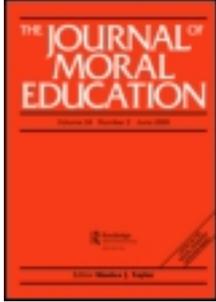


This article was downloaded by: [University of Otago]

On: 18 October 2011, At: 13:19

Publisher: Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



## Journal of Moral Education

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/cjme20>

### New Zealand's Recent Concern with Moral Education

Robert K. Shaw

Available online: 07 Jul 2006

To cite this article: Robert K. Shaw (1979): New Zealand's Recent Concern with Moral Education, Journal of Moral Education, 9:1, 23-35

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0305724790090104>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Full terms and conditions of use: <http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions>

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.

The publisher does not give any warranty express or implied or make any representation that the contents will be complete or accurate or up to date. The accuracy of any instructions, formulae, and drug doses should be independently verified with primary sources. The publisher shall not be liable for any loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand, or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.

---

# New Zealand's Recent Concern with Moral Education

Robert K. Shaw

---

## Abstract

References to moral education in New Zealand over the last fifteen years are traced through official and semi-official government reports, teachers' publications and other sources. It is argued that since 1962 there has been an increasing awareness of and concern with moral education.

The significant report of the *Commission on Education in New Zealand* in 1962 stressed that New Zealand schools' prime responsibility was for intellectual education, although they should also be concerned with physical, emotional and moral development.

Since the Commission's report it has been noticeable that subsequent reports and papers such as the Education Department's booklet *Social Education*, the reports from a nation-wide educational development conference and the teachers' union publication *Education In Change* have indicated that the school should adopt greater responsibility in the area of moral education.

The 1977 Johnson Report strongly supported the introduction of moral education in schools and precipitated considerable public debate.

## Introduction

New Zealand's education system has developed under the influence of both British and American educators, but for all that it has followed its own path to meet its own peculiar needs.

The Common Schools Act of 1855 provided that instruction be strictly secular and in general this stance has been maintained, although provision for the reading of Scripture was established in 1857 and today there is some non-compulsory religious instruction. Free compulsory primary education was legislated for in 1877.

In its early history New Zealand educators derived many of their ideas from the model of public elementary education in Victorian England, although its character was not tied to social class. From these beginnings a unique system evolved. More recently ideas on guidance and moral education have tended to be derived from the United States.

Today, the major concerns of educators have been the challenge of cultural pluralism, the reorganization of the examination system in secondary schools and the introduction of comprehensive guidance systems. Social and moral education have never been major issues for educators although there is a tradition of concern in these areas which can be traced back to the 1920s.

There is some evidence that over the last decade moral education has gained more ready acceptance by New Zealand parents and teachers. Reports by special committees and articles in teachers' publications have increasingly placed emphasis on moral and social education. The revival of

---

Robert Shaw is a Lecturer in Philosophy at the School of Education, Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education, Post Office, Darling Heights, Toowoomba 4350, Queensland, Australia.

interest in moral education appears to be somewhat akin to the flurry of activity in the early 1930s when character training was a concern. In the 1928 *Syllabus of Instruction for Primary Schools* which came into force in February, 1929, 'Character training' was first on the list of objectives. In the previous *Syllabus for Primary Schools*, 1919, 'Moral Instruction' (as a section under the heading 'Man and Society') was the fifth of six subjects (see Fairbrother, 1930). It would, however, be wrong to suggest that there has ever been an emphasis on any formal inculcation of moral values in the classrooms of state schools.

Of recent times there has been an upsurge of interest in moral education but now with greater emphasis on autonomy and moral judgment, the overseas influences being Kohlberg, Wilson and McPhail. The interest is reflected in the research interests shown by McGeorge (1971), Moody (1973), Codd (1974) and White (1974), amongst others. This recent developing concern with moral and social education may be traced in other ways, for example by considering the reports of committees concerned with the areas of education.

All the discussion and formal documents have had very little impact on classroom practices. Schools have been, and still are, concerned to maintain discipline and teach intellectual courses. The move into liberal studies programmes and school based curricula have offered opportunities for formal moral education courses, but few teachers have been able to teach such courses. One reason for this is the teachers' lack of background. There are, however, now courses in moral education in a number of teachers' colleges, but their effect has yet to be shown.

Here, I propose to trace the recent demand for moral education as expressed in official reports and other public documents. It is convenient to begin with the rather neutral stance of the Currie Commission in the early 1960s — a time when there was little public debate on moral education.

