are out and about and know people; they set an example of hard work; they cultivate a family spirit, and are simple people. I find they are very conscious of it; you see it in their newsletter editorials all the time.

The concept of simplicity appears to provide the best window on the directional themes of Marist school culture.

6.2.8 Purposeful themes

The experience of Phase 1 was echoed among the interviews in Phase 2: while there was clear and general agreement on the development of a sense of self worth in students and the nurturing of them as loving people with social conscience, there was considerable ambivalence surrounding the shared spiritual purposes in the culture of the schools. “We are turning out ‘good people and good citizens’,” said one principal, referring to Champagnat’s phrase, “but ‘good Christians’? I’m not too sure about that.” One person summarised her view of what Marist schools attempted to achieve:

An appropriate spirituality for Marist graduates is that they go out with a healthy respect for themselves and others, that they have hope about
themselves and the world, and that they can touch at their core a yearning for a 
power beyond themselves that we call God. It will find prayerful expression 
but in today's world it won't link into traditional structures.

It is the last sentence that captures the tension present in the culture. 
Others said it this way:

We don't do enough to involve kids in identifying with their parishes, and so 
prepare them for future involvement in and leadership of the Church. We are 
certainly enhancing their spirituality, but there's a lot more that can be done 
about identifying with the Church.

Yes, by and large, we should be satisfied with how our graduates leave us: they 
think well of themselves, they are hopeful, they have a critical sense of their 
world and some sense of acting responsibly. By and large they will be loving 
people, I think, and open to the spiritual dimension of their lives. But there's 
little commitment to the Church, at least the institutions of the Church and the 
usual way of "practising the faith", so to speak.

While the lack of clarity about the meaning of "good Christians" 
remains in the culture of the schools it could be seen as a point of 
incongruity with its charism.

6.3 A SYNOPSIS

There are several major conclusions that can be drawn from the data. A 
strong, explicit and consistently expressed culture is shared among 
Marist schools and among those who lead, work and study in them. 
Although the schools are not culturally identical, they do have in 
common core cultural values to which they give articulation and 
expression in very similar ways. The priorities of their educational 
endeavour, their ways of relating, their styles of pastoral care and their 
approaches to young people, their corporate self-perceptions, their 
purposes, and the environments they create are consciously shaped by 
what they understand as the "Marist" or "Champagnat" charism. None 
of them is a pristine incarnation of the core Marist values on which it is 
centred, and each school varies to some degree in the ways it expresses its 
ideals. There are, also, members of each school who are disconnected 
and even alienated from the mainstream culture. It is manifestly
evident, nonetheless, that there is sufficient commonality of purpose and expression to describe a shared culture which is present in the schools of the Marist Province of Sydney. A precis is offered, the words, phrases and structure of which attempt to be as faithful as possible to the data of the study:

**Family spirit** presents itself as an appropriate root metaphor for the culture of Marist schools. The emphases and biases of the schools, and the quality, nature, style and significance of interpersonal relationships within them, are analogous to those that might be expected in a functional and loving family. Priority is placed on each person's feeling known and loved, and being accepted not only for what he or she is but also what they can become. Whereas academic and other achievement is prized, it is not pursued with the same imperative as the well-being of individuals or that of the school community. A tone of homeliness is characteristic of the schools. They strive to be places of warmth, welcome, hospitality and lack of pretence. People relate with each other in down-to-earth and transparent ways. The source of this family spirit emanates historically from the local Brothers' community. Some of the most honoured heroes of the schools' cultures are those teachers who have personified a family-style approach through their personal knowledge of students, their warmth and friendliness, their sincerity, and their indefatigable belief in young people.

The schools are strongly affective environments. Teachers relate to their students after the manner of older brothers and sisters relating to younger brothers and sisters. They know them well. Their dealings with each other are marked by an unaffected ease, spontaneity, humour, and informality. They value the integrity and fairness of the relationships and show to each other high levels of trust and respect. Among the members of the schools, both staff and students, there is a strong sense of belonging, mutual support and loyalty.

Pastoral care of students is given the highest priority. It shows itself through a **maternal-like instinct for nurture** which is able to balance high expectation for all students with the provision of appropriate support, forgiveness, and a hardy belief in their worth and goodness. By and large, teachers and administrators take much time over the care and discipline of students. The priority of care is also reflected in the administrative and pastoral structures of the schools. A minority of
teachers, typically younger, can be more exacting in their approach to their students.

The style of care is marked by teachers' presence in the midst of the students. They look for opportunities to form relationships with the students that will affect them and be conducive to their growth. And they enjoy the company of young people. This is particularly the case with less advantaged students and students for whom a "second chance" is needed. Although there is evidence that the ability of some teachers to walk in the shoes of these students is diminishing, there remain a dominant willingness and an intuitive ability on the part of the majority of Marist teachers to engage the world of young people, to communicate effectively with them, and to become involved in their lives beyond the limits of the classroom. This calls for people who are generous in spirit and dedicated to their roles. Such people remain very active within the schools and influence the preferred patterns of work within them. There is, nonetheless, a decreasing willingness or availability of staff in some schools to engage in extended contact with students. Each school, however, does honour members of staff who have shown or continue to show such a readiness.

There is a pervasive simplicity that is a defining feature of the most of the school's values and expressions. It shows itself most obviously in the egalitarian and inclusive manner of the relationships that exist among members of staff at all levels, and the open relationships between teachers and students. It also expresses itself through a corporate focus on what are perceived to be the most important purposes of the school, and little priority given to what are seen to be petty or unimportant concerns. There is, therefore, an absence of a rigorous legalism in dealings with students, with external bureaucracies, and with ecclesiastical authorities. Preference is given to simple, uncomplicated procedures within the school.

