THE HISTORY OF WOMEN, RELIGION AND EDUCATION:

A METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

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Introduction

This paper arises out of a long-time interest in the relationship between theology and education. Early in my graduate education at Columbia University Teachers College, while preparing a curriculum for teenagers on the topic of "Education for Parenthood," Arno Bellack counselled me to be explicit about the underlying values of the project in which I was engaged.[1] This, he said, would free me to accomplish what I wished with integrity; it would also assist the potential users of the finished materials.

This simple advice has influenced the whole of my academic career. During my doctoral work at Columbia University Bellack's counsel freed me to integrate a theological perspective into my research. By attempting to pay conscious attention to the lens through which I viewed my work I was more cognizant of the hermeneutic I brought to my thinking; my reasoning was refined theologically even as theology brought a critical perspective to my thought and writing.

During my graduate work I became interested in the contribution made by vowed religious to Catholic education. Historians of education are aware that many religious congregations and orders are noted for their particular approaches to education -- the Jesuit *Ratio studiorum* and the *Plan of Studies* of the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Jesus come to mind. Through friendship and contact with the Society of the Holy Child Jesus I developed a

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[1] Arno Bellack, Professor of Curriculum and Teaching, Columbia University Teachers College was my major advisor and mentor.

specific interest in what is known in Catholic circles as "Holy Child Education." Not only was there a shared educational ethos among the women religious I met of this international congregation but, moreover, these women attributed this ethos to the spirit of the founder of their Society, Cornelia Peacock Connelly.[1]

As I toyed with the relationship between Connelly and her philosophy of education it was again Arno Bellack who "heard" me. He referred me to the theologian and educationist, Robert Starratt, then head of the Commission on Research and Development for Jesuit Secondary School Education at Fordham University.

Starratt confirmed my suspicions regarding the connection between Connelly and Holy Child Education. What I had intuited about Holy Child Education had been concluded by the Jesuit Commission after empirical research over a period of eleven years with respect to Ignatius Loyola and Jesuit Education. Research had found an implicit spirituality in the *Ratio studiorum* as originally implemented by Loyola, founder of the Jesuits. The Jesuits had been suppressed in 1773 by Pope Clement XVI. When the *Ratio studiorum* was reintroduced following the re-establishment of the Jesuits by Pope Pius VII in 1814 what had given it "life"

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[1]The Society of the Holy Child Jesus was founded in England in 1846 by an American, Cornelia Peacock Connelly, for the education of females of all classes. Today it consists of three administrative regions -- the African, American and European Provinces.

had been lost; the *Ratio* had become a reified document.[3] Star-ratt recommended Eisenstadt's introduction to his edited work on Max Weber, *On Charisma and Institution Building*, for a fuller understanding of this phenomenon from a sociological perspec-tive.[4] This advice proved invaluable.

As one pursues the work of Max Weber one becomes aware that his understanding of *charisma* draws on the work of the Christian theologian Rudolph Sohm.[5] "It is possible and probable that *Weber* was influenced by ... *Sohm's* <u>interpretation</u> of the Pauline texts on [*charisma*]."[6] (Emphasis added.) This, I believe, is an important consideration when assessing the usefulness Weber's theory in the study of <u>religious</u> institutions.

The theology (or theologies) of *charisma* are well-developed in the Christian tradition. Much of the discussion centres around the nature of authority in the structuring of ecclesial institu-tions. The theological self-understanding of particular denomi-nations and groups informs their interpretations of the classical

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[3]Documentation and recommendations building on this research are available from the Jesuit Secondary Education Association, 1717 Massachusetts Ave. N. W., Suite 402, Washington, D.C. 20036.

[4]Max Weber, <u>On Charisma and Institution Building</u>, ed. with an intro. by S.N. Eisenstadt (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968).

[5]There is much discussion among biblical scholars regarding the accuracy of Sohm's exegesis. His belief, however, in a initial period in which there was a charismatic order in at least the Pauline church is generally accepted. See Bengt Holmberg, <u>Paul and Power: The Structure of Authority in the Primitive Church as Reflected in the Pauline Epistles</u> (Philadelphia: For-tress Press, 1980), n.56, 149.

[6]Ibid., 148-149.

texts.[7] There is also a particular understanding of the role of
charisma and charismatic authority in the life of religious con-
gregations in the Catholic church. The shared life and work of a
religious congregation is in some way an expression of the
charism of its founder[s].[8]

The goal of this paper is to attempt to provide an inter-
pretive framework to clarify the relationship between the relig-
ious and educative dimensions of the educational philosophy of
Catholic religious congregations committed to education. In order
to lay the ground work for the development of such a framework I
present an overview of the theology of *charism* and *charisma*, an
introduction to the founding charisms of religious congregations,
and compare this with the understanding of the phenomenon of
charisma in institution building presented in the work of Max
Weber.[9] In this way I hope to get at the influence of the "the-
ology-behind-the curriculum"[10] in Catholic education carried out

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[7]It has been noted that "Every ecclesiastical tradition
wishes to find its own church order confirmed by the New Testa-
ment; in fact this can in many cases be done without doing viol-
ence to the texts due to the paucity and ambiguity of the rel-
evant historical material." Ibid.,1.