#### Commission on Education in New Zealand

In July, 1962, the Report of the Commission on Education in New Zealand, under the Chairmanship of Sir George Currie, identified five reasonably well defined groups of people eager to make submissions on the content of New Zealand education as it affected all children. Four of these groups could readily be classed as being groups concerned with moral education in a loose way. The Commission reached the following conclusions which appear to have guided New Zealand's formal State Schooling:

The school . . . it may be argued, is concerned with the whole pupil, his intellectual, physical, emotional and moral development. But this is not to say that the school is wholly responsible for all these, or that all sides of pupil development are equally important and legitimate subjects for a school's efforts . . . particular institutions, such as schools, are provided for particular purposes, and there cannot be much doubt that the intellectual development of each pupil to his full capacity is still the primary, even though it is not the sole, purpose of New Zealand schools. (*Commission on Education*, New Zealand, 1963, p. 23)

The Commission, in asserting the primary intellectual aim of schooling, was not seeking to suggest that other aspects were unimportant but had definite views on where the primary responsibility lay — specifically in the community at large and the family.

#### Advisory Council on Educational Planning

Reports since 1962 have placed greater emphasis on moral and social development. The Advisory Council on Educational Planning, which was established as one of the sector councils of the National Development Council, was asked by the Minister for Education to report on priorities in education. A group in Christchurch associated with the Canterbury Institute for Educational Research prepared the final report of 49 pages, which was released in July 1969. They found 'three major areas in which schools should . . . be specially competent', including the

development of attitudes which they saw as covering moral conventions, character, and social attitudes. The report detailed objectives for seven age groups and it was clear that they intended there to be ever increasing emphasis on moral autonomy throughout the middle and later school years.

A feature of the report was an appendix titled 'Values in the New Zealand Society' which stressed the 'christian – liberal – humanist tradition which they claimed was a British tradition that arose from a fusion of Greek, Roman, early Christian, and later European contributions, and was a great civilizing power. Maori values were of two kinds: those which would be absorbed in or 'give way' to the technology-oriented Western values, and those which could enrich the developing New Zealand heritage.

The booklet did not appear to receive as much publicity as some of the later publications in the same field. It was, however, in a number of important ways the forerunner of later reports. Firstly, it was one of the recent semi-official documents which stressed moral or social development in schools at least as consistently as it emphasised intellectual development *per se*, and this was a departure from The Currie Report. Secondly, the practice of considering each of the different levels of schooling made the report relatively comprehensive. Thirdly, and most significantly, the Advisory Council on Educational Planning played a major role in later developments; for they prepared the basic documents for public discussion during the Educational Development Conference which was held in 1974. Their earlier work probably influenced them considerably in that project and gave the public a lead into the fields of moral and social education.

#### The Department of Education

In 1968 the Department of Education responded to what they saw as a real demand by schools for assistance with social education courses, by publishing a booklet titled *Social Education* (Curriculum Development Unit, 1968). This action they saw as being in line with the policy suggested by the Currie Commission. The Director of Secondary Education, Mr. Hewitson, observed in the Foreword that:

In the last few years increasing pressure has been put on secondary schools to provide some form of social education. . . . This bulletin has been compiled in order to make available to schools information that could be useful if schools wish to develop courses of this nature.

In the text of the booklet, the current upsurge of interest in social education was reiterated:

Over the past few years there has been a noticeable increase in the interest shown in the community, and by the schools themselves, in the contribution of secondary schools towards their pupil's social education (p. 1).

A further contribution by the Department of Education to moral and social education was the result of their organizing a number of conferences. In 1971, the Department, in response to a suggestion from the Post Primary Teachers' Association, held a residential conference on current issues and problems in secondary education. The report from that conference was used by the Department's officers to write a 19-page booklet, *Secondary School Curriculum: Some Issues and Prospects*, which was widely circulated among schools during 1972 and caused considerable teacher comment. The report, in essence, was an attempt to sound out the opinions of teachers and other people directly involved in secondary education by asking for comments on a number of specific questions. Moral education was not cited specifically (in fact no 'subjects' were), but

there were a number of minor references to values. For example, as a part of the investigation into 'Secondary Schools and Society' the question was asked, 'What values are worth considering?' (p. 5).

