

**The Concerns of
Christian Teachers in State and Christian
Primary and Secondary Schools**

by

Alaine Coleman
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Education Department
University of Canterbury

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ABSTRACT

Christian teachers, 85 from state schools and 85 from Christian schools, responded to a questionnaire which requested information about the problems, concerns and issues facing them. Teachers were invited to suggest forms of assistance, training or other activities which might help them to deal with their concerns, or had been helpful to them in the past. This information is to be used to clarify the needs of Christian teachers and to determine appropriate courses of action towards meeting these needs.

This research uncovered common factors as well as differences between the teachers from the two types of schools. The concerns which were most frequently mentioned were: philosophical and religious matters, relationships, curriculum, behaviour, organisation, resources, legal concerns and training. Although philosophical and religious concerns were most frequently noted by teachers from both types of schools, there were significant differences between state and Christian school teachers regarding five of those concerns. Another significant difference was that the state school teachers favoured the informal and the Christian school teachers the formal learning mode.

A list of forms of assistance, which were desired or had been experienced, has been compiled from the questionnaire responses. The feasibility of implementing these suggestions for assistance, and a closer examination of the other concerns which were expressed by respondents, could be investigated in future research.

INTRODUCTION

Research Focus

During 1989 there have been many changes in the New Zealand education system. Consequently, Christian teachers are conscious of the importance of assessing their roles and needs in their educational sphere. Therefore, it is an appropriate time to raise the question: How can Christian teachers be assisted to deal with the problems, concerns or issues which they face? Tough's suggestion is to "look at educators ... as learners instead of just looking at them as teachers".¹ In view of that, this research is focused on Christian teachers' perceptions of themselves as learners: how their concerns have been resolved in the past and how their current needs may be met.

Historical Overview

This section provides an outline of the historical developments which have produced the basically secular New Zealand state education system and the Christian education provisions that operate alongside state schooling. However, to really appreciate the context within which Christians perform their teaching tasks, it is necessary to examine details (provided by other writers) of the historical antecedents of the development of the state and Christian, primary and secondary sectors of education.

Christian teaching has been part of New Zealand's educational history since the first church school was established in 1816 by missionaries.² Later, when education came under the control of the provincial authorities, there were varying provisions for religious and secular teaching: in Auckland the churches took "the lead in the establishment of schools"; in Wellington

private schools predominated; in Otago there was "a church-controlled system of public schools"; in Canterbury monetary grants were given to denominational heads, and in Nelson there was an "unsectarian public school system" ... which "became the basis of the national system".³

The Education Act of 1877 established a secular, national system of state education. However, "the 'settlement' of the religious question in the 1877 Act satisfied no one except the advocates of complete secularism, and these were almost certainly in the minority".⁴ In fact, Blamires believed that "divisions within the Church" may have been "the chief obstacle" to providing a state school "curriculum which includes religious training".⁵

After 1877 while some church schools (such as Christ's College) were retained, many of the small private and church schools were closed in favour of the state system. Subsequently, many state primary schools had half an hour per week for religious instruction under the Nelson system. On the other hand, prayers, hymns and Bible readings were customary at assembly in secondary schools.⁶ Christian teachers were often available to conduct these activities because there have always been some Christian teachers within the state system. However, many Christian teachers have not always been clear about their role as Christians in secular schools.

ISSUES IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

When Christian educators discuss issues in New Zealand education, whether informally, formally at conferences, or through locally written articles, a wide variety of viewpoints is expounded. Many of the same issues are also discussed in Australian, British and North American material which is available to New Zealand Christian educators. This material includes books and audio-visuals, as well as information presented by speakers.

By these means debate is stimulated and teachers' thinking is developed about issues such as: financial concerns, the establishment of schools, philosophical and religious matters, aims, teacher education, curriculum, relationships, behaviour and discipline, resources, and organisation.

Financial

Financial concerns have been significant for both Catholic and Protestant schools. However, private schools with Church affiliations were mainly Catholic and since the Private Schools' Conditional Integration Act (1975) the Catholic schools have integrated with the state system, maintained their Christian character and sought to solve their financial problems.⁷ Protestant schools have been established both for social and religious reasons. Some of them have also encountered financial difficulties, and have discussed the possibility of integration too, but most have chosen to remain independent by raising funds and school fees to be financially viable. Independent schools want to be free to develop in a manner which they consider is beneficial to their pupils and some private school authorities are concerned that greater financial dependence on the government may encourage the government to inhibit the freedom of the independent schools.

The Establishment of New Schools

Lineham claims:

There has also been a growing unhappiness about the state system in the Christian world. Unhappiness about its values, the quality of its teaching, and its secular ethos.