[8]Mary Milligan, "Charisms and Constitutions," Way Supple-
ment, 36 (1979): 45-57. This notion is developed later in the
paper.

[9]This is not meant to be a critical study of Max Weber. I am
aware of the current critique of his approach for historiography.
Weber's perspective on charisma and institution building does
provide a useful conceptual construct for looking at the phenom-
enon of founding leadership as understood by religious congre-
gations.

[10]Randolph Crump Miller, "Theology in the Background," in
Religious Education and Theology, ed. Norma H. Thompson (Birming-

by vowed religious.

Both male and female congregations of vowed religious have engaged in Catholic education -- although in the last two centuries there have been far more female than male religious.[11] This paper does not address the particular circumstances with which women religious have had to deal even to become acknowledged. In many cases they were required to accommodate to the authority of the Church in ways which limited their lives and work and/or called for creative innovation. Although most congregations can identify a founder, each congregation of women religious must be considered in its own social, cultural and ecclesial context.

The Contextualization of Charisma

In the Jewish and Christian faith tradition theology is an attempt to make sense of the perceived experience[11] of God's action in the history and lives of communities and individuals.

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ham, AL: Religious Education Press, 1982), 21. Miller began to work with this paradigm in The Clue to Christian Education (New York: Charles Scribner & Son, 1950). Thompson's book actually provides seven distinct points of view on this subject. For the purposes of this paper I find the work of Miller most helpful.

[11]In 1966 there were 181,411 women and 33,309 men in religious life in the U.S.A. Lawrence Cada, Raymond Fitz, Gertrude Foley, Thomas Giardino & Carol Lichtenberg, Shaping the Future of Religious Life (Whitinsville, MA: Affirmation Books, 1979/1985), 43.

[11]Elizabeth A. Johnson, She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse (New York: Crossroad, 1992), chapter 7, n. 2, 293. Drawing on the work of Karl Rahner, Johnson uses this term "to refer to the existential movement of human beings' interpretation of reality within their cultural tradition."

In contrast, sociology deals with the origins, organization, institutions and development of human society. The differing stances to understanding human behaviour and experience offered by theology and sociology provide different explanations of the phenomenon of charisma.

"Charisma" is defined for common usage from what might be considered both a theological and sociological perspective. It may be understood as "a divinely inspired gift or power or the ability to perform miracles," or, "as a rare quality or power attributed to those persons who have demonstrated an exceptional ability for leadership and for securing of devotion of large numbers of people."[13] The first definition focuses upon charisma as a gift and its perceived miraculous effect placing that effect in the category of an extraordinary happening or God-action; the second meaning draws attention to a "quality" or "power" of persons whose leadership results in a particular type of followership. The dialectical relationship between these understandings becomes evident in an examination of the phenomenon.

The semantic origin of the English words *charism* and *charisma* is the Greek term *kharisma* meaning grace, favour or free gift.[14] In his work Max Weber is very clear that "The concept of 'charisma' ('gift of grace') is taken from the vocabulary of early

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[13]<u>The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language</u>, 1969.

[14]<u>Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon</u>, abridged ed., 1977. *Kharisma* is actually a derivative of the verb *kharizesthei* "to favour" which in turn arises from the noun *kharis* meaning "favour" or "grace."

Christianity. For the Christian religious organization Rudolph Sohm, in his *Kirchenrecht*, was the first to clarify the substance of the concept, even though he did not use the same terminology."[15] Ernst Käsemann, a biblical exegete, suggests that the Apostle Paul substituted the idea of charisma for the technical term *pneumatika*, meaning "all the powers of miracle and ecstasy..." after which the Greeks sought, for a concept of the same content found in both Judaism and Hellenism. The lack of Hebraic equivalents and the infrequent use of the concept by the Apostolic Fathers in the early church (its use at all was probably only under Pauline influence) leads to the conclusion "that it was the Apostle [Paul] who first gave technical meaning to the word"[16] and introduced it into Christian thought.[17]

Very often, although not always, the term charism rather than charisma is used in Catholic theological writing.[18] The

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[15]Weber, "The Pure Types of Legitimate Authority," in <u>On Charisma and Institution Building</u>, 47. See also W. Lowrie, <u>The Church and Its Organization in Primitive and Catholic Times: An Interpretation of Rudolph Sohm's Kirchenrecht</u> (London: Longman, Green and Co., 1904).

[16]Ernst Käsemann, "Ministry and Community in the New Testament," in <u>Essays on New Testament Times</u> (London: SCM Press, 1964), 66.

[17]Esteva Bettencourt "Charisms," <u>Sacramentum Mundi: An Encyclopedia of Catholic Theology</u>, 1968 ed.