The schools are generally calm and well-ordered places. They run efficiently but flexibly. Effort is devoted to creating environments that are clean and attractive. Attention is given to detail and to doing things well. Expectations on students are high but reasonable, and generally effected without undue tension or struggle. These reflect a belief in the potential of students for growth and achievement, whatever their circumstances.
Among staff there is a high degree of internalisation of what are seen to be Marist values. They are able to articulate these clearly, and most identify with them strongly, even passionately. Along with their students, they share a high level of cultural knowledge, particularly about the founder of Marist education, Marcellin Champagnat. In positions of leadership and influence in each school are members of staff who identify themselves as Marist educators and understand their role in terms of vocation. For them, in particular, and among others in the schools more generally, Marcellin Champagnat is not only a cultural hero but also a point of access into Christianity. This is evident more self consciously in Marist schools in which Marist Brothers have no or minimal presence on staff.

There is a promotion of feminine qualities in all schools, and more explicitly in the boys’ schools. They are not perceived as excessively masculine places. This is seen as a growing edge of the schools’ cultures, and is evident in the gentleness of tone and balance of educational programmes. Schools actively work against male chauvinism and competitiveness, some more effectively than others. Such machismo is seen in all schools as antithetical to their Manist value base. They share a heritage born of French spirituality, a Catholicism they understand to have softer edges than those originating from anglo-celtic contexts. In this light, the significance of a Manist dimension as a source of particular aspects of the feminine is worthy of highlight, not only in the spirituality of the schools but more broadly in their culture.

The high degree of connectedness with families and church, from which the schools have historically gained much of their cultural strength, shows signs of dissipation in most schools. Although not consistently evident, there is a significant breakdown in the three-way nexus of family-parish-school. The school is the major experience of church for the majority of its families and many of its staff. The school community itself, however, remains strongly bonded — a situation which exacerbates the insularity that is already in the schools through their lively scepticism towards most outside bureaucracy.

Much importance is attached to the evangelising mission of the school. Considerable time, effort and creative energy are invested in the religious education programmes, both class-based and extra-mural. The liturgical ceremonies of the schools attract high levels of involvement and very positive reaction by staff and students. Liturgy is the chief means of formal ritualisation of
shared meanings within the culture of the schools. It is able to be both grounded in the experience of the members of the school but also rich in symbol and ritual. Despite the significant influence of the Marist heritage on the culture, explicit reference to Mary either in study or devotion is negligible in the evangelisation strategies of the schools.

In addition to liturgy, the **symbolic life** of the schools is strongly promoted. The presence of statues and religious pictures, the practice of daily prayers, the prominence of rooms and buildings for religious use are all examples of the unambiguous ways in which the religious purposes of the school are manifest. Sound knowledge of the schools’ individual stories and heroes, induction processes for staff and students, the regular celebration of significant days, events and rites of passage are universally present.

The **shared purposes** of the schools are reflected in the aims they have for their graduates. They hope to produce young people, first, who have a profound sense of their own self worth, something which will lead them to be people of hope, purpose and love, and able to lead balanced and integrated lives. Second, they hope their ex-students will have each developed a social conscience, and be able to engage the world critically and responsibly. Third, they look for young people with a sense of their spirituality and a sense of God in their lives. What this might mean in practice is a goal not clearly or consistently shared by the schools.

Much of the strength of the symbolic and cultural life of the schools is a result of the style of **leadership** exercised by principals. Its single most defining feature is its simplicity. The principals exemplify the distinctive Marist style presented above: an instinct to keep their eyes on the fire of their main purposes and not be distracted by the smoke that blows around it; an obvious sincerity and integrity; and a grounded and uncomplicated manner. Above all they have a comprehensive personal knowledge of the members of the school and are motivated by a deep compassion for them. They are well known to the school community and physically present in its midst. They lead with confidence and optimism, with a tenacious belief in the worth of their work and the highest expectations of their students. They are spiritual people, able not only to articulate their core values and lead others in them, but also to integrate them into their own lives and personally model them. By and large they are people given to big picture planning, but with dispositions for action and pragmatic solutions.
They can be resolute and even audacious in achieving the best for their schools, given to acting independently of authority to expedite their plans, and often intolerant of bureaucratic delay or distance.
THE CHARISMATIC CULTURE OF MARIST SCHOOLS

Because it is a gift of the Holy Spirit, the charism will always be dynamic and renewing, rejecting stagnation, routine and rigidity ... If history and reality change, if Church and society are transformed, the charism evolves, adapts itself, invents new forms of presence, new solutions. Falquetto (1993:50)

The precis of the culture of Marist schools which concluded the presentation of data in the previous two chapters achieves a primary purpose of this study: to provide a description of the lived experience of the cultures of secondary schools in the Marist Province of Sydney. This chapter aims to consider this cultural synopsis in the contexts of organisational culture and Marist charism that were examined in Chapters Two and Three. It explores the extent to which the schools’ culture that was presented in snapshot can be considered to be one which is, first, strong and functional and, second, authentically Marist. It considers the degree to which the culture takes its values, shape and form from a Marist charism, and discusses the existence of a charismatic culture in the schools.

It was seen above (2.4.2) that a strong and functional school culture would be predicated on there being members of the school who were sufficiently attracted by a core of several key values and beliefs, who had ways of expressing these culturally, and among whom relationships could be described most of the time by the term “community” or even “family”. Second, the presence of transformational leaders with moral
bases for their authority and a sense of the importance of cultural leadership were seen to be necessary to bring this to effect, a task that required sufficient autonomy of operation or at least sufficient devolution or decentralisation to create a situation where such leaders could be nurtured and feel empowered. The charism of Marist schools was crystallised from a review of the literature (3.3.2) to comprise seven core values: a spirit defined by a sense of family; simplicity; God consciousness, in the manner of Mary; presence and good example; love of work; a bias and fondness to those most in need; and daring and confidence. A charismatic culture which was authentically Marist would require an organisational culture, within and among the schools, which was rooted in these core values of the charism. That is, they would be places in which the Gospel of Jesus was being incarnated in a demonstrably and distinctive Marist way.