Many Christians have come to regard it as a lost cause.⁸

Therefore, numerous new Christian schools have been founded during the latter part of this century and increasing numbers of children have been either departing from, or failing to enter the state system. These schools, which are largely supported by evangelical Christians, are usually owned

by Associations or Trusts and operate under a Board of Governors.⁹ Unlike the older church schools (such as St. Andrews which is Presbyterian, and St. Bedes which is Catholic) these schools claim to be non-denominational. Nevertheless, many of the new Christian schools have been established by groups of people who are mainly from the same denomination. For example, Reformed Church people, particularly those who have Dutch ancestry, have been involved in the establishment of non-denominational Christian schools such as the Hastings Christian School, Emmanuel in Christchurch, and Liberton in Dunedin. Some of these people have been influenced by Edlin who wrote: "We must seek for a pattern for the Christian school that establishes and maintains responsible control within the hands of the parents whose children attend the school".¹⁰

The "Christian Schools' Directory" indicates that during the last few years the number of these private schools has continued to increase in spite of the decreasing allocations of State Aid.¹¹ The size of this new type of registered Christian school varied in 1988 from Rainbow Park Christian School with 11 pupils to Middleton Grange School with 942 students.¹²

Philosophical and Religious Concerns

There are philosophical and religious differences between state and Christian schools; and within these two different types of schools there is a vast disparity of both aims and practice. Within the state system there are variations from school to school in the emphasis on Taha Maori, and in the amount of religious instruction which is provided.¹³ Christian schools differ both in the amount of biblical teaching and in the interpretations of it. For instance, some teachers are familiar with and employ the message and methods which Jesus used.¹⁴ Other teachers are familiar with some Bible stories but they are quite unfamiliar with material which

employs an integrated Christian approach to teaching the prescribed academic subjects.

According to Section 77 of the Education Act 1964 "Every State primary school shall be kept open 5 days in each week for at least 4 hours each day ... and the teaching shall be entirely of a secular character." However, Brighton reminds us that Section 77 applies to primary schools only, because "secondary schools have never been subject to the secular clause".¹⁵ The word "secular" has been interpreted in various ways by different writers. Fountain suggests that:

The intention of the Education Act which established primary education in New Zealand in using the word **secular**, was to establish this form of non-sectarian Christian education rather than an education which ignored religious education altogether.¹⁶

McGeorge states that 'secular' meant "excluding religious observances and instruction".¹⁷ Snook agreed that "the existence of the word "secular" in the Act forbids the [state school] teacher to explicitly instruct in religion or consciously to influence the religious views of the pupils."¹⁸ He also wrote that, in contrast to the state school situation, "in the religious school, the teacher regards it as an important duty to influence the children religiously as often and as much as he can."¹⁹ Some teachers choose to teach in Christian schools because they believe that:

It is disastrous for children to have their lives divided between the 'secular' school and the Christian home and Church; to be torn between two opposite religious directions.²⁰

That concern does not appear to be shared by many state school teachers and the "N.Z.E.I. claimed that our [state] system of education was founded on a secular, i.e. neutral basis."²¹ In opposition to that, Johnston contends that "it is quite impossible for any educational system to be "neutral" on religious questions",²² and Vriend refers to "the humanistic pretence of religious neutrality in the classroom."²³ Some Christians are content to be part of the state system but others believe that "Christians will discover

that there is no neutral ground on which to stand in the business of educating their children".²⁴ For instance, Van Brummelen wrote:

Public education has a faith commitment to which a Christian cannot adhere [because] there is no room in the public school for the Christian as an **integral** Christian [because s/he] cannot be wholly faithful to Christ's command of Matthew 29: "Go to peoples everywhere and make my disciples..."²⁵

Many Christian teachers choose to transfer from state to Christian schools because they realise that it is not acceptable to evangelise children in the secular system. However, in some Christian schools evangelism is not included in the teacher's job description either.

Aims for Christian Education

Among those who retreat from the state system and become involved in Christian education there appears to be no clear, consistent set of aims shared by all writers. One writer suggested that children should be nurtured so that they can attain wisdom rather than "the mere accumulation of knowledge".²⁶ Another wrote that "the ultimate goal of Christian education is to equip the student for living a Christian life in today's culture..."²⁷ and Jeffrey's declared that:

The Christian school is a community whose most important aim is to learn the Christian life. It is a worshipping community, seeking to know God in Christ and learning to follow Him, not in monastic seclusion but in active relation to the world.²⁸

Some educators, who oppose Jeffrey's view, reflect the stance which is objected to by Hathaway in his statement:

Too often our churches have had a fortress mentality, seeking to protect the Lord's people from the evil influence of the world around them, and have failed to be "salt" and "light".²⁹
In fact,
the presumed evilness of the world has led some Christians to hold the view that public schools should teach morality, and many others to decide for isolationistic Christian schools.³⁰

When writing about the aims of Christian education, Weeks deplores the situation in which he observes many Christians "quite at a loss to bring

biblical ideas to bear on the whole question of education." ³¹ He contends that Christian schools often tend to simply copy state schools and that "even when Christian schools have been founded, their purpose is not always seen in a particularly clear way." ³² Carvill's agreement with that statement is evident in his questions:

Why is there such confusion about what Christian schools should do - are they primarily for evangelism? for a Christian atmosphere, for protecting our kids from the world, or for teaching them to be citizens of God's kingdom - which of these ideals is best?" ³³

Teacher Education

The aims for Christian education will influence the mode of teacher education deemed appropriate. In Britain "the Church was a leader and pioneer in teacher training, as in the founding of schools". ³⁴ In New Zealand some educators would like that pattern to be adopted too. In fact, Storm claimed that "the matter of training Christian School Teachers is being evaluated, certainly a priority one issue". ³⁵ At present the state's provision of secular teacher training is the only means of gaining a teacher's certificate which is approved by the state authorities. Some Christians believe that that provision is inadequate because:

There is a school of thought which sees anything Christian as so distinctively different from anything secular that it requires a fresh start, from specifically Christian presuppositions ... [because] Christians are called to proclaim and live by the absolute sovereignty of God over every aspect of life, and to serve God with heart, mind and strength in every realm of life ... this view can be used to justify Christian withdrawal from present schools and universities and the founding of specifically Christian institutions." ³⁶

In discussions with me, many Christian teachers have expressed a desire for teacher training, from a Christian perspective, to be provided in various ways. Some teachers suggest that Christian studies could be added to the initial College of Education courses, others envisage post-graduate courses offered in Advanced Studies for Teachers Courses, or by the Bible College of New Zealand. Some teachers prefer the idea of correspondence

courses or guided reading programmes which teachers can study when it is convenient for them. Others are quite happy to read in an unplanned manner, to attend conferences and other meetings to further their professional development from a Christian perspective.