[18]Xavier Léon-Dufour, ed., "Charisms," in <u>Dictionary of Biblical Theology</u> (Montreal: Palm Publishers, 1967), 55-57. Léon-Dufour distinguishes between technical and nontechnical meanings of *kharisma*, Charism refers to all the gifts which God bestows [to be used for others]; charisma to the first gift of the Holy Spirit ("The love [charisma] of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit," Rom. 5: 5 [NAB]).

term was introduced by the Apostle Paul to the phenomena of pro-
phecy, speaking in tongues and the performing of miracles, as
well as various gifts of leadership[19] in early Christianity.
According to Esteva Bettencourt, Paul was able "to dislodge the
charisms from the region of mere 'enthusiasm' and strange
ecstatic phenomena and to place them in the ordered life of the
community...."[20] Thus charisms, gifts of grace, became integral
to Christianity's self-understanding.

Charisma and Institutions

As noted above it was Rudolph Sohm's historical study of Roman
Church Law to which Weber turned for his conceptualization of
charisma. The various forms of church polity evident within the
Christian tradition find their origins in how leadership is iden-
tified and "ordered." Sohm declared, "No legal organization for
the Ecclesia"[21] believing that the institutional structure of
Catholicism contradicted the Pauline constitution of the early
church where ministry was linked to specific charisms. Käsemann
writes

> While there is no real equivalent in the New Testament
> for our present-day conception of 'office,' there *is* a
> concept in Paul and sub-Pauline theology which

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[19]See I Cor. 12: 27-31.

[20]Bettencourt, 283. For Bettencourt this is a "special
notion of charism" in contrast to the more general, nontechnical
sense of *kharisma* referring to the gift of God's saving grace to
all Christians. The key New testament passages here are Romans 5:
5 & 6: 23.

[21]W. Lowrie, <u>The Church and Its Organization in Primitive
and Catholic Times: An Interpretation of Rudolph Sohm's Kirchen-
recht</u> (London: Longman, Green and Co., 1904), 150.

describes in a theologically exact and comprehensive way the essence and scope of every ecclesiastical ministry and function -- namely the concept of charisma.[22]

Here charisma is identified with roles of leadership. Käsemann believes that Paul established a doctrine of charismatically ordered leadership in opposition to institutionally guaranteed ecclesiastical offices.[23] Lowrie concludes, however, that the introduction of a legal order into the church most likely occurred because the senior elders refused to give way to members of the younger assembly and/or the assembly refused to obey the counsel of the elders.

> This moment was bound to come; and when it came to the introduction of a legal order, the definition of official rights may well have been an inevitable necessity. *But with the introduction of ecclesiastical law primitive Christianity was transformed into Catholicism.*[24]

The distinguishing characteristic of Catholicism for Sohm was the institutionalization of leadership roles which had risen spontaneously, at God's discretion, in the early church.

The debate between theologians regarding the issue of the charismatic ordering of church leadership over and against a church with a legal constitution and institutional leadership is not the issue here. What is important for this discussion is the connection between the charismatic leadership identified in the

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[22]Käsemann, 63-64.

[23]Ibid., 84-85.

[24]For Lowrie (and Sohm), "the whole development of Catholic institutions was conditioned by ideas which, perverted as they may be, may be traced back to the very beginnings of Christianity." Lowrie, 402.

early church and the institutions that evolved. Without the charismatic leadership of the early church, the institutional church would not have developed. It is from this debate, in the work of Rudolph Sohm, that Weber built his work on charisma and institution building.

The Genesis and Nature of the Teaching Congregations

The nineteenth century is identified as the Age of the Teaching Congregations (1800-Present).[15] Religious communities in the Christian Church first formed in the second century. They were never fixed nor static entities but, rather, a significant social movement in the history of Western civilization. Particular religious communities arose in response to critical social and cultural upheaval.

> They have been both a cause and effect of social change: the founding of religious communities has frequently been a response to major developments in society, and the evolution of the Church and Western culture has been significantly influenced by the life and work of religious communities.[16]

In the nineteenth century there were some six hundred new religious communities formed in Europe.[17] "For the most part, these

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[15]Cada et al., 39-44. In fact, the number of religious congregations with a primary commitment to education in North America began to decrease dramatically in the seventies.

[16]Ibid., 11. This chapter, "The Evolution of Religious Life: A Historical Model," 11-50, provides an excellent overview of the history, development and transformation of religious life. See also Raymond Hostie, Vie et mort des ordres religieux (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1972).

[17]The revival of religious life followed its widespread suppression by the Protestant and Anglican states formed following the Protestant Reformation and the mentality of the Enlightenment which gave birth to the French Revolution.

groups were dedicated to the ideal of building institutions and having their members selflessly apply themselves to attaining the professional standards required for excellence in those institutions.... These activities spilled over into other apostolic works such as hospitals, <u>but teaching was the paradigm</u>. (Emphasis added.) Even the few pre-revolution orders which were managing a slow recovery took on may trappings of the typical nineteenth century teaching congregation."[18]

The primary area of need to which these religious congregations responded was the education of the masses. For the first time in European history the ideal of educating everyone (primarily for the moral rehabilitation of the poor) became popular. "The new congregations joined in this movement in hopes of planting a robust faith in the souls of the children they taught -- by the thousands."[19] Religious life expanded and solidified into the twentieth century -- reaching its peak numerically in 1967 after the Second Ecumenical Vatican Council.