The approach of this chapter is to consider first the ways in which the culture of the schools was evidently strong and then the areas of cultural diffusion and weakness. The same approach is taken for considering it in the context of Marist charism: first, those aspects which indicated a high level of authenticity and, second, areas for possible concern. A conclusion is then offered in terms of Marist charismatic culture.

7.1 ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

7.1.1 Pointers to a functional culture

A clear and consistently articulated value base among students, teachers and principals was an outstanding finding of the study. The research tradition influenced by Peters and Waterman (1982) and Deal and Kennedy (1982), identified the presence of a set of such core values as a primary indicator of a strong and functional culture in an organisation. School-oriented researchers such as Millikan (1987), Duignan (1987), Beare (1989), Sergiovanni and Starratt (1993), and Flynn (1993) echoed
this finding in their understanding of culture in the school setting. The richness in story that was evident in the schools, the tales of their heroes, their expressive symbols and reported ways of acting, all reflected the values that were summarised at the end of the previous chapter. Although they found variety of expression, as appropriate to different places and needs, the foundational values remained constant and indicated the signs of very strong and functional organisational culture.

The literature showed that it was in people, in their meaning-making, that it was essential for these cultural values to be found. Sackman's (1991) concept of "axiomatic knowledge" was strongly in evidence throughout the study, shown through the participants' reflecting a high degree of understanding as to why things happened the way they did, and having views on the types of cultural expression that would constitute an authentic Champagnat-inspired approach. That there was more consistency at the hermeneutic level than the phenomenological supports this conclusion. For example, the practice of using teachers' first names at one school but not another did not suggest that there was any difference between them in commitment to student-teacher relationships that were open, friendly, respectful and spontaneous. That is, although there was some variety in observable cultural expression, there was a high degree of coherence between the stated values of the schools and their justification of — or indeed their unease with — the patterns of behaviour and expression within those institutions. This is consistent once again with the emphases of the Peters/Waterman and Sergiovanni traditions. It is, on the other hand, at odds with those researchers and commentators who have focussed more on the recipe or instrumental models of culture which were negatively criticised in Chapter Two (e.g. Kilman et al., 1985; and to some extent Deal, 1985).

The findings also contrast with the study by Angus (1988) who found a significant degree of alienation among staff who had not internalised the
core cultural values of the school which he studied. The Marist schools
in this study appeared to have been quite successful in finding ways of
enculturating their members, and managing the transition from being
schools dominated and defined in terms of Marist Brothers to ones
largely or exclusively staffed by people who were not members of that
religious institute. The high profile and popularity enjoyed by
professional activities such as *Sharing Our Call* are indicative that
cultural transmission and cultural expression were seen to operate
primarily at the level of Sackman’s axiomatic knowledge. There was
much to suggest that the approach of school administrators and others
responsible for cultural leadership of the schools has been one inclusive
of most members of staff and students. Consistent with the literature, it
is reasonable to conclude that the functionality and strength of the
culture emanated from the effective way in which the core values had
been articulated and nurtured.

Lay members of staff, in particular, had a strong sense in which they
understood themselves as fully sharing in the charismatic heritage of
their Marist schools. An insufficient number of Marist Brothers was
interviewed to judge whether or not this sense was reciprocated. In
terms of Flynn’s (1989) three levels of shared mission, the teachers
understood themselves at the highest level of “partnership”: sharing not
only knowledge and professional approaches, but appropriating the
values and spirituality of a Champagnat-oriented school.

The significance and particular style of community that was evident in
the culture of the schools is consistent with the importance of
community as a feature of strong school cultures that was identified in
Chapter Two. Flynn (1985, 1993), Coleman and Hoffer (1987), Clark
(1988), Lesko (1988), Ramsay and Clarke (1990), and Bryk (1996) were
among those who pointed to the importance of the affective and
relational dimensions of the Catholic school. The ways in which school
community formed around the school’s core values support Sergiovanni’s (1994, 1996) model of “purposeful communities”. The school communities were most in line with Sergiovanni’s imperatives of their needing to be “caring”, “collegial” and “inclusive” communities, but there was less evidence of their being extraordinary as “learning” and “inquiring” communities. Their distinctive descriptor was, rather, that of “family”, a finding closer to that of Woods (1992). The large extent to which there was an explicit and articulated sharing of the value base of the school around which the school community or family was apparently based, was supportive of Sergiovanni’s (1992) concept of a “covenant of shared values” and his argument for a “virtuous school”.

The second major pointer to the strong and functional culture of the schools was the exercise of leadership within them. The qualities of the principals, both those interviewed and those who emerged from the stories and myths that were recounted, were consistent with Peters’ and Austin’s (1985), Sergiovanni’s (1990) finding that “leadership” rather than “management” was a feature of effective organisations and schools, and the concept “cultural leadership” argued, among others, by Sergiovanni (1984), Saphier and King (1985) and Owens (1987). The influence of the principal as the shaper of the vision and culture of the school emerged strongly, particularly through his or her ability to lead with “simplicity”.