Curriculum

Betteridge wrote that: "Schools which are free to carry out variations of curriculum and method, provide that element of individual freedom and experiment which is so necessary a condition of progress".³⁷ However, all schools do not take advantage of that opportunity. The curriculum which is developed for Christian schools tends to reflect teachers' awareness and beliefs about how to teach 'Christianly'. With reference to Christian schools, some teachers desire a "more expansive and more developed, biblically attuned curriculum",³⁸ "based on the Word of God ... [with] fresh and new approaches in education."³⁹ However, according to the "Christian Schools' Directory", the curriculum in some Christian schools is not very different from that which is offered in state schools.⁴⁰

Within the context of state primary schools, teachers are aware that they are expected to maintain secular courses even if "a school devoid of religion can give only a restricted outlook on life".⁴¹ One writer complained that within this restricted view of life which is presented by some state schools:

The school tends to concentrate, inasmuch as that is possible, on the non-debatable. When key issues are touched upon, as they must be, attempts are made to be non-controversial by presenting all the various viewpoints. Since the student is to decide by himself which option to choose, he soon gets the idea that it does not really matter too much one way or the other ... Both students and teachers must leave their basic beliefs at home because they may offend others.⁴²

Relationships

In some state schools, Christian teachers find that their relationships with their colleagues may be adversely affected by philosophical and religious differences between them. For example, the desire to avoid social activities, such as those involving the excessive use of alcohol or gambling, can have a negative effect on relationships which are developed by social contact outside school hours, or in the staff room. Also, "many teachers in the public school system surreptitiously or openly scorn Christian answers to society's needs".⁴³ However, this situation may be evident in reverse and some Christian teachers could do well to remember that "teachers will teach as much (positively or negatively) by the way they handle their own relationships with administrators and fellow teachers as in any other ways."⁴⁴

Although Christ wanted his followers to have appropriate relationships and to live together in unity, those aims appear to be difficult for some Christians in education to attain.⁴⁵ In fact, the disunity which is evident in some aspects of schooling is of concern to many Christian educators because

one of the real difficulties about Christian witness in the world today is its lack of unity ... [because] our children have been educated **not** in the way of the Lord.⁴⁶

Lack of unity appears to be an old problem which simply re-emerges in different forms. For instance, McGeorge reports that:

the old divisions between Catholic and Protestant over what should be done in state schools has been replaced by a deep division between liberal and conservative Christians who now regard each other with considerable suspicion."⁴⁷

Disunity can create problems, both within individual Christian schools and within groups, when people from different sections of the Christian spectrum attempt to work together. For instance, disunity is evident at times within the New Zealand Association of Christian Schools (NZACS). One of its

aims is "making known the viewpoint of the Association with respect to issues of public concern or debate in education"⁴⁸ but the Secretary, Mr A. B. Masterton, indicated that "schools [in the NZACS] are so diverse in their thinking on Christian education it is difficult to make statements which reflect the viewpoint of all the Christian schools."⁴⁹

Relationships may be strained within the Christian school scene because as Weeks notes, "teachers can be giving up much to teach in a Christian school. There may be longer hours. Often there is less pay."⁵⁰ These factors can lead to great stress on teachers and on their families, particularly when a new school is being established by enthusiastic but inexperienced people. For instance, Weeks notes that "the flight of parents from state schools is partly caused by the exclusion of the parent from any say in education by the 'expert' teacher."⁵¹ Parents who are keen to be involved in their children's education are often prepared to spend hours raising funds, serving on committees, and caring for the physical environment of the school. This can develop familiarity with the classroom and it can lead to the removal of parents' inhibitions about entering it during school time, even when doing that contradicts school policy.⁵² These stresses may account, at least in part, for the high turnover of staff at many small Christian schools.⁵³ On the other hand, relationships can be enhanced in some school communities by parental involvement in school activities. For example, the assistance of parents is often highly valued in the multi-level classes which are found in many small, Christian schools. This desire of parents to be involved in schools has been recognised in the new approach to state schooling and that may make state schools more acceptable to some Christian parents and teachers.

Behaviour and Discipline

Many writers have attempted to deal with matters relating to the behaviour and discipline of school students, for example, May claims that "the biggest cause of stress, tiredness and burnout in teachers is the problem of discipline".⁵⁴ It is clear that the philosophical and/or religious beliefs which are dominant in a school will dictate the mode of discipline and expectations for students' behaviour.