Following Vatican II religious congregations in the Catholic Church were asked to examine the nature of their involvement in their traditional areas of service such as education. One of the key principles for this renewal and adaptation of religious life to the needs of today reads

It redounds to the good of the Church that institutes have their own particular characteristics and work.

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[18]Ibid., 40. This included the Sisters of St. Joseph founded in 1650 and the Dominicans founded in 1207.

[19]Cada et al., 40.

> Therefore let the founders' spirit and special aims
> they set before them as well as their sound traditions
> -- all of which make up the patrimony of each institute
> -- be faithfully held in honor.[30]

This simple statement, highlighting the importance of the heritage left each congregation by their founder[s], became the inspiration for significant historical research on the part of many groups.[31]

Three sources for renewal of religious life were identified: the gospel, the spirit of the founder[s], and the social conditions of the time.[32] Renewal was understood as "recovering one's origins" (rather than "changing") with adjustments/adaptations to the world of today.[33] The process of renewal challenged religious congregations to understand their histories and their traditional areas of apostolic endeavour (the work they did) in terms of the historical contexts and societal needs which had inspired

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[30]Degree on the Adaptation and Renewal of Religious Life: Perfectae Caritatis,#2 All citations from documents of Vatican II found in *The Sixteen Documents of Vatican II*, ed. J.L. Gonzalez and the Daughters of St. Paul (Boston: Magister Books, St. Paul Editions, 1965).

[31]The Conference on the History of Women Religious in the USA publishes History of Women Religious: News and Notes, 1:1 - 6-3, 1988-1993. Much of the incentive for this work arises out of a new feminist consciousness which developed during the renewal of the last twenty-five years in religious congregations which put them more in touch with their own stories. A conference on "The Role of Women's Religious Orders in Education" is scheduled for March 12, 1994 at D'Youville College, Buffalo, NY.

[32]Perfectae Caritatis,#2.

[33]Christopher Butler, The Theology of Vatican II, revised and enlarged ed. (Westminster, MD: Christian Classics Inc., 1981), 18. Cited by Howard Gray, "Continuing Summons to Renewal and Reorientation," Origins 23: 8 (July 15, 1993): 116.

and influenced the formation of their original foundations. It
was explicitly stated that a certain continuity, in the context
of present social conditions, should be accepted and retained.
Pope Paul VI underlined this

> In order to be faithful to the teaching of the Council,
> must not "the members of each community ... combine
> contemplation with apostolic love? [service to others]
> ...." Only in this way will you be able to reawaken
> hearts to truth and divine love in accordance with the
> charisma of your founders who were raised up by God
> within His Church. (Emphasis added.)[34]

The importance of recovering the original vision, the charisma of
the founder[s] of each religious congregations, was seen as para-
mount for the renewal of religious life and areas of service in
the twentieth century. Theologically and institutionally "there
is no such thing as religious life in general, but only particu-
lar charisms which ground religious families."[35]

Historically the founding vision of religious congregations
highlight "a certain aspect of the mystery of Christ, or a funda-
mental value of the Gospel, or a particular service to the Church
or others."[36] This vision is then translated in to a specific
mission which is in turn expressed in particular ministries in
the Church and society. The recovery of the founding vision was

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[34]Paul VI, Evangelica testificatio, English edition ed.,
trans. Vatican Polygate Press (Ottawa: Canadian Conference of
Catholic Bishops, 1971), #10-#12.

[35]Gray, 117.

[36]Synod Secretariat, Lineamenta for the '94 Synod of
Bishops: Consecrated Life in the Church and the World, trans.
Vatican Polygate Press (Ottawa: Canadian Conference of Catholic
Bishops, 1992), #17. The variety of forms of religious life are
expanded upon in #18.

sometimes difficult for teaching orders born in the nineteenth
century .

> The mandate to return to the original inspiration of
> the institute was not always a reassuring enterprise,
> as many religious uncovered in their histories not an
> overarching inspiration, but simply a pragmatic pas-
> toral need to be met in the states or in a local dio-
> ceses, e.g. to teach the children of immigrants in an
> environment which safeguarded their faith."[37]

Over the previous three centuries many congregations had been
founded in response to specific societal needs. In order to
become religious institutes these groups had often adopted a
classical rule: Benedictine, Franciscan, Dominican, etc. "The
discovery of the founder's charism in these instances involve[d]
seeing how these classical spiritualities were *applied* ... to the
particular apostolic charism."[38]

While some religious congregations needed to go in search of
their founding charism, others had maintained strong identities
with their founders. In the history of the church many of these
founders are similar to the charismatic instigators of "*revita-
lization movements.*" This concept was introduced by Anthony Wal-
lace "to denote any conscious, organized effort by members of a
society to construct a more satisfying culture."[39] Revitaliza-
tion movements are observed in societies subjected to great
stress. Such societies experience an incremental accumulation of

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[37]Gray, 116.