Later, in 1972 another conference was held, with the objective of narrowing the field of teacher discussion to the 'major issues' identified. Again the conference was composed mainly of senior people concerned with secondary education. The third major issue identified by the 1972 conference was 'moral education'. More material was published and widely circulated to schools in an effort to prompt further discussion. The response from teachers, according to the Director of Secondary Education, was minimal. The Director, P. W. Boag, thought the reason for the minimal response from teachers was that the material 'came in the form of just more paper to read, and that teachers, lacking active involvement, saw the examination of the material as merely an academic exercise' (Jennings, 1975). No reference was found which suggested that teachers were not interested in the topics raised. According to Jennings, the Department of Education's officers recognized their failure to involve teachers in discussions and planning, and they also realized that teacher-involvement in decisions to change the structure of secondary education was essential. Hence, in 1973 a further conference was organized and participants were asked to write some basic guidelines upon which teachers might act in forming practical policies. Members of the conference were all senior teachers – principals, administrators, heads of departments – and they undertook an in-depth study of four secondary schools. In his 1974 address to the Post Primary Teachers' Association conference, the Hon. P. A. Amos, Minister of Education in the new Labour Government, referred to the success of the 1973 conference on secondary education, and made special reference to ten 'important keystones for the future development of our secondary system'. One of the keystones was:

The need to make greater provision for the social and cultural education of pupils including teaching about values, and moral education (Amos, 1974, p. 31)

It appears that the Department of Education's officers made a consistent effort over a four-year period to establish the concerns of secondary school teachers. The fields of social and moral education evidently were of concern to teachers along with a host of other things.

The third major way in which the Department of Education has recently tested the demand for moral education or contributed to the fields of moral and social education, was by the publication, in 1973, of a booklet which was mainly concerned with sex education. A committee, set up by the Director-General of Education, was briefed to produce a study paper on the subject of health and social education. This booklet, *Human Development and Relationships in the School Curriculum* had a considerable impact on the public at large.

The committee responsible for the booklet was selected by the Director-General. The Chairman was the Superintendent of Curriculum Development, J. A. Ross, and all the members were respected professional people. Four school principals and two teachers were included along with a senior social worker and medical officer. Clearly the group which included the National President of the National Council of Women for New Zealand, and a senior Lecturer in Education from Christchurch Teachers' College, could not be regarded as anything but responsible and conservative.

The committee met six times and in producing the study booklet followed the specific terms of reference closely. They suggested teaching programmes for primary, intermediate and secondary school levels, dealing with human reproduction and its personal and social implications. In their suggested programmes they included:

Aspects of human physiology such as reproduction from conception through pregnancy to childbirth, as well as the moral and social implications of sexual behaviour including family and child-parent relationships (pp. 5–6).

The *Education in Change*<sup>1</sup> values – the urge to enquire, concern for others, and the desire for self respect – were adopted by the study group and from the starting point they produced their outline of teaching programmes. They carefully noted the prime importance of parents in the raising of children and in a number of ways showed that they saw the school only in a supporting role. For example, the first three 'basic assumptions' listed were:

Parents are the main influence in determining social attitudes and values. The school can support the home by providing accurate and detailed knowledge about human development.

The knowledge provided should be available to parents so that they will be able to continue to play a leading role in influencing their children. In supporting the influence of the family schools should ensure that all children have opportunities to develop personally and in their relationships with others (p. 8).

Although one academic commentator has described the document as 'mild' (McGeorge, 1975), the public debate generated was considerable. There were extremists for, and against, the booklet. A picture of the community's reaction may be gained from the leading article in the Catholic newspaper *Zealandia*, which on Sunday, February 24th, 1974, read:

The Education Department's discussion paper on 'Human Development and Relationships in the School Curriculum' has met with a mixed reaction of qualified approval and criticism by spokesmen from Catholic organisations.

One of the major points made by many critics was summarized in *Zealandia's* editorial:

Their (those whose opinions *Zealandia* sought) concern is likely to be shared by many Christians, who will wonder how an educational programme which deals with so many morally-charged questions can operate within a morally neutral framework.

Many of the sympathetic critics of the Ross committee's report were concerned that sex education should be put more clearly in a context. A spokesman for the New Zealand School Committee's Federation, Mrs. B. P. Hanson, was reported as saying that 'sex should not be given undue emphasis. Some people are getting hung up on the sex side'. (*National Education*, November, 1974, p. 196). Another group expressed a similar sentiment:

The school should initiate a parent education programme to help them impart values and information appropriate to the particular child's level of development. (Catholic Community Study Group in Dunedin, reported in *National Education*, November, 1974, p. 197)

An indication of the number of people involved in the debate may be gleaned from the fact that the first printing of the booklet, 20,000 copies, was quickly exhausted and the Department printed a further 30,000 copies.