Adams believes that "all discipline must be biblically based".⁵⁵ That statement is open to various interpretations and Christian teachers who agree with that view may experience conflict in a secular education system. Adams also wrote: "Sin affects learning. Wise teachers ... do not plow on oblivious to problems that are adversely affecting children. They take time to confront, offer counsel, encourage, and help".⁵⁶ On the other hand, Weeks suggests that it is important to have a long-term relationship when dealing with personal and behaviour problems between adults and children, therefore it is preferable for parents to be responsible in those situations.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, co-operation between parents and teachers is essential in order to ascertain the reasons for behaviour, to maintain consistent standards of behaviour, and to ensure that problems are dealt with appropriately, in both state and Christian schools.

Resources

Parents of Christian school pupils are frequently required to assist with accumulating resources for teaching. This can be a problem for new Christian schools because many of them have severe financial limitations. Another difficulty which confronts some Christian school teachers is that of procuring written material that is appropriate to the character of their

school. In order to help to overcome the lack of resources in Christian schools, the Chairman of NZACS, Mr R. Oliver asked, "What value would be served through the [Christian Schools'] Association establishing a resource centre?"⁵⁸ Mulholland suggested that it would be useful to collect and distribute units of work, written resources about establishing schools, videotapes and other visual aids.⁵⁹ Other information about resources is available in the "Directory of Educational Resources" which was produced by the organisers of the 1980 National Christian Conference on Education. It lists educational courses, equipment and literature which are available in New Zealand from Christian organisations.⁶⁰ A number of overseas publishers such as Rod and Staff, Accelerated Christian Education, A Beka Book, Thoburn Press, Eerdmans, Concordia (U.S.A.); Scripture Union, (New Zealand); Light Educational Ministeries (Australia); and Lion (England) also produce material which some Christian teachers have appreciated. Once resources have been selected it is vital to have them organised so that they are readily accessible to those who require them and the National Library Service has useful information to assist with that task.

School Organisation

The organisation of schools is affected by the relationships which teachers have with administrators, other staff, parents and pupils. Many schools foster a supportive network in which roles are clearly defined. In some schools this is difficult to achieve in practice, particularly when teachers with state training enter Christian schools with preconceived notions (which differ from those of the school's Board of Directors) about the appropriate organisation to ensure that a school functions efficiently. For instance, some Directors are keen to allow principal teachers to concentrate on teaching because they believe that "it is a waste of a valuable resource to take the senior and most experienced teacher and to make a clerk of

him. Others can do the administrative work." ⁶¹

That sounds good in theory but as a school principal I found that the voluntary helpers for administrative tasks kept changing. I had to teach a helper what to do, and to correct errors. Then, often the next time a task needed doing there would be a different helper who required training. Ultimately this did not seem to be the best way to co-ordinate activities or to use time.

It may be preferable to release teaching principals from the classroom part-time so that they can deal with administrative tasks because "a certain amount [of administration] unavoidably falls upon the principal because he is on the spot and outside parties [such as government agencies] assume that he is the administrative head of the school". ⁶² Confusion may arise when, in theory, one of the Board of Directors (who has a full-time job elsewhere) assumes the principal's administrative tasks. In that situation frustration occurs when small details require permission from a voluntary administrator who is not involved in the school on a daily basis. There may be unnecessary delays because the official administrator is under too much pressure in other areas of his life to attend to school matters promptly.

Christian teachers in both state and Christian schools suffer from the pressures of too many tasks or too little time because they are often required to use their skills in areas of Christian service in addition to their full-time job, for example, teaching Sunday school, youth groups, or Inter-School Christian Fellowship. This can cause conflicts of priorities between home, work, and church commitments.

AIMS OF THIS RESEARCH

The literature confirms my experiences as a teacher in various state, Catholic, and non-denominational schools. In those positions I became aware of the wide range of needs of teachers as well as of the discrepancies between the theory and practice of Christians in education. Consequently, this research project was undertaken to provide a survey of the nature and extent of these concerns within a selected sample of Christian teachers in state and Christian schools. Specifically, this research sought to test the assumption that there were differences between state and Christian school teachers in their concerns, in the solutions which they desired, and in the learning activities which they have found useful in the past.

METHOD

1. SUBJECTS:

A. Numbers

Table 1: Numbers of Subjects in Terms of Type of School, Sex, School Level, and Location

	Type of School		Total
	Christian	State	
Subjects	85	85	170
Sex			
Male	38	43	81
Female	47	42	89
School level			
Primary	45	40	85
Secondary	40	45	85
Location			
Christchurch	52	79	131
Out of Christchurch	33	6	39

B. Sex

There are more female than male primary teachers and more male than female secondary teachers in New Zealand schools and in this sample.

Table 2: Sex of Respondents According to Type and Level of School

SCHOOL:	State		Christian	
	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary
Male	13	30	12	26
Female	27	15	33	14

C. Ages and Teaching Experience

The Subjects ranged in ages from 19 to 59 years, and their length of teaching experience varied from one term to 38 years.

Table 3: Ages of Subjects, in Decades, According to Type of School

Ages	Type of School		Total
	Christian	State	
Under 20	1	0	1
20 - 29	13	19	32
30 - 39	31	21	52
40 - 49	30	32	62
50 - 59	10	13	23
Total	85	85	170

D. School Positions

The teachers in this sample comprised 153 assistants and 17 principals.

E. Christian Groups

The Subjects for this study were self-identified Christians who represented a broad spectrum of the Christian tradition. Appendix B lists the 20 different labels which the respondents gave themselves. Clearly, more than just the evangelical, fundamentalist, and conservative sectors of Christianity were included in the sample of Subjects who assisted with this research. Nevertheless, Appendix B shows that when this sample of Subjects was compared with the Census figures, the Anglicans, Presbyterians and Catholics were under-represented but the other groups were over-represented.