[38]John Carroll Futrell, "Discovering the Founder's Charism,"
The Way Supplement, 14 (Fall 1971): n.3, 68.

[39]Anthony Wallace, Religion (New York: Random House, 1966),
30.

social change which renders obsolete former world views and interpretations of their religion. Often a charismatic leader arises who has had a prophetic revelation following a conversion experience.[40] The movement which eventuates is part of a religious search for a "unified view of the world derived from a consciously integrated and meaningful attitude towards life."[41]

> [I]n the case of major founders, it is not too difficult to see them in the role of prophets, that is, persons who are particularly sensitive to historical change and endowed with a gift for interpreting the signs of the times. These sensitivities, which give an acute understanding of both new needs and new opportunities, often engage the founder in opposition to what has become established, familiar, or comfortable in the institution or society.[42]

The teaching orders arose in the nineteenth century in response to both societal need and cultural change.

When the Vatican documents referred religious congregations to the spirit and special aims of their founders it was to their specific faith vision, their response to the needs of the time as perceived through the lens of the Christian gospel which had given rise to the founding of their institute, to which they were referred. Mary Milligan identifies three "moments" in the founding of a religious congregation: the original inspiration and its implicit or explicit expression; the gathering of the founding

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[40]See Robert E. Murphy, <u>An Overture to Anthropology</u> (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1979), 182 and George C. Bond, <u>The Politics of Change in a Zambian Community</u> (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 156.

[41]Max Weber, <u>Sociology of Religion</u>, trans. Ephraim Fischuff with intro. by Talcott Parsons (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963), 266.

[42]Cada et al., 169.

community; and the "institutionalization" of the charism." From
a theological perspective, the gift of grace received by a person
or persons for the founding of a congregation is understood to be
the origin of the *charism of foundation* and includes all the
qualities in the person which make the enterprise both possible
and unique." In the process of institutionalization the *charism
of the institution* is established. This she describes as "a reli-
gious congregation's shared faith-vision, its shared values and
their expression in the life and mission of the congregation.
Particular works [such as education] are an expression of the
congregation's fundamental call."" The *charism of the institu-
tion* today is the *charism of foundation* in its historic conti-
nuity. For Milligan, it is the institutionalization of the
charism of foundation of the religious congregation which allows
it to come about. As a consequence of the process of routiniza-
tion and institutionalization of the founder[s]' charism relig-
ious congregations within the Catholic Church, with their various
Gospel emphases and shared lifestyles, have provided something of
the pluralism which Protestantism has expressed by means of dis-
tinct denominations and sects. Religious congregations, with
their histories of charismatic founders, are in historic continu-
ity with the early church in a particular way.

Caritas McCarthy notes R. Laurentin's caution "of the error

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[43] Milligan, "Charisms and Constitutions," 46-53.

[44] Ibid., 51 & 45-46.

[45] Ibid., 51.

of reifying the notion of charism [for the founder of a religious congregation] and detaching the supernatural vivification by the Spirit from the living human person...."[45] Laurentin writes

> If charisms be said to be 'supernatural' in the sense that they are free gifts of the Spirit, it is only on condition that 'supernatural' is not understood as superadded to nature, like a kind of superstructure, a metal crown on a bodily head. <u>The charism sets free natural gifts according to diversity of people and of human communities</u>. Hence, charisms touch the whole body of reality, individually and collectively, the body and physical features, according to the diversity of commitment or involvement.[47] (Emphasis added.)

This perspective is not in conflict with a sociological understanding of charisma. A reading of the literature on the subject of charism and its operation in the formation of religious institutes indicates that it is informed by sociological analytical approach to religion.[48]

Max Weber *On Charisma*

Max Weber's approach to religion is distinct from that of the theologian or church historian. His concern was "*the relations between* religious ideas and commitment and other aspects of human conduct within a society."[49] Weber's consideration of "types of religious association," including both the social causes and

[45]Caritas McCarthy, "The Spirituality of Cornelia Connelly: A Study of the Founder of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus." (Ph.D. diss., Pontifical Gregorian University, 1980), 53.

[47]R. Laurentin, "Charisms: Terminological Precision," <u>Concilium</u>, 109 (1978): 7. Quoted in McCarthy, 53-54.

[48]<u>Shaping the Coming of Age of Religious Life</u> is one such study.

[49]Talcott Parsons, "Introduction," <u>The Sociology of Religion</u>, Max Weber, xix.

influences as well as the social effects and interrelations of
religion upon group life, is particularly helpful in understand-
ing the nature of religious congregations and the role of their
founders.[50] "Religion or magical thinking," he writes, "must not
be set apart from the range of everyday purposive conduct...."[51]
The influence of religion must not be discounted.