Such simplicity reflected a patently authentic style of leadership, one in sympathy with that favoured by Duignan (1997) and Starratt (1993a) and with the moral authority which Sergiovanni (1996) presented as essential for the virtuous school. The significance of the principal’s having an integrated vision and a readiness to model personally that vision and its attendant values has been emphasised by much of the literature (e.g. Millikan, 1987; Duignan, 1987; Wilson and Corcoran, 1988; Beare et al, 1989; McGaw et al, 1992; Flynn, 1985, 1993; Starratt, 1993b;
Hilton 1997; Simms, 1997). Marist principals were reported as modelling the core values of the charism, qualities such as personal knowledge of school members, presence in their midst, compassion in action, confidence, integrity, generosity, directness of purpose, and spiritual depth. That they personified the values of the schools, as well as being able to articulate them and lead others to describe themselves in terms of them, reflects a coherence and a moral basis to their cultural leadership. It is consistent with Sergiovanni’s (1992) and Slattery’s (1995) concept of “servant leadership” — a service to the values of their schools and its members, and an ability to give purpose and empower the school community.

7.1.2 Areas of cultural diffusion
Four pointers to possible weakness and diffusion in the culture of the schools emerged in the study. First, the existence of cells of discontent or alienation were reported in each school as well as examples of some members of each school community being more distant than others from the stated values and purposes of the school. Although there was no evidence of the degree of staff dysfunctionality found by Angus (1988) or evidence of leadership that was currently out of sympathy with Marist cultural expression, the culture of the schools was not a wholly homogeneous one. In one school, where there had been a new principal who did not immediately feel at ease with articulating and promoting an explicitly Marist charism, there was a period of staff anxiety and a risk that the cultural momentum of the school may have been heading to the kind of crisis described by Angus. Although some researchers (e.g. Louis, 1985; Martin, 1992; Alvesson, 1993) have argued that strong cultures can admit degrees of diversity and heterogeneity, there is no research to suggest that an organisation or school can remain culturally "strong", in Peters and Waterman’s terms, once its leadership or any cell of its staff which were culturally out of sympathy with some of the core
values of the organisation. While this was not the case in the schools of this study, and the level of staff formation would work against it, there were, nonetheless, aspects that reflected some risk of weakening the prevalent culture.

The diminishing degree to which there was a sense of connectedness among schools, families and church represents the second point of concern for the strength of the schools’ culture. What had been described as a historically strong feature of Australian Marist schools, was in various stages of dissipation in each of the five schools of Phase 1, something supported in Phase 2 of the research. Although there was a number of examples of significant effort in linking the local churches with schools and families, the common reality was one of considerable fraction. Such a situation is not only at odds with the schools’ lived histories but also with the findings of research (e.g. Coleman and Hoffer, 1987; Ramsay and Clark, 1991; Bryk, 1996; Sergiovanni, 1996) which identified the network of converging relationships surrounding the students’ experience of the Catholic school to be a critical factor in the school’s effectiveness. To use Coleman and Hoffer’s terminology, the “social capital” of the Marist schools examined in this study was in jeopardy. Although the at-school community was generally well bonded, its practical links with families and parishes, and them with each other, were far removed from the levels of intensity reported by the research cited above.

Although there was both strength and consistency in the way in which the core values and distinctive style of the schools were reported and expressed, there was ambivalence, or at least lack of precision, in the way in which staff and students identified some of the goals of the schools. In particular, a fuzziness about the religious and ecclesial purposes was evident. Staff and students varied in their understanding of what such terms as a “sense of spirituality” or a “sense of God” might mean for
graduates, and only a minority expressed goals which involved former
students' future participation in the Church. Such a situation is
consistent with the schools' disconnectedness with the institutional
Church to which reference has been made. This lack of clarity and
consistent expression among school members over purposes represents a
third area of possible risk for the strength and functionality of the
culture.

Strongly evident in the study was the concern expressed by staff and
principals about the extent to which schools were becoming meshed into
diocesan systems of schooling and under the influence of their
centralised administrative structures. It was the point over which there
was most anxiety. From the research of Peters and Waterman (1982) and
Deal and Kennedy (1992) through to that more associated with schools
(e.g. Purkey and Smith 1982; Lightfoot, 1983; Finn, 1984; Saphier and
King, 1985; Duignan, 1987; Beare et al, 1989; Sergiovanni, 1992; Bryk,
1996), there has been advocacy of the benefits of decentralisation of
administration and the devolution of responsibility. It contrast, the
schools in this study reported a progressive tightening of coupling, more
centralisation of decisions previously taken at the school level, and more
expectation of conformity of practices. The frustration expressed by
principals in not having the autonomy to lead with the liberty and
imagination that was their preference is a situation which, on the basis
of other research, may be more conducive to the development of
"managers" rather than "leaders", to the ultimate detriment of the
culture of the schools.

7.2 MARIST CHARISM
7.2.1 Indicators of an authentically Marist charism
The presence of a foundational charismatic influence in harmony with
that identified in Chapter Three was clearly evident in the study. The
core values of family spirit, presence and simplicity can be highlighted, along with the significant place given to Marcellin Champagnat and the Marist story within the cultural expressions of the schools. The maternal style of pastoral care is also a reflection of an authentically Marist charism, as is the priority given to the evangelising mission of the school.

First, the descriptor of “family”, which presented itself in the study as a root metaphor for the culture of the schools, is one congruent with a Champagnat-inspired culture. All researchers and theorists into Marist education (e.g. Gibson, 1971; Farrell, 1984; Zind, 1991; Balko, 1991, 1992; Bergeret, 1993) ascribe an essential role to the spirit of family in Marist schools and among Marist educators. That it should emerge so strongly in this study, both as an articulated value and an experienced reality, attests to the fidelity with which the Marist charism continues to find expression in these schools. It was the quality by which the participants in the study most typically and intuitively defined themselves and their experience of Marist schools. By this definition they conveyed the values that the literature emphasised as characteristic of early Marist education: the emphasis on nature and quality of inter-personal relationships, the family-style way of relating and caring, the lack of pretence, the sense of belonging and homeliness, the equitable and optimistic dealings (Furet, 1856; Laboureyras [undated]; Bâ!!ko, 1991; Marist Brothers, 1992; Bergeret, 1992; Farrelly, 1996; Marist Brothers, 1997).