2. PROCEDURE:

A. Subject Selection

The 1989 annual conference of the New Zealand Association of Christian Schools was held at Middleton Grange School in Christchurch. Dr John Hitchen, the principal speaker at the conference, agreed to assist with this research by making introductory comments: expressing interest and encouraging teachers to become involved in it. Most of the conferees were from Christian primary and secondary schools and responded to the questionnaire (Appendix A).

Other Christian teachers at state and Christian schools were approached using a networking method. That is, I started by contacting teachers who were known to me as Christians and told them about my research. Then I asked them: firstly, if they were prepared to complete a questionnaire, secondly, how many teachers they knew from whom they could obtain responses to the questionnaire, and thirdly, I requested the names of other Christian teachers from whom I could receive similar assistance in other state schools. Subsequently, some questionnaires were left at school offices, while others were posted. I attempted to obtain more Subjects by telephoning some state schools at which I had no Christian contact. On each occasion I received a negative response.

B. Data Collection

The questionnaire designed for this research project consists of two parts: firstly, personal background information about subjects, and secondly, three questions about the subjects' experience with problems/concerns/issues, and the forms of assistance which they desired or had previously found helpful. Most of the conferees completed and returned the questionnaires to me immediately.

To obtain responses from state school teachers, forms were delivered to them after telephone discussions revealed who would act as distributors of the questionnaires in individual schools. Subsequently, telephone reminders to return the questionnaires were often necessary.

C. Analysis of Data

The responses to the questionnaire were examined to identify and define categories of concerns which included: behaviour and discipline, curriculum, organisation, philosophical and religious, relationships, resources, and training. Definitions were formulated for the 'Forms of Assistance' and 'Nil Responses' categories too. (Refer to Appendix C for more information.)

D. Reliability Checks

I coded all the questionnaire responses before two other people checked the reliability by coding the responses on every fifth questionnaire. Paul, a university student, selected the same codes as me for 109 (84%) of the responses which he checked. Ruth, who has had no university education, agreed with my classifications in 104 (81%) of her responses.

In discussions with Ruth and Paul it was clear that a much higher level of agreement would have been obtained if they had referred to the classification system definitions more carefully before they coded each response. Neither of the checkers were trained teachers and therefore they were not always clear about what was referred to by some teachers.

On the basis of this level of agreement being attained by inexperienced people, and the clear indications that with further training a very high level of agreement would be reached, this appears to be a very reliable coding system.

RESULTS

Most of the Christian school teachers' responses were obtained at the Christian Schools' Association Conference. Responses from state school teachers were gathered slowly because it was only possible to obtain one or two from some schools. The most questionnaires obtained at one time was nine from one school.

The length of the Subjects' responses varied from "No, N/A, N/A", to two full pages. Some of the respondents discussed their responses with me but most Subjects completed their questionnaires without any personal interaction.

Table 4: Numbers of Christian School and State School Teachers who Mentioned Various Concerns (Question 1)

	School Type		χ^2	p
	Christian (N = 85)	State (N = 85)		
Concerns:				
Behaviour	10	30	11.802	<.001
Curriculum	37	25	3.070	NS
Organisation	22	17	0.532	NS
Legal	3	8	1.554	NS
Philosophical & Religious	44	73	21.492	<.001
Relationships	28	49	9.496	<.01
Resources:				
a) People	6	8	0.078	NS
b) Materials	16	8	2.378	NS
Training	7	0	5.362	<.05
Nil Responses	9	29	12.234	<.001

Table 4 indicates that when state and Christian school teachers' responses are combined, philosophical and religious matters, relationships then curriculum are of most concern. Nevertheless, the order in which the teachers from the two types of schools placed the concerns differed for the second and third most important items. There were highly significant differences between the numbers of teachers from each type of school who were concerned about behaviour, as well as philosophical and religious matters. Also, significant differences were evident in numbers of teachers, in each group, who expressed concern about relationships and training. However, only Christian school teachers indicated that they were concerned about training in response to Question 1, but that is unlikely to be a true indication of their interest and concern considering their responses about training for Questions 2 and 3. While 29 state school teachers had nothing to say about their concerns, the 56 people who did respond made a larger number of responses (218) than the Christian school teachers of whom 9 made Nil responses and 76 produced 182 item responses.

Table 5: Numbers of People who Listed Training Courses or Other Forms of Assistance Which Might Help Them to Deal With Their Problems / Concerns / Issues; and Nil Responses (Question 2)

	School Type		χ^2	p
	Christian (N = 85)	State (N = 85)		
Activity/Resource				
1. Learning Mode				
a) Informal	19	36	6.880	<.01
b) Formal	50	33	6.026	<.02
2. Resources				
a) People	10	11	0	NS
b) Materials	12	8	0.236	NS
Nil Responses	27	18	1.934	NS

Table 5 shows that there were significant differences between the Christian school teachers who preferred the formal learning mode, and the state school teachers who preferred the informal learning mode. Nevertheless, similar small numbers of state and Christian school teachers indicated that resources would help to solve their problems. A larger number of responses were recorded for Christian school teachers for both suggestions for assistance and for Nil responses.