Of charisma Weber writes

Charisma may be of either of two types. Where the
appellation is fully merited, charisma is a gift that
inheres in an object or a person simply by natural
endowment. But charisma of the other type may be arti-
ficially produced in an object through extraordinary
means. Even then, it is assumed that charismatic powers
can be developed only in people or objects in which the
germ already existed but would have remained dormant
unless by some ascetic or other regimen.[52]

The prototype of charismatic leadership is, for Weber, the
prophet where "'prophet' [is understood] to mean a purely indi-
vidual bearer of charisma, who by virtue of his [sic] mission
proclaims a religious doctrine or divine commandment."[53] The
experience of call provides the basis for the prophet's claim of
revelation.[54]

Eisenstadt points out that the sphere of religion and cul-
tural activity is prone to the manifestations of charismatic

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[50]Ibid., xx.

[51]Weber, Sociology of Religion, 1.

[52]Ibid., 2.

[53]Eisenstadt,"Introduction," On Charisma and Institution
Building: Selected Papers by Max Weber, xvii. See also Weber,
"The Pure Types of Legitimate Authority," 46.

[54]Ibid., "The Prophet," 254.

creativity and innovation. "But at the same time, in this sphere the importance of organizational exigencies in making such creativity enduring becomes fully evident."[55] For Weber, "rationalization is the primary concept through which cultures define their religious situation and through which the sociology of religion must understand the cultural definitions of a situation."[56] Rationalization, then, provides the bridge between Weber's concept of prophecy and the concurring phenomena of charisma and breakthrough.

> The prophet is above all the agent of the process of breakthrough to a higher, in the sense of more rationalized and systematized, cultural order, <u>an order at the level of religious ethics</u>, which in turn has implications for the society in which it becomes institutionalized.[57] (Emphasis added.)

The values and cultural order which the prophet advocates are of importance to Weber.

Using "authority" as a synonym for leadership, Weber conceptualizes three pure or ideal types of legitimate authority -- legal, traditional and charismatic. These are not usually found in a "pure" form. The grounds of charismatic authority rest "on devotion to the specific and exceptional sanctity, heroism or exemplary character of an individual person, and of the normative pattern or order revealed by him [sic]."[58]

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[55]Ibid., 252.

[56]Parsons, p. xxxii.

[57]Ibid., xxxiii.

[58]Weber, "Pure Types of Legitimate Authority," <u>On Charisma</u>, 46-47.

Ann Ruth Willner notes that in Weber's typology "traditional and legal-rational authority are institutionalized in beliefs systems and are, therefore, in the *role* rather than the person."[59] She adds that "while the belief systems underlying the former types provide legitimate bases for the enactment of leadership roles within them, it is the exercise of charismatic leadership that legitimates and sustains charismatic authority" making it highly personal."[60]

Weber also speaks of the grounds of charismatic authority.[61] The leadership assumed by a charismatic person is relational: the response of the followership effects its expression.[62] Charisma is "a certain quality of an individual personality by which he [sic] is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities ... not accessible to the ordinary person, but ... regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary, and on the basis of them the individual is treated as a leader."[63] The definitive factor is "how the individual is

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[59]Ann Ruth Willner, Charismatic Political Leadership: A Theory (Princeton: Center of International Studies, Princeton University, 1968), 2.

[60]Ibid., 3.

[61]Weber, "Pure Types of Legitimate Authority," 46.

[62]Weber, "Sociology of Charismatic Authority," On Charisma, 20.

[63]Max Weber, Social and Economic Organization, ed. with intro. Talcott Parsons, trans. A.M. Henderson & Talcott Parsons (New York: The Free Press, 1947/1964), 358.

actually regarded by those subject to charismatic authority."[44]

Weber emphasizes that it is not necessarily what the leader is but how the leader is perceived by the followership that is decisive for the validity of the charisma. Willner explains this capacity for charismatic leadership in terms in terms of the ability of the person to project an image of leadership. She asks "What components can contribute to this capacity to project, what images can be projected and what means can be used to project them?"[45] Abraham Heschel offers another viewpoint to Willner's "projective-perceptual"[46] understanding of this phenomenon within a religious tradition. He writes of the prophet

> Other people regard *experience* as the source of certainty; what singles out the prophet ... is that to him [sic] *the source of his experience* is the source of his certainty.[47]

Willner's perspective does not fully provide for the role of perception and belief on understanding nor the influence of individual and societal pressure and change which give rise to revitalization movements and lead to the emergence of charismatic

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[44]Ibid.

[45]Willner, 4-5.

[46] Willner's theory is that this projective-perceptual dimension serves as a mediating factor in the charismatic relationship and that because groups and societies differ in their dominant cultural definitions of preferred leadership qualities "it is not surprising that the attributes of charismatic leaders have varied among societies and among groups within societies." Willner, 5.

[47]Abraham Heschel, <u>The Prophets</u>, 2 vols. (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1975), 1:206.

leaders." In the perspective of leader-induced followership offered by Willner something of the capacity for the vision of the charismatic leader to respond to the exigencies brought about by societal change is lost.