Emanating from this root metaphor was the maternal-like instinct for nurture which characterised the nature of pastoral care in the schools. Although much of the literature does not explicitly identify this quality as a core Champagnat value, it remains consistent with the heart of his distinctive approach. Forissier (1992), in his research into the founders of the four Marist institutes, discovered that they had in common not
only a desire to educate, but to do so in a maternal way. This was the first quality he listed, linking it with a style which was patient, optimistic, founded on a love for people and a belief in their goodness. The findings of this study align closely with those of Forissier, and again reflect a style which is faithful to its founding charism. The place of a feminine, both in styles of care and spirituality, is also related to this quality and suggest the continuing influence of its French origin.

A readiness of staff to be present in the lives of students, both physically and figuratively, emerged in the study as a defining characteristic of the approach of the schools. This feature of their culture is a further quality derived from Champagnat, and one which demonstrates an authentic expression of his charism. Although the word “presence” was not articulated with the same frequency as “family”, its operation was, nonetheless, much in evidence in the schools and the sentiments of the participants. The intuition which led Champagnat to favour the méthode simultanée or to demand the inclusion of playground in his schools, was found in this study to be expressed in a variety of ways among the schools as teachers created opportunities to have extended contact with students and to form relationships with them. It is an element of the culture which sits easily with Bergeret’s (1993) conclusion that Champagnat’s approach to young people was, in the first place, founded on a closeness to the students.

The style of the relationships, as with much of the culture of the schools was found to be essentially simple. Simplicity was identified by Balko (1994) as the single most distinctive element of the Marist approach. Others have also given it a prominent place (e.g. Furet, 1856; Marist Brothers, 1990; Marist Brothers, 1992; Bergeret, 1994; Farrelly, 1997; Marist Brothers, 1997). A simplicity in relationships is one way of linking the qualities presented above: the transparency and lack of pretence that is
typical of the family-style way of relating, and the proximity of contact that is sought in active presence of the lives of young people.

Simplicity was seen to operate at all levels within the culture of the schools, encouraging an approach among staff that focussed on values that were of the essence of the school's purposes and of most worth. Such a disposition was seen to translate into a prizing above other priorities of the growth and well-being of the students and the aims of the school. Its corollary was often an intuitive rejection of legalism in relations with students and with educational, province or church authorities. It showed itself also in a calm orderliness in the schools and a preference for uncomplicated structures and procedures. Simplicity, it has been seen, was the most defining element of the leadership style of principals, a style which is suggestive of Champagnat himself. In all of this, the culture of the schools had been formed around a key element of the charism.

The priority given to evangelisation in the schools, and the particular style of approach, were also indicative of a Champagnat-inspired culture. For Champagnat it was an urgent imperative, one identified in the literature as his primary motivation (Furet, 1856; McMahon, 1994; Clisby, 1995). That the story of Champagnat and the dying boy, Jean-Baptiste Montagne, had assumed a place at the centre of the mythology quoted by staff in the study, reflected the degree to which they had internalised and were able to articulate this aspect of the charism. They also showed their ability to realise it through their closeness to the concerns, hopes, preoccupations and language of young people, and their evangelising strategies such as the religious education curriculum, the retreat programmes and the liturgies that were, as a result, engaging, relevant and the focus of considerable investment of time and energy.
Finally, the highly prominent place that Marcellin Champagnat and the Marist story occupied in the publications, expressed sentiments, cultural knowledge, rituals, celebrations and iconography of the schools indicated a high level of self-conscious identification with the founding charism. In Deal and Kennedy's (1982) terms, Champagnat was found to be the key hero of the culture. In terms of charism, he was clearly an important point of access into Christianity for the members of the schools. His personal qualities were extolled and the stories of other heroes such as Ludovic Laboureyras or other school-based people were told in terms of Champagnat-like qualities: their spirit of work, their affability, their practical compassion for young people, their fidelity and spiritual depth, their dynamism, their groundedness and humility, and their audacity and daring. There was a strong sense in which the members of the schools had consciously identified with the founding time, entered the Marist story, and saw themselves as present-day actors within it, a phenomenon which researchers and commentators who have emphasised the importance of authentic and unfolding story as a means of understanding charism (e.g. Lee, 1988; Sullivan, 1996; Hilton, 1997) would see as an indicator of vitality of a charism.

7.2.2 Areas of possible concern

The authenticity that a focus on Champagnat gave to the charismatic culture of the schools was at the same time a source of possible diminishing of it. To the extent that the focus on Champagnat was a way of promoting and incarnating the Gospel, it was a valid expression of the charism. There was evidence to suggest, however, that it was also a diverting of the Gospel. A measure of criticism could be levelled at the schools for falling into what Alvesson and Berg (1991) called the "folklore trap", where the goals of the organisation are lost in an emphasis on its affective and stylistic features. The base-rock of Champagnat's charism was its purpose — "to make Jesus Christ known
and loved” (Marist Brothers, 1986:19). This was the evangelising mission which fired Champagnat and into which his schools ostensibly directed so much priority. Ryan (1989:14) defined an authentic Marist school as one “alive with a sense of Jesus”. With only a few exceptions, however, there was little mention of Jesus or the Gospel by the participants. Indeed, there was a recognition by some that, in some ways, Champagnat or Champagnat-linked values had replaced Jesus as the focus of cultural or charismatic attention.

A particular emphasis of Champagnat was the championing of Mary as a model of faith, a focus of devotion, and a way of coming to Jesus (Furet, 1856; Balko, 1992). Although there was a covert promotion of qualities that could be described as Marial — simplicity, gentleness, optimism, humility, generosity, faithfulness, acceptance of God’s presence, and the whole feminine emphasis — there was only a little evidence of explicit attention to Mary by school principals, and none among students and other staff. This was a surprising finding in a culture claiming to be informed by genuinely Marist charism.