Table 6: Numbers of People who Described Courses or Other Forms of Assistance Which were Helpful to Them as Christian Teachers; and Nil Responses (Question 3)

	School Type		χ^2	p
	Christian (N = 85)	State (N = 85)		
Activity/Resource:				
1. Learning Mode				
a) Informal	17	29	2.942	NS
b) Formal	58	39	6.916	<.01
2. Resources				
a) People	1	5	1.554	NS
b) Materials	6	2	1.182	NS
Nil Responses	19	29	2.352	NS

Table 6 indicates that there was a significant difference in the responses from state and Christian school teachers in terms of the formal learning mode. While more Christian school teachers preferred the formal learning mode, the informal learning mode was appreciated by more of the state school teachers. Few teachers, from either type of school, indicated that provision of resources had been helpful to them and more Nil responses were recorded for state school teachers than Christian school teachers. Appendix D lists forms of assistance which had been experienced and/or were desired by teachers.

DISCUSSION

A. Differences in the Distribution and Collection of Questionnaires

Differences in the method of obtaining the responses may have influenced the quantity and quality of the questionnaire responses; for example, some differences in the results may be related to the length of time which different subjects had to reflect on their responses. There were differences in the procedures for the distribution and collection of questionnaires at the two types of schools. Quotations from the respondents will be used to illustrate the discussion of the results.⁶³

The collection of questionnaires from state schools was very time consuming. Establishing contact with someone who would distribute the questionnaires often required several telephone calls; then the forms had to be delivered to schools and sometimes several telephone calls were required before the forms could be collected. Difficulties in obtaining responses from all the Christian teachers in a school may have occurred because it is not always easy to identify the Christians when they do not acknowledge their beliefs within a secular context, or because some who identify themselves as Christians refuse to accept that some others are truly Christian. This reflects the disunity which is sometimes evident between different Christian groups. Also, whether or not someone is identified by others as a Christian depends, at times, on whether the person sees 'Christian' as an important way to label him/herself.

Most responses from teachers in Christian schools were collected at the N.Z.A.C.S. Conference where questionnaires were distributed and collected immediately. Those responses to questionnaires were not always as elaborate as those from state school teachers who had more time to consider their answers.

B. Length of Responses

The length of teachers' responses was not always directly related to the amount of useful information provided in their answers; or to the length of time taken to write their responses. In fact, the shortest response was from a state primary teacher whose questionnaire was posted to and from the respondent, and some teachers were able to write useful information more succinctly than others. Apparently, the responses only indicated what was uppermost in the subjects' minds when the questionnaire was administered because it was evident from discussions with the conferees that some teachers did not record all their concerns.

C. Differences in Concerns (Question 1, Table 4)

The five significant differences between state and Christian school teachers' concerns and Nil responses confirm the hypothesis that there are differences between teachers in those two types of schools. However, one of those significant differences involved a zero total for 'Training' from state school teachers compared with seven respondents from Christian schools. Training will be dealt with in section D of this discussion. Other significant differences were that state school teachers indicated that they were more concerned about behaviour, relationships, and philosophical and religious matters than their counterparts in Christian schools. More of the state school teachers' responses to Question 1 were classified as Nil responses.

As expected, state school teachers tend to experience more conflicts in the area of philosophical and religious concerns than Christian school teachers. Legal boundaries relating to the expression of their faith were more relevant to Christians in state schools. Those teachers have various approaches within their situations. For instance, some teachers believe

that they have a responsibility to be "salt and light". Others dare not in any way indicate their beliefs for fear of influencing their charges. Another group tends to prefer to express the Christian perspective outside the classroom, within the context of groups such as Inter-School Christian Fellowship, where students are voluntary participants rather than a captive audience. However, it was reported that some non-Christian teachers attempt to limit those activities when staff "deliberately do not read, from the daily notices, the I.S.C.F. notice to their class". (SSM4322Ba7)

Different expectations and perceived levels of acceptance are experienced by teachers; for example, one state secondary teacher wrote, "I am concerned with the 'amoral' standards that schools adopt in the name of tolerance and non-sectarianism". (SSM4217Ba11) Another state secondary teacher claimed "I have had every encouragement to act in a Christian way, and when I don't agree with certain things (e.g. school raffles) have always had 100% respect and consideration". (SSM5028Br2) A primary teacher added "in my situation it is still possible to express a Christian viewpoint in the classroom as far as values etc are concerned and to teach about the true meaning of Christmas, Easter ...", (SPM4117An8) In spite of this, a state secondary teacher expressed concern about "the increasing secular nature of the school and move away from spiritual values. The daily Bible reading, hymn and prayer of the '60s have disappe[a]red completely in the 1980s". (SSM5026Ba4)

A common concern expressed by Christian teachers was summed up by one who wrote: "The problem that I face as a teacher is communicating my faith in the 'state' school without abusing my priv[i]lege / position as teacher". (SSM4217Ba11) Teachers expressed two different viewpoints about that type of concern. One teacher wrote: "If an argument develops over religion I tend to keep my views to myself unless asked". (SSM275Pr24)

Conversely, another state teacher believes "Christian teachers should not be shy about talking about their faith in the classroom - feminists, homosexuals etc certainly aren't". (SSM5026Ba4) Reflecting the attitude of many of his colleagues, a primary teacher indicated that:

My Christian beliefs influence the attitude I have to children ... but the majority of teachers probably hold similar attitudes and expectations whether they are Christian or not i.e. that they should care about children, expect good standards of behaviour, and do their job as well as they can. A job such as teaching where you have the opportunity to help others (in this case educating children in a positive and caring way) fits in well with having Christian beliefs. (SPM3410Un11)

That secondary teachers agree with the above is confirmed by this statement: "I believe that I can be a teacher without compromising my Christian values or ... flaunting my Christian beliefs in a way that offends others". (SSM3917An12) Clearly, some teachers are able to cope well with the problems, concerns and issues which face them, while others have yet to deal with some areas of concern.