Neither of the two types of charisma identified by Weber convey the sense of deliberate and premeditated action of Willner's model. The depersonalized and institutionalized perspective she presents is better understood in terms of what Weber refers to as the routinization of charisma in an institution.

Routinization of Charisma

Weber's work contains the recurrent theme of "charisma and institution building."

> When the tide that lifted a charismatically led group out of everyday life flows back into the channels of workaday routines, at least the "pure" forms of charismatic domination will wane and turn into an "institution;" it is then either mechanized, as it were, or imperceptibly displaced by other structures or fused with them in the most diverse forms, so that it becomes a mere component of a concrete historical structure. In this case it is often transformed beyond recognition, and identifiable only at an analytical level. "

This process occurs out of "the desire to transform charisma and charismatic blessings into a permanent possession of everyday

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"Willner, 37 & 45. She actually discounts Wallace's theory terming it the "frustration-eruption formula" and sees it as invalid for "the actions of a leader may help to define that stipulated as a prerequisite or precondition of his [sic] emergence" because "of the rather active role played by the emergent charismatic leader in (1) crystallizing and catalyzing the call to which he seems to respond and (2) contributing to the crisis that seems to give rise to the call."

"Max Weber, "Charisma: Its Revolutionary Character and Its Transformation," in Sociology and Religion, ed. Norman Birnhaum & Gertrude Lenzer (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1969), 191.

life."[70] "From a unique gift of grace charisma may be trans-
formed into a quality that is either (a) transferable or (b) per-
sonally acquirable or (c) attached to the incumbent of an office
or to an institutional structure."[71]

In considering the question of routinization Weber maintains
his view of charisma as a unique phenomenon. "We are justified in
still speaking of charisma in this impersonal sense only because
there always remains an extraordinary quality which is not acces-
sible to everyone and which typically overshadows the charismatic
subjects."[72] It is this existential perspective of Weber that
bridges for many the differing perspectives of sociology and the
disciplines of theology and philosophy.[73]

It is the extraordinary quality of charisma and its inac-
cessibility to all which enables it to fulfil a social function
but, in becoming a component of everyday life and changing into a
permanent structure,"its essence and mode of operation are signi-
ficantly transformed."[74] Eisenstadt points out that Weber did
not assume a "deep chasm" existed between the charismatic aspects
and the more ordinary, routine aspects of social organization and
the organized, continuous life of social institutions.[75] The in-

[70]Ibid., 192.

[71]Ibid., 193.

[72]Ibid., 192.

[73]Parsons, "Introduction," Sociology of Religion, xiii-xiv.

[74]Weber, "Charisma: Its Transformation," 192-93.

[75]Eisenstadt, "Introduction," On Charisma, ix.

vitation offered by Eisenstadt is to combine the two and to ana-
lyze their relationship. It is thus that we will come to compre-
hend the place of charisma in the processes of institution build-
ing and historical change."[76]

It is this analysis of the relationship between the charis-
matic and the more ordinary routine aspects of social institut-
ions which I believe is so vital in understanding the relation-
ship between the influence of the founding vision or charism of a
religious congregation and the philosophy of education developed.
In the process of routinization the founder's charism is trans-
formed into stable forms of thought, practice, and organization.
In the institution this same charism may undergo transformation
making it transferable or personally acquirable. But it remains
available to the followership.

This is not to deny the role of the formative and educative
process in the development of charisma -- particularly that which
Weber states "may be artificially produced."[77] Futrell points
out that for religious congregations persons "who join an already
existing community do so because they come to recognize that
their own charism is the communal charism of this community."[78]
But Weber insists, and this is key, "that charismatic powers can
be developed only in people or objects in which the germ already

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[76]Ibid., x.

[77]Weber, Sociology of Religion, 1.

[78]Futrell, 65.

existed...."⁹ This offers explanation for the development of a
followership which is able to maintain and develop the vision of
the founding leader after his or her death. In the case of relig-
ious congregations one of the signs of the authenticity of a
charism of foundation is its continued existence. Institutional
embodiment is a sign of its validity.¹⁰

The process of routinization with respect to charisma and
institution building provide a useful and valuable framework for
understanding the relationship between the work of religious
congregations and the visions which inspired them. Émile Durkheim
writes

> Like all major functions of society, education has its
> own spirit which is expressed in programmes of study,
> of subjects taught, teaching methods and a physical
> body, a material structure which partially expresses
> this spirit but which also influences it, sometimes
> leaves its imprint upon it and temporarily serves to
> confine it.... This is because the organs of education
> are in every age closely related to other institutions
> of the body social, to customs and beliefs, to the
> major intellectual movements.... But they also have a
> life of their own, an evolution which is relatively
> autonomous in the course of which they conserve many
> features of their former structure.¹¹ (Emphasis
> added.)

The educational "spirit" to which Durkheim refers, I believe,
often has as its origin the charisma of some person or persons.
The structure of education, in fact, may be a facilitative means

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⁹Ibid., 2.