#### The Educational Development Conference

The Minister of Education, the Hon. P. A. Amos, announced early in 1973 that an Educational Development Conference would be held. The terms of reference for the conference were derived by the organizers for the Auckland region from public statements made by the Minister and

<sup>1</sup> *Education in Change* (1969) was a report on secondary school education by the Post Primary Teachers' Association Curriculum Review Group chaired by R. G. Munro. It proposed a reorientation of secondary schools around the three values mentioned.

directives from the Advisory Council in Educational Planning. The terms of reference were summarized by the Auckland regional organizers as follows:

The Educational Development Conference is to establish the aims, direction and development of our system of education for the next decade if not to the end of the century. The Conference aims for the fullest participation possible of all New Zealanders. By 'all New Zealanders' is meant the widest possible cross section of society: young people, minority groups, as well as the non-conformist sections of our society. The Conference is to tap the wisdom and experience of the grassroots of society as well as professional educators. The part to be played by the grassroots in helping to achieve the aims of the Conference is through discussion groups and public seminars. Reports and recommendations from discussion groups and seminars should identify local issues and the way people think about national questions. These reports will contribute towards co-ordinated guidelines for development in education now and in the future. (Auckland Central Region Secretariat, 1974, *Auckland Regional Report*, p. 3).

The Educational Development Conference was, according to McGeorge (1975), the fulfilment of a Labour Party election promise to extend and democratize an on-going Educational Priorities Conference which the National Government had established.

Three working parties, organized by the Advisory Council of Educational Planning, prepared reports and in April and May of 1974, these reports were among the basic documents discussed by the public in a series of meetings. Regional Committees in at least 25 centres, were organized by the Departments of University Extension, and reported back to the Advisory Council the viewpoints expressed at the meetings. The Council then wrote a report advising the Government what it thought should be done to improve education in New Zealand.

Discussion of moral education appeared in both the reports of the working parties and the reports from public meetings. There were three working parties established and two of them touched on moral education; 'The Report of the Working Party on Aims and Objectives'; and 'The Report of the Working Party on Improving Learning and Teaching'.

The aims and objectives groups in a section headed 'Values' noted that there were certain 'basic values to which public assent is given' and listed some of them as being truth, kindness, compassion, social justice, respect, rationality, tolerance, impartiality, consideration and responsibility (*Educational Aims and Objectives*, 1974, p. 15). The Committee thought these things were agreed and that the major problems were to relate them to particular life styles and particular situations. Under the heading 'Personal Morality' the committee stated:

It is possible to force a moral upon children and they may obey the rules of the code while it is politic so to do, but they cannot develop a personal morality this way (p. 15)

In classrooms it is important that all aspects of rules, values; conduct, and morality should be discussed freely and frankly. . . . the difficult task of moral education requires able and enlightened teachers who can help others rationally to apply general principles of morality to specific areas . . . (p. 16).

Outside the two sections mentioned above, no other major references which could be related to moral education were found.

In *Improving Learning and Teaching* (1974), the working party devoted a chapter to 'An Area of Concern – Moral Education'. The Chairman (Professor Lawrence from the University of Canterbury), in his Preface to *Improving Learning and Teaching* noted that the Committee had drawn

upon the expertise and assistance of many people outside the working party, and that in some areas of concern they had set up study groups to prepare background documents and reports for consideration by the working party. In four areas they considered it worthwhile to make these reports available to the public. Moral education was not one of the areas.

The chapter on moral education began with the observation that 'schools are under pressure to take a more active role in the moral education of their pupils, but exactly what this role should be is not always clear. (p. 152). Clearly, the Committee recognized a demand for some form of moral education:

It is unfortunate that the term 'moral education' is often used in a popular but restricted way to refer to a handful of moral values . . . While the school must obviously uphold the law with regard to . . . 'moral offences' . . . it is by no means limited to this indirect role. Indeed, by its very nature, it has a direct role to play which is its distinctive educational contribution (p. 154).

The fourth recommendation on moral education followed a similar line, namely:

That the ability to discuss and evaluate moral issues and to learn what is involved in translating precepts into practice be a central rather than a peripheral outcome of teaching activities in the area of moral education. Moral education should therefore be a deliberately planned part of the curriculum in schools (p. 155).

The group did not envisage that a period called 'moral education' should be set aside on the timetable, and they acknowledged the difficulty they had had in defining the teacher's role but recommended that it ought to be 'managerial — he should deliberately remain a neutral promoter of activity except where his professional judgment indicates a need for intervention' (p. 156).