A third area for concern was an element of the founding charism which was consistently identified in the literature as distinctive of Champagnat and encouraged by him (Furet, 1856; Marist Brothers, 1986; Marist Brothers, 1990; Marist Brothers, 1992; Balko, 1992; Forissier, 1992; Marist Brothers, 1997) — “love of work”. Within the Sydney Province it was a quality most admired in the heroes of the Province (Marist Brothers, 1990) and included in the draft report of the International Marist Education Commission (Marist Brothers, 1997) as one of the five characteristics of the Marist educational approach. While there was a self perception among the schools that a spirit of endeavour prevailed within them, and the most quoted stories within the schools involved people of extraordinary generosity, there were signs in the study of a trend towards a decrease in the readiness of some staff to become
involved outside their assigned duties or in the humble and menial ways favoured by Champagnat. To the extent that this was happening, it would be compromising the inherited style of the Marists.

The fourth and final area in which the evidence from this study suggests the culture of the Australian Marist school may be diluting its founding charism is Bergeret’s (1993) concept of “*creativité et projet*”. This was presented in Chapter Three as the sense of innovative daring, creative audacity and confident enterprise that characterised Champagnat’s approach to the needs of his time and place. In the context of the organisational culture literature, it is a quality that is symptomatic of healthy and strong cultures (Peters and Waterman, 1982; Deal and Kennedy, 1982). In the literature of school culture, commentators such as Sergiovanni identified this trait as essential for a genuine leader. In Marist research (e.g. Farrell, 1984; Bergeret, 1993, 1994; Balko, 1994), and indeed in the school and province mythology cited favourably by this study’s participants, this Champagnat-like disposition for imaginative and even audacious planning and action is clearly present. There was, however, evidence in the study that this was less true of the present generation of Marist educators and Marist school leaders. In honouring this quality, their stories were more of the past where other values were given current examples. It remained a value for them but one expressed more in frustration than present realisation. This was particularly true of principals in their reflections on the an educational and systemic culture that they did not find conducive for what Deal and Kennedy (1982) would have called the “outlaws” and the “mould-breakers”. To the extent that bureaucratic forces were having such an effect, this study’s findings would contrast to some extent with those of McMahon (1993) who found that the Weberian notion of “routinisation” had not dampened the charismatic flame in Marist schools. In the contexts both of organisational theory and of charism, the literature suggests that a
muzzling of the distinctive leadership style would represent a broader risk to the viability of the culture.

7.3 CONCLUSION: A CHARISMATIC MARIST SCHOOL CULTURE
The theoretical context of this study has brought together the metaphor of culture, as it is used in the literature of organisational theory, with the theological concept of charism. It has accepted the view that the vitality, effectiveness and goodness of an organisation, particularly a school, is advantaged by the presence of a strong and functional culture. Such a culture would be one where a set of core values captures the beliefs, purposes and collective vision of the members of the school, values which are shared by these people, brought to effect in their lives together, and remain constant over time. The values would find temporal expression in a range of symbolic and actual behaviours, judgements, responses, icons, rituals, mythology, and ways of relating, all of which would draw people together in community. The study has understood charism as a graced way in which God can be encountered and the Gospel of Jesus can be promoted, and has accepted Marcellin Champagnat’s engaging of the Gospel as an identifiable charism. In proposing the concept of “charismatic culture” the study has explored the way in which a charism may form the set of core values around which a culture may develop. It has been premised on the view that, as something which is essentially incarnational, the Christian Gospel requires a cultural context. A culture which is in symbiosis with the Gospel becomes a way of giving the time and place, the people and events, the story and community, that incarnation of the Gospel needs. It has been found that there is a strong and coherent culture in and among Marist schools, and that the heart of this culture and its temporal expression represent most of the key qualities of Champagnat’s charism. By these criteria, it is valid to conclude that, with some qualification, a
Marist charismatic culture is present in the schools, giving them their vitality and their distinctiveness.

The figurative concept of "family" as the root of the metaphor, the maternal-like instinct of nurture, a disposition to simplicity, and adult presence in the midst of the young people were all seen as the characteristics of Champagnat's charism which were given most authentic expression. These were translated into a myriad of ways of relating, caring, acting, judging, teaching, ritualising and leading that had evolved distinctive and self-conscious cultural expressions. Although they were present, the study found that a Christocentric approach to evangelisation, an explicitly Marial dimension, a love of work, a sense of family-school-church connectedness, and the encouragement of daring in leadership to be less prevalent, less actively expressed, or at some risk. The schools remain, nonetheless, communities which are keenly aware of the rich charismatic heritage they share, and active in their creative fidelity to bringing that charism to cultural expression in ways that are contemporary, relevant and engaging for all within them. They represent an authentic way of promoting the Gospel and providing a culture in which people can engage it, a charismatic culture.
REFERENCES


210


Braniff, J. (1992) *The Quest for Higher Things, A History of the Marist Brothers' Hundred Years in Kilmore, with special attention*
to the foundation and development of Assumption College. Melbourne: Marist Brothers.
School Social Systems and Student Achievement: Schools Can Make a Difference New York: Praeger


Defour, J-B. (1910) Prima Positio, Super Virtutilars. Unpublished submission made to the Sacred Congregation for Rites on behalf of the Marist Brothers of the Schools to support the Cause for Beatification of J.B.M. Champagnat SM, Founder of the Marist Brothers of the Schools.