¹⁰McCarthy, 37.

¹¹Émile Durkheim, The Evolution of Educational Thought (Lon-
don: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977), ix.

for charisma to become routinized and institutionalized." The manner in which this takes place is determined by the educational structures peculiar to the society, and the social and cultural conditions involved.

Summary Conclusion

In this paper I have provided an overview of the manner in which *charisma* is defined, understood and conceptualized from both a theological and sociological perspective with a view to providing an interpretive frame work for the study of the educational work of religious congregations. Anthony Wallace theorizes about the manner in which an individual experiencing great personal dissonance, in the context of a society under prolonged stress, becomes the impetus for an all-embracing revitalization movement which, in turn, results in creative social change. Max Weber identifies three concurring phenomena: charisma, prophecy and breakthrough. The prophet, the archetype of charismatic leadership, leads the followership in a direction which results in a breakthrough from a level of dissatisfaction and restlessness, to a level of cultural and religious order which provides a more integrated and meaningful worldview. Although it is to the person, the charismatic quality of the leader that the followership is attracted, the prophet also enters into a process of rationalization by

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[11]It is interesting to note that the original formation program for the sisters of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus was almost identical to the teacher formation program developed by Cornelia Connelly. The spirituality, values and lifestyle she envisioned were for "all." Yet she did not impose an inappropriate lifestyle on the children she taught as did many women's religious congregation in mid-nineteenth century England.

which the factors which gave rise to the vision are translated into a doctrine, a consciously integrated ethic. The vision of the charismatic leader becomes institutionalized and available to others when s/he is no longer there.

The institutional embodiment of a founding charism of a religious congregation is a sign of its theological validity. Eisenstadt's insight that charisma and the eventuating institutional form may be combined lays the foundation for analyzing the manner in which the two are continuously related in the ensuing institution in the fabric of its social life and the processes of change. This perspective is especially salient for our purposes.

The literature of religious education also offers perspective in relating this phenomenon to education in the dialogue that has developed between the disciplines of theology and education. Randolph Crump Miller illustrates "that how one thinks theologically influences one's educational theory ... and how one thinks educationally influences one's theological development...."[13] Miller's position "that theology stands behind the curriculum [and] also that theology and educational theory must be in conversation, with both partners having equal status" is an essential stance when trying to understand the history of Catholic education implemented by religious congregations."[14] He believes that a "particular theology stands in the background for every [religious] educator.... What one assumes about the nature

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[13]Miller, "Theology in the Background," 21.

[14]Ibid., 31.

of God or the value of human beings becomes evident as various
educational problems are faced."[15]

Ideally, to understand the educational philosophy of a
teaching congregation one should be cognizant of its founding
faith vision. For those teaching congregations born for very
practical purposes in the nineteenth century Margaret Brennan's
contemporary insight has relevance:

> From reflection on our history and place in the church
> as apostolic congregations these last 25 years, I have
> become more deeply aware that the call of the Holy
> Spirit to which we responded was in terms of the Gospel
> mandate of Jesus to ministry. Jesus' appropriation of
> the words of the prophet Isaiah to himself has found a
> resonance in the founding charisms of all apostolic
> congregations: 'The spirit of the Lord has been given
> to me, because God has anointed me to bring good news
> to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and to the
> blind new sight, to set the downtrodden free, to pro-
> claim the Lord's year of favor' (Lk. 4:16-20)."[16] (Em-
> phasis added.)

Brennan provides the "theology in the background" of all Catholic
education.

It is my belief that how charisma is expressed in a particu-
lar context is sometimes best understood when a religious and/or
theological perspective is included in the discussion. Ann Ruth
Willner obviates this point in an effort to disassociate the term
from its Christian origins by stating that the works of a Luther
or a Hitler may not be distinguished from one another by saying
the one can be seen as in the service of God and the other as

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[15]Ibid., 31-32.

[16]Margaret Brennan, "Bishops, Religious Face Postmodern
World Era," Origins, 23:8 (July 15, 1993): 122.

communicating a darkly secular fever. She does concede that "the various empirical manifestations of the process of charismatic leadership and their various consequences can be distinguished in accordance with moral, religious, social, or esthetic criteria."[17] The concern of this paper, however, has been not so much with the express "empirical manifestations" as with the theology or philosophy of life behind the process of charismatic leadership and its various expressions. It is my thesis that the operative theology or world view of a charismatic leader is a decisive factor in the moral, religious, social and esthetic manifestations of the process of such leadership and the values, attitudes and commitments of a resulting institution. Thus, using a primarily sociological conceptualization for interpretation, it is possible to ascertain the influence of the charismatic founder of a religious congregation on the philosophy and praxis of education developed.

And, in the words of Peter Berger,

> sociological theory must, by its own logic, view religion as a human projection, and at the same time can have nothing to say about the possibility that this projection may refer to something other than the being of its projector.[18]

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[17]Willner, 16.

[18]Peter L. Berger, The Sacred Canopy (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1967), 181.

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