In addition, the Lawrence committee noted that teachers had some experience in this area, through general and liberal studies courses and experience teaching the Forms One to Four Draft Syllabus in Social Studies (pp. 157–8). They also noted that in the United Kingdom the Schools Council Moral Education Curriculum Project and the Farmington Trust Research Unit were now well established. It was also acknowledged that a recent in-service course for teachers at Hogben House, Christchurch, had confirmed the importance of moral education courses and programmes by recommending that a set of specific objectives be established for Forms Three to Seven.

To assist with the public discussion on a range of educational topics, the Advisory Council on Educational Planning wrote a booklet called *Let's Talk Education* (1974a), which would, hopefully, stimulate discussion. They also provided, in another handbook, *Proposals for Change* (1974b), a summary of the recommendations from the three working party reports. Education in values was stressed in the former booklet and pertinent recommendations were included in the latter.

The public response to the Education Development Conference was, according to most observers, considerable. Tully (1974), for example, remarked that:

Throughout New Zealand discussion groups have met in halls, classrooms and living rooms to criticise the education system as never before (p. 16).

The organizers grossly underestimated the number of booklets required and the number of study groups that were established. An estimated 16,000 people were involved in 915 official study groups and over 7,000 copies of *Let's Talk Education* were issued.

The written submissions concerning moral and social education from the public in the Auckland Central Area have been reviewed to distil out any references, however vague, to moral or social education (Shaw, 1976).

From the Auckland Central Region 541 groups forwarded written submissions and of these, 102 groups had a total of 298 separate submission items published by the Educational Development Conference organizers in a section of the official reports entitled 'What Schools Should Teach'. Of these 298 submissions, 92 were classified as being concerned with social or moral education (using a liberal interpretation of these two terms). Calculations made on samples from the reports written outside the Auckland suburban area showed that the groups there did not stress moral or social education to the same extent as those in Auckland. The influence of the Department of Education booklet, *Human Development and Relationships in the School Curriculum* and the Educational Development Conference booklet, *Let's Talk Education*, can be seen in the wording of some of the submissions so that it is probably reasonable to conclude that the interest shown in moral education was not altogether spontaneous.

The conclusion reached by the Auckland Central Region Secretariate when they summed up the submissions from their area, was stated in very general terms:

The conclusion is drawn that there is a strong desire to adjust our education system to provide for maximum flexibility, freedom and choice so that the end product is better equipped to meet the challenges of life in the modern world. This is expressed in the request for broader curriculum that will encompass the teaching of religion, morals and ethics, a wider range of school subjects including the language and culture of Maori and Polynesian minorities, family life and human relationships, work experience and vocational training (Auckland Central Region, 1974, *Auckland Regional Report*, p. 182).

At a national level a similar conclusion was reached. After collating all submissions the Advisory Council on Educational Planning concluded that on moral education 'most felt that the schools had a role to play but there was no consensus on how this should be done' (*Talkback: Reports of Public Discussion*, p. 6).

Some reviewers of the Educational Development Conference have commented on the lack of agreement shown by the public on what ought to be involved in moral education courses. McGeorge (1975, p. 216), noted this lack of agreement, and the Editor of the *Post Primary Teachers' Association Journal*, in an issue which featured moral education, made a related observation:

Most of the public discussions held this year on the subject of moral education have concentrated on minor aspects of the problem, largely because the public will insist on seizing upon any mention of sex as by far the most interesting part of morality (Edmond, 1975, p. 5).

Edmond also commented on what he saw as the importance of moral education to teachers: 'we are united as a profession and as a community in believing in its (moral education) extreme, even urgent importance' (p. 5).

McGeorge (1975), listed three possible factors which he considered had contributed to the 'renewal of public interest' in moral education. They were:

- (a) . . . a general concern over the incidence of drug abuse, crimes of violence, alcoholism, venereal disease and illegitimacy.
- (b) . . . there is a growing criticism of secondary schooling, especially as it affects the less able, tractable, or fortunate pupils, bored, bewildered, or bloody-minded when faced with the customary examination-oriented syllabus.
- (c) . . . renewed interest in the UK and USA in moral development and moral education as legitimate subjects of study, and the writings of Kohlberg and Wilson in particular, have made 'moral education' a respectable term in academic and teaching circles once again. . . . (p. 218).