Dwyer, B. (1986) Catholic Schools at the Crossroads Melbourne: Dove


218


Laws, K., Bailey, M., Smith, D., McLeod, R. (1995) 'Want to be a leader, forced to be a boss': a dilemma for creative school leaders. A paper prepared for the ACEA International Conference, Sydney (July).


Marist Brothers (1968) *Our Marist Apostolate, Documents of the XVI General Chapter*. Sydney: Marist Brothers.


Marist Brothers (1994) *Brothers in Solidarity, Documents of the XIX General Chapter*. Rome: Marist Brothers


Sanday, P.R. (1979) *The Ethnographic Paradigm(s).* *Administrative Science Quarterly* 24, 527-538


224
Strauss, A.L. (1987) *Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists*


225


APPENDICES
Area in which Champagnat worked most of his life
APPENDIX B

Charism, Spirituality and Mission Statements of the Marist Brothers of the Province of Sydney

Province Pastoral Plan, Marist Brothers, 1990

Marist Charism

The Marist charism flows from a basic trust in God and a desire to follow Christ in the way of Mary. It is a response to the need to bring Jesus into the lives of all people, especially the young through education. It expresses itself as a humble and compassionate care for all, but with particular care for the ordinary and least favoured.

Recalling the Founder's strong personal affection for the early Brothers, each member, by his life in community, strives to be brother to the others. The community missions and supports each Brother in the ministry with which he is entrusted and recognises Christ's action in him.

In all his work, the Brother strives to be responsive to the signs of the times, accepting the risks and challenges of meeting people where they are and accompanying them on their life's journey. He brings to his ministry a reverence for those with whom he works. He is prepared to persevere without the gratification of an immediate or obvious success. He works hard at his ministry with enthusiasm and commitment.

He always strives to be faithful to the Spirit of Jesus alive in the Church and open to the Christ who comes to him through those to whom he ministers.

Marist Spirituality

A Marist Brother is a man of hope who is profoundly aware of the presence of God and trusts in him. He recognises that God, who loves him unconditionally, has called him in a particular way as a consecrated religious in the world.

His confidence in and affection for Mary is such that he relies on her as his Good Mother and Ordinary Resource. This leads him to spend his life simply and humbly just as his Founder did.

He lives with his Brothers in community. Together they are a spiritual family. He encounters Jesus personally in the Eucharist, daily prayer, the Brothers of his community, and in all people, especially the ordinary and least favoured, for whom he has a special compassion.
The Brother seeks to integrate prayer and apostolic activity in down-to-earth ways. He searches for God's will in the signs of the times and realises what whatever he does flows from the power of the Holy Spirit working through him. With this vision, even in difficult times, he remains steadfast to his call.

**Province Mission Statement**

As Marist Brothers, we share in the mission of Jesus to reveal God's faithful love for all and to build community wherever we are, committed to his values.

We share in the mission of the Church to help people become aware of the presence of Jesus in their lives. We bring to our ministries the special Marist charisma and spirituality, given to us through Champagnat, of being brother to one another and to all, especially to disadvantaged youth.

We respond to the needs and yearnings of people of our time. We accompany them with care and practical concern so that they will esteem themselves, be empowered to take responsibility for their own lives, and, in turn, take up the mission of Jesus.

In the light of this, we commit ourselves

1. To take responsibility for our lives in ways that will deepen both our individual encounters with Jesus and our Marist spirituality.

2. To build communities with strong family spirit, that live simply and prayerfully, are welcoming and hard-working, and which form the foundation of all our ministries.

3. To counter materialism and promote justice for all by living and spreading the Gospel.

4. To work primarily for youth, especially the least favoured, through Christian education and other caring and supportive ministries.

5. To exercise our ministries especially in situations where others are unable to go.

6. To work with the laity in a spirit of mutual service as they discover their renewed mission in the Church.

7. To be men of hope and joy, reading and responding to the signs of the times and putting our trust in the Lord.
APPENDIX C

Indicative interview schedule for Phase 1

Interview Schedule for Staff Groups

Indicative questions on shared purposes
- When do you most/least enjoy being part of this school?
- What keeps you here?
- What are the greatest challenges facing this school in maintaining its Marist character?
- How would you describe a successful graduate of this school?
- What are your hopes for this school ten years from now?

Indicative questions on shared values, beliefs
- What kind of teacher would best/least fit in here?
- What changes have most impacted on this school over the last ten, twenty years? what have been the positive/negative effects of these on the mission and style of the school?
- Has the Marist character of the school changed? How?
- Who are heroes of this staff? (present/past)
- What are the great stories of the school?
- Who has made this school what it is today? what was their contribution?
- What makes a good teacher
- What would please most/least Marcellin Champagnat about this school?

Indicative questions on nature of interpersonal relationships
- What are best/worst features of the climate of the staff?
- How are parents involved?
- What is the typical nature of the relationships between staff and students?
- How much importance/opportunity exists for staff involvement with students outside the classroom?

Indicative questions about the place of religious formation
- What liturgies are organised? how do staff/kids respond?
- How are the religious aims of the school expressed?

Indicative questions about the style of the school
- What are three adjectives that best capture the essence of this place?
- What do you like most about the students of the school?
- What's different from other places in which you have been?
- How do you think the students would see the school?
- Are you able to be a good teacher in this school? why/why not?
- What frustrates you most in your job?
Indicative questions on leadership style?
- What do you respect/appreciate most/least about the leadership of the school (present as well as past)?
- What hampers/helps the aims of the principal

Indicative questions on cultural expression
- What are the biggest celebrations of the school’s year?
- What are the ways in which kids are rewarded/honoured in this school?

Interview Schedule for School Principals

Indicative questions on purposes
- When do you most/least enjoy being part of this school?
- What sorts of things do you encourage in the self-perception of staff, students, and the school in general?
- What are your current priorities as principal?
- What makes this a Marist school?
- What are the greatest challenges facing this school in maintaining its Marist character?
- How would you describe a successful graduate of this school?
- What are your hopes for this school five, ten, fifteen years from now?
- How do you try to maintain its Marist character?