Perhaps more concerns about relationships were expressed by state school teachers because Christian school teachers, selected to "fit in" with the character of Christian schools, have more in common than the diverse group of people who espouse a wide range of different philosophies within the state system.

Difficulties with relationships which are encountered by some state school teachers are noted in questionnaire responses such as:

Another real problem which has existed through my teaching career is the "happy hour" type of activity, usually after school on Friday and usually at the local pub. I have never felt at ease in a bar situation - I strongly dislike the smell of stale tobacco smoke and alcohol and even to drink non-alcoholic drinks in this environment is an anathema. As a result I have missed out on some of the social life of the staff. (SSM5026Ba4)

Many non-Christian state school teachers could also experience this difficulty when trying to establish social relationships with their colleagues, but a

state secondary teacher thought that: "Any differences of opinion on such issues as gambling, alcohol, language etc are readily accepted as long as one's stand is made clear in polite, non-judgemental & friendly terms". (SSM4220SA9)

Christian school teachers tend to choose different types of social activities for mutual help and support. Respondents to the questionnaire frequently referred to the value of their Church home-groups for social interaction and help in problem-solving within an accepting environment. Perhaps Christian teachers should spend more time learning to relate appropriately to people with different values and to make an acceptable contribution in enriching relationships between teachers and within the wider community.

One teacher wrote that "quite often the extremes of views from both Christian groups and non-Christian groups are difficult to handle". (SPM4423Pr5) Extremes of views are also evident between the two groups of Christian teachers. For instance, sometimes relationships between Christian school and state school teachers are strained by differences of opinion regarding the type of schooling in which Christians should be involved. On the one hand, a state school teacher wrote: "I cannot tolerate so called private 'Christian pseudo elitist' schools". (SPM5232Pr3) Similarly, other state teachers added "Christian educators [should recognise] that there is a place for Christians in the state system". (SSM4218Br10) "I think that it is more valuable for Christian teachers and families to be involved in state schools rather than shut away in Christian schools". (SPF255Me17) In opposition to that, a Christian school teacher stated: "I firmly believe that Christian schooling is not an alternative for Christian parents but is God's only true way to have Christian children educated". In view of these comments it is not surprising that one state teacher wrote: "I often feel as if the battle is with a small part of the army". (SSF3615Ap7)

In spite of the differences evident within each of the two types of schools there are areas of common concern. It was suggested that there is a need for the "respect of differences and appreciation of others' viewpoints". (SPM4218Ca7) "Perhaps Christian educators from the alternative and state systems should get together to support each other". (SSM4218Br10)

The highly significant differences between the numbers of teachers who expressed concerns about behaviour may relate to the fact that in many state schools there is more divergence between the Christian and non-Christian teachers', pupils' and parents' beliefs and expectations about behaviour. Therefore, more concerns about behaviour arise for Christian teachers in state schools than in Christian schools; for instance, some difficulties are evident when teachers try "making stands with boys on ... issues such as swearing, without much school backing". (SSM4110NL17)

Likewise, a state teacher wrote of his concern about:

bad language being taken as the norm and self-control is virtually non-exist[e]nt. When confronted with the fact that their behaviour is unacceptable, most cannot see that their actions may affect other people and if they do, [they] don't worry about it anyway. Could be summed up by saying that many do not feel they are responsible for their own actions. (SSM401NL29)

Some state school teachers expressed concern about the content of the curricula. One was concerned about how far to "accept the concept of a 'non-religious' education system with issues such as evolution, sex education, health studies, peace studies, etc, when these issues obviously convey a values system". (SSM3714Ap15) Similarly, another teacher noted his concern about:

Some issues being adopted as educational and given what I consider to be inflated status e.g. racial issues, feminism, homosexuality, health education topics etc. Whatever happened to politeness, neatness, hard work, discipline? (SSM4220SA9)

In addition, a primary teacher claimed that:

The state system is secular ... to stop unfair religious prattling at children ... secularity remains unfair because

its complete silence about the Bible and Christianity makes it actually oppose Christianity by its lack of support. This is a difficult issue for Christians to come to terms with. (SPM4512Chr10)

On the other hand, Christian school teachers want to develop curricula which are written from a Christian perspective. A Christian school teacher contended that they should be "pioneering and leading the way in developing innovative curricula and teaching techniques. (Too much of what we do is a 'Christianized' version of what everyone else does!)" (CSM4019An10)

Organisational problems which were common to both state and Christian school teachers related to time pressures and the ordering of their priorities to cope with the expectation that they should use their teaching skills for Christian service, outside the sphere of their daily work. One teacher wanted "enough time to run a home, parent children, teach full-time, and participate in the life and fellowship of church, while not neglecting neighbours, friends, relatives." (CPF4308EI20) Another organisational concern which is relevant to many of the new Christian schools is "multi-level teaching ... because of small class size". (CSF2703Ap11)