These three factors, according to McGeorge, made it inevitable that the public should, when invited by the Education Development Conference to discuss education, consider 'ways and means' in moral education.

A 1974 seminar in Wellington formed a voluntary incorporated public society to continue the debate initiated by the Educational Development Conference. The Educational Development Association's foundation Chairperson was Dennis Rose, the Director of the New Zealand Institute of Economic Research. The Association is continuing to stimulate public debate on education.

#### The concern shown by teachers

The recent interest shown by teachers in moral education has already been referred to. Teachers took an active part in the Educational Development Conference, produced *Education in Change*, and contributed members to numerous committees. There were, however, a number of other activities which could be mentioned to indicate teachers' concern for moral education.

There was a four day meeting held at Hogben House in October, 1975. The purpose of the course was to widen the debate on moral and religious education in New Zealand. Primary, secondary and tertiary teachers, members of the Education Department's Curriculum Development Unit, and people from private and religious school organizations attended. They suggested six aims, which they considered would 'foster social and moral education'. The aims were:

- . . . the school environment must:
    - be a warm and welcoming place;
    - emphasise co-operation rather than competition;
    - practice concern for others;
    - inter-relate with its wider community;
    - recognise the worth of each individual and what he/she can offer the total school community;
    - have equal worth to all spheres of activity within the school community.
- (Report in *National Education*, 1 December, 1975, p. 163).

Six suggestions were made for 'school communities' to assist them in achieving the six aims. It was never recorded that anyone suggested that formal moral education classes should be established.

A review of a periodical produced mainly for primary school teachers, (*National Education*) showed that except for comments resulting from the publication of *Human Development and Relationships in the School Curriculum* and the Educational Development Conference, there were no references to moral education in the ten year period up to 1975. There were two very brief references to sex education made before the publication of the booklet mentioned above. Both concerned questions asked of the Minister of Education, in the House of Representatives and one revealed National Party Government Policy. The National member for Hobson asked for information on the contention of Professor J. S. Werry of the Auckland Medical School, that schools should teach sex education and drop French and Latin, if necessary, to do so. The Minister for Education, Hon B. Talboys, replied that:

. . . various aspects of sex education were covered in the secondary school programme, such as in biology and human biology classes. However, individual schools were able to establish selective courses in which the social aspects of sexual knowledge could be considered (*National Education*, 1971, p. 420).

The Post Primary Teachers' Association publication for teachers has, over the last ten years, made a number of minor references to moral education. Many more references have been made to school

counsellors and sometimes their functions have been seen as involving moral education. Referring to the functions of guidance counsellors, Wadsworth (1971, p. 33), notes with displeasure:

. . . it (guidance counselling) faced pressure to take responsibility for teaching the fundamentals of human relationships — including sex education and what is described as 'the inculcation of sound moral values' — (a demand which a good proportion of its members felt inclined to accede to).

An article by Bunce in the October, 1974 issue of *The Journal*, stressed rationality and mentioned Wilson's book, *A Teacher's Guide to Moral Education* (1973). One of Bunce's conclusions is that 'we shall not be able to escape the responsibility of doing something about it (moral education)' (Bunce, 1974, p. 41).

The Post Primary Teachers' Association organized a number of activities after the publication of *Human Development and Relationships in the School Curriculum*. The Association wished to be prepared to voice an opinion on the discussion paper or if necessary make submissions to the Department of Education. The Waikato Region accepted responsibility for this work on 15 March, 1974. In April the Region organized a questionnaire which was circulated to schools throughout the Region. Forty-five per cent of the Region's members responded. Eight per cent of the respondents endorsed in principle the suggestion that courses in Human Development and Relationships be established in schools. Forty per cent thought a separate department in the secondary school should organize such courses. In answer to the specific question, 'Should moral values be discussed and studied in schools?' 87 per cent of the respondents replied 'yes'.

The teachers' debate concerning values and moral education was overshadowed by the wider public debate of the aims of education and the performance of schools. There was an outcry from teachers when the Prime Minister, the Hon R. D. Muldoon, opening a conference of teachers in 1978 said:

Children are not as well grounded in the basics as they were many years ago. I believe that is so.  
(*National Education*, 3 July, 1978, p. 92).

But in November, 1977 the Director-General of Education, Mr. W. L. Renwick, addressing the Napier Rotary Club, expressed the view that there was too much uninformed comment on standards and insisted that teachers needed help and more research should be undertaken (*National Education*, 7 July, 1978, p. 3–5).