Indicative questions on values, beliefs
- What are the qualities you most look for when employing staff? What kind of teacher is likely to do well here? What kind of teacher is least likely to fit in?
- What characteristics of staff are most likely to make a positive contribution to the Marist elements of the school?
- What changes have most impacted on this school over the last ten, twenty years? What have been the positive/negative effects of these on the mission and style of the school?
- Who are heroes of this staff? (present/past)
- What are the great stories of the school?
- Who has made this school what it is today? What was their contribution?
- What makes a good teacher?
- What would please most/least Marcellin Champagnat about this school?

Indicative questions on nature of interpersonal relationships
- What are best/worst features of the climate of the staff?
- How are parents involved?
- What do you encourage in the style/expression of relationships between teachers and students?
- How much are staff involved with students outside the classroom? What importance is placed on this?

Indicative questions about the place of religious formation
- In what ways are the religious aims of the school expressed?
- What is the place of religious education in this school?
• What is the place of liturgy and organised prayer?
• How do staff/kids respond?

**Indicative questions about the style of the school**
• What are three adjectives that best capture the essence of this place?
• What do you like most about the students of the school?
• What's different from other places in which you have been?
• How do you think the students would see the school?
• How well are the students known by staff?

**Indicative questions on leadership style?**
• How free are you to be the kind of school leader you want to be here?
• What hampers/helps the aims of the principal
• What do you think are the characteristics of a Marist school leader?
• What frustrates you most in your job?
• Who are the great leaders of the past? what do you admire most about their legacy

**Indicative questions on cultural expression**
• What are the biggest celebrations of the school’s year?
• What are the ways in which kids are rewarded/honoured in this school?
• What are the key rituals of the school

**Interview Schedule for Student Groups**

**Indicative questions on shared purposes**
• Are you glad that this is your school? when do you most/least enjoy being part of this school?
• Why did you/your parents choose this school? do you think your hopes are being realised?
• What makes a Marist school different from other schools?
• How would you describe a successful graduate of this school?

**Indicative questions on shared values, beliefs**
• What kind of student would best/least fit in here?
• What direction is the school currently taking? are you comfortable with this?
• What makes a good teacher
• What would please most/least Marcellin Champagnat about this school?

**Indicative questions on nature of interpersonal relationships**
• How do people really get on with each other here?
• What is the typical nature of the relationships between staff and students?
• What ways are teachers involved with you outside the classroom?

**Indicative questions about the place of religious formation**
• What liturgies are organised? how do staff/kids respond?
• How are the religious aims of the school expressed?
**Indicative questions about the style of the school**
- What are three adjectives that best capture the essence of this place?
- What's different from other places in which you have been or have heard about?
- How do you think the students would see the school?
- Would you like to make in major changes to this school?

**Indicative questions on leadership style?**
- What do you respect/appreciate most/least about the leadership of the school (present as well as past)?
- What hampers/helps the aims of the principal

**Indicative questions on cultural expression**
- What are the biggest celebrations of the school's year?
- What are the ways in which kids are rewarded/honoured in this school?
APPENDIX D

Indicative Interview Schedule for Phase 2

1. What makes a school "Marist"? What features, what priorities? Is there a Marist style?

2. A theme that has emerged strongly in the study is the priority given to personal relationships in the culture of Marist schools. What is your experience of this?

3. "Family spirit" has emerged as a central theme. What do you understand by the concept, and how important is it as an element of Marist cultural style?

4. In what kinds of ways have you found family spirit expressed in Marist schools?

5. There is the suggestion that Marist schools find a distinctive balance between high expectation on one hand and a warm and personal care on the other. Some see it as a kind of maternal nurture. Has this been your experience? What is your experience of the pastoral style of Marist schools?

6. To what extent do staff place importance on active presence in the lives of the students? How does the whole "presence" and "good example" imperative sit with staff?

7. How much does a perception of personal cost restrict the availability or willingness of staff to become more actively involved in the school?

8. Do you think teachers are able to strike up relationships with the battlers as well as in the past? Can they understand and deal appropriately with reluctant learners? Had this changed the culture of the schools?

9. Is there a chauvinism or competitiveness in the culture of this school with which Champagnat would be uneasy?

10. What is the place of the feminine in Marist schools?

11. To what extent do you think that staff internalise the whole Marist thing: its values, its particular approach to schooling, its culture?

12. Have you ever thought about the significance of the French origins of Marist education and how this might have influenced its particular flavour, style or even spirituality?

13. What do you understand by "simplicity" as a feature of the culture of Marist schools?

14. Marcellin wanted schools which were "calm and tranquil". To what extent and in what ways does this find expression in today's Marist school?

15. What role does the school play in the spiritual formation of its members who are largely unchurched?

16. To what extent is there a depth of spirituality on staff?
17. What place is given to an explicitly Marial spirituality in the life of the school?

18. There seems to be a degree of knowledge of Marcellin Champagnat by staff and students? Is this your experience?

19. How are shared meanings ritualised in the school? Does ritual have a significant place?

20. Describe the sense and strength of the connectedness the school has with its wider community, particularly the parents and the local church.

21. Is there a distinctive style of leadership that Marist principals exercise? How does the principal balance high expectation on one hand with compassion on the other? How does the principal balance autonomy with collaboration?

22. How do you respond to the view that graduates of Marist schools should be people with a high sense of their own self-worth, a developed sense of social responsibility, and a sense of their own spirituality? Is this the ideal graduate of the Marist school?

23. What does "a sense of their own spirituality" mean to you? How does this relate to being the "good Christian" of which Marcellin spoke?