#### An outside perspective

McPhail, the Director of the Schools' Council Moral Education Projects in England and Wales, was in late 1974 New Zealand's third McKenzie Travelling Lecturer. *The New Zealand Listener* noted:

Peter McPhail has been in New Zealand for several weeks. He had seen his publications in use and was gratified by the amount of interest shown in moral education. New Zealand, he says, is small, and in a strong position for developing 'very good social education'. A drawback though — 'Quite a lot of moralising goes on here.'

'It's easy when you have plenty of time to be particularly slow off the mark. I think there are people here who would like to go back to some traditional position and feel this is possible in New Zealand. It's only a partial truth. I think change comes more gradually and is perhaps less threatening here than it is in the United Kingdom. You have more time and this could

be a good thing. On the other hand it's quite wrong to feel that one could just stay where one is and maybe that's a danger which some New Zealanders have not quite sorted out.' (*New Zealand Listener*, 30 November, 1974, p. 13).

McPhail really gave his summation of the situation before the public debate escalated. Over the last few years newspapers and teachers' journals have brought out considerable public controversy.

### The Johnson Report

In his introduction to the *Report of the Committee on Health and Social Education: Growing, Sharing, Learning* the National Party Minister of Education, Mr. L. W. Gander observed that 'there has been considerable discussion in recent years on many aspects of . . . social education'. He acknowledged that the report was a serious attempt to identify courses and subjects of study which could be included in official syllabuses. The report was forwarded to the Minister by Chairman of the very representative 21 person committee, Mr. J. Garfield Johnson, Q.S.O., on 24 August, 1977. The Committee recommended for priority action:

- the provision of an appropriate climate in all schools for healthy growth and maximum development;
- the vigorous promotion of health and social education, including education in human development and relationships, morals and values;
- the substantial upgrading of physical education and of outdoor education;
- the training and retraining of teachers both in health and social education and also in process, as distinct from content, learning;
- the extension of education for parenthood as a matter of urgency throughout our society;
- the real involvement of parents (and, where appropriate, students) in the formulation and implementation of health and social education programmes;
- the extension and up-gradings of medical services to the children in our schools and to the community through our schools;
- the establishment of the concept that every person is responsible for his own health and that of his dependents;
- including the proper knowledge and skills that enable the ready acceptance of that responsibility;
- the formation of regional councils in health and social education, a national council in health and social education, a curriculum team within the Department of Education, and an inter-departmental committee.

These recommendations were based on considerable discussion of social concerns such as sexuality, alcohol, heart disease and early marriage following suggestions from some 122 submissions from groups and individuals and the committee's analysis of the concepts of health and social education.

The report proclaimed 'Society expects positive leadership from its schools. Schools which remain neutral about education in values are not facing up to their responsibilities' (p. 32).

Accepting that every school does reflect some type of value system, the Committee emphasized the importance of establishing appropriate forms of school organization which stress a philosophy and human relationships. Teachers, with appropriate consultation, should be free to adopt whatever formal approaches to moral or social education they wish. The Simon method of values clarification, the Schools Council Material and the suggestions of Kohlberg and Wilson were specifically mentioned. There was a plea for positive leadership to be shown by both primary and secondary schools (p. 34).

The public debate following the release of the report was unprecedented, and it came at a time when the local 'back to basics' movement was gaining momentum. The Director-General of Education, Mr. W. L. Renwick defended the report:

The cumulative effect of the report is to convey a picture of society that may be coming apart at the seams . . . As I see it, the aim of community education programmes should be to help people to become more autonomous and effective in their own terms. (*National Education*, 3 July, 1978, p. 113).

But an 'Auckland housewife' was given massive coverage in the *New Zealand Listener* to launch the debate. A typical comment:

I tell you, if I were a teacher I'd want \$30,000 to teach that stuff, plus comprehensive insurance against law-suits brought by parents blaming me for alienating their children's affections. (*New Zealand Listener*, 12 August, 1978).

The debate continues, but meantime the report has been noted by the Government and held over for action in a year or two. (It is worth noting that the National Party Minister for Education, Hon L. Gander, lost his seat in Parliament on 25 November, 1978).

### Conclusion

The general conclusion which may be drawn from the evidence presented in this review of the recent demand for moral education in schools, is that over the last 15 years there has been an upsurge of interest in moral education and related subjects, comparable to the situation in the early 1930s. However, certainly amongst the public there is considerable confusion on what form such education should take. Teachers have little background in moral education, although they have recently been prompted to consider the issues by the Department of Education and their own organizations. The current consensus is that moral autonomy is a desired/necessary/vital? objective for secondary school pupils.

Of the formal overseas projects in moral education New Zealand teachers know little, but there have been enough local publications and reports to stimulate interested participation in debate. The open attitude of the Department of Education has been quite commendable in this respect.

As to the future, there is reason to believe that public debate will continue and more teachers will be motivated to introduce formal moral education courses.

### References

- ADVISORY COUNCIL ON EDUCATIONAL PLANNING (1946). *Proposals for Change*. Wellington: New Zealand Government Printer.
- ADVISORY COUNCIL ON EDUCATIONAL PLANNING (1969). *In Search of a Statement of Aims for New Zealand Education*. Wellington: New Zealand Government Printer.
- ADVISORY COUNCIL ON EDUCATIONAL PLANNING (1974a). *Let's Talk Education*. Wellington: New Zealand Government Printer.
- ADVISORY COUNCIL ON EDUCATIONAL PLANNING (1974b). Conference Steering Committee. *Proposals for Change*. Wellington: A. R. Shearer, Government Printer.
- AMOS, P. A. (1974). Text of an address to the Post Primary Teachers' Association, Annual Conference 1974. *New Zealand Post Primary Teachers' Association Journal*, September, 29-32.
- AUCKLAND CENTRAL REGION SECRETARIAT (1974). Auckland Regional Report. Report of the Auckland Regional Organisers on the district meetings, public forums and regional seminars held during the period November, 1973-May, 1974.
- BUNCE, J. (1974). 'Patience, thought . . .', *The Journal*, October, 40-1.
- CODD, J. A. (1974). Some philosophical problems in the cognitive-developmental approach to morality. Unpublished MA thesis, Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand.
- CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT UNIT (1968). *Social Education, Curriculum Development Bulletin Number 10*. Wellington: New Zealand Government Printer.

- DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (1971). *Secondary School Curriculum; Some Issues and Prospects*. Wellington: New Zealand Department of Education.
- DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (1973). Human development and relationships in the school curriculum. A discussion paper prepared by a working committee. Wellington: New Zealand Department of Education.
- DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND SOCIAL EDUCATION (1977). *Growing, Sharing, Learning*. Wellington: Department of Education.
- EDMOND, L. (1975). 'Morality and the teacher', Editorial, *New Zealand Post Primary Teachers' Association Journal*, October, 5.
- EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE WORKING PARTY ON AIMS AND OBJECTIVES (1974a). *Aims and Objectives*. Wellington: A. R. Shearer, Government Printer.
- EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE WORKING PARTY ON IMPROVING LEARNING AND TEACHING (1974b). *Improving Learning and Teaching*. Wellington: A. R. Shearer, Government Printer.
- EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE (1974c). *Talkback: Reports of Public Discussions*. Wellington: New Zealand Government Printer.
- FAIRBROTHER, L. M. (1930). Some observations on character training in a sole-charge school. Unpublished MA thesis, Victoria University College, Wellington, New Zealand.
- JENNINGS, L. (1975). 'Secondary school review', *Post Primary Teachers' Association Journal*, October.
- McGEORGE, C. M. (1971). The situational generality of Kohlberg's stages of moral judgment. Unpublished thesis, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand.
- McGEORGE, C. M. (1975). 'Some old wine and some new bottles; religious and moral education in New Zealand'. *J. Moral Educ.*, 3, 4, 215-23.
- MOODY, K. F. (1973). The development of moral judgment in children: a study of children aged between eleven and thirteen years of age. Unpublished MA thesis, University of Auckland.
- NEW ZEALAND COMMISSION ON EDUCATION (1962). *Report of the Commission on Education*. Wellington: Government Printer.
- NEW ZEALAND POST PRIMARY TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION CURRICULUM REVIEW GROUP (1969). *Education in Change*. Auckland: Longman Paul.
- SHAW, Robert K. (1976). The assessment of morality. Unpublished M Phil thesis, University of Auckland.
- TULLY, G. (1974). 'Educational Development Conference', *New Zealand Post Primary Teachers' Association Journal*. April, 16.
- WADSWORTH, E. J. (1971). 'What will the school counsellor do?', *New Zealand Post Primary Teachers' Association Journal*, February.
- WHITE, J. (1974). Stages in the development of moral judgment. Unpublished MA thesis, University of Auckland.
- WILSON, J. (1973). *A Teacher's Guide to Moral Education*. London: Geoffrey Chapman.