Lack of resources within Christian schools is often commented on in personal discussions with Christian school teachers but this concern was seldom recorded in the questionnaire responses. Perhaps Christian school teachers just accept that finances do not permit them to purchase many resources. On the other hand, perhaps they are not aware of the resources which are available and therefore they often comment only about problems for which they can conceive solutions. Nevertheless, a number of teachers want a "full-time consultant to travel and offer assistance and ideas, resources to our schools". (CSM5030Chr1) Another suggestion was to have

someone to collate a list of resources: tapes/books/articles/videos that we could borrow/hire on various topics relevant to the survival of teachers. Even just other people

sharing about their experiences and how they cope with issues would be an encouragement. (SSF3505Ap11)

D. Forms of Assistance (Question 2 & 3; Tables 5 & 6; Appendix D)

What teachers thought would be helpful (Question 2) appeared to be conditioned by what they had found helpful in the past. (Question 3) When state school teachers responded to the second and third questions they referred to more examples of the informal learning mode than the Christian school teachers who presented more instances of the formal learning mode.

In part, these differences may have occurred because Christian school teachers are expected to develop their teaching skills and curricula from a Christian perspective. These tend to be developed by using formal teaching modes, for example, staff meetings, seminars and conferences.

On the other hand, state school teachers often desire fellowship with people who have similar concerns in order to gain support, assisting them to resolve the conflicts which they face within the secular system. For instance, some teachers want "a means of knowing who other Christian teachers in the district are ... for mutual encouragement through prayer etc". (SSM4015Br13) Other teachers enjoyed having a fellowship dinner (SSF2804Me12) and some would like to pursue the informal learning mode by reading articles about the concerns of Christian teachers. (SSM4218Br10)

While some teachers believe that training is an important issue, many of them argue that any additional study for retraining purposes would present a huge challenge as they are already under pressure with their normal commitments. Therefore, the results (in Table 4) showing the number of people who expressed concerns about 'Training' may not reflect its value to teachers because most teachers discussed 'Training' in answer to questions

2 and 3 and showed that it was important to them. Nevertheless, at present there are few incentives, apart from personal motivation, to encourage teachers to engage in Christian teacher training. A primary teacher suggested that

to help individual teachers with their commitment to Christianity, courses could be developed through Teachers College ... it would be valuable too if they could be made part of the Post-Graduate Qualifications teachers could acquire. (SP M 5633Ca2)

However, I believe that unless courses are offered with that type of incentive it would be preferable for teachers to attend refresher courses during school time. That would avoid conflict with personal commitments and then teachers would be fresh enough to benefit from the learning opportunities. One teacher (CSF2703Ap11) saw a "need to rethink state training ideas etc in terms of a Biblical world view". Another teacher (SSM5028Br2) added that "the best training is in the scriptures which teach us to practise what we preach". Several suggestions were offered by a teacher who wrote about the need for

good teacher training courses for teachers new to Christian education and Post-Graduate courses set up in New Zealand as a follow up to state training ... I would like to see this done through Bible College of New Zealand and incorporating some of their subjects, but available after school on a part-time basis or through a correspondence course. (CPF4315Ba6)

E. CONCLUSION

The reason Christian school teachers noted fewer problems and more solutions for their concerns may relate to the consistency between their beliefs and teaching practice. That situation is conducive to problem solving. On the other hand, state school teachers may have noted more problems because they experience more conflicts with their beliefs in their schools. Also, they may have sought fewer solutions for their concerns because

they have learned to accept that in the state system there are conflicts with their basic values and usually they cannot do much to change that situation. These reasons may also help to explain the highly significant differences in the Nil responses of state and Christian school teachers.

Clearly, there are significant differences between the concerns and needs in this sample of Christian teachers from state and Christian schools. However, more research is required in order to obtain solutions which are appropriate for the New Zealand scene and suitable for each group of teachers. In view of the highly significant differences between the groups in this research, some separate investigations could be conducted. Nevertheless, for both groups the primary focus of the research could be on philosophical and religious concerns. Secondly, concerns regarding the development of curricula for Christian schools could be examined; and for state school teachers, concerns about relationships with people who have different beliefs and values could be investigated. Thirdly, Christian school teachers' relationships with other Christians and non-Christians could be researched; and methods of coping with unacceptable aspects of the state school curricula could be examined to assist Christian teachers in state schools. Furthermore, future researchers could consider the feasibility of initiating the various training and assistance options which have been suggested by Christian teachers. (Appendix D) Also, a larger sample of Subjects could be involved in future research using new questionnaires, individual interviews and group discussions to build on this foundational research.

FOOTNOTES

1. Tough, 1976, p. 70.
2. Fraser, 1986, p. 331.
3. Butchers, 1929, p. 102.
4. Johnston, 1952, p. 4.
5. Blamires, 1960, p. 20.
6. McGeorge and Snook, 1981, p. 25.
7. Ibid., pp. 45 - 57; Fraser, 1986, p. 25.
8. Lineham, 1989a, p. 2.
9. Storm, 1989, pp. 34 - 66.
10. Edlin, c. 1977 - 1985, Bulletin III, p. 4.
11. Storm, 1989, pp. 34 - 66.
12. Ibid., pp. 50 & 57.
13. Personal observations as a teacher.
14. Hobbs, 1986; Horne, 1971.
15. Brighton, 1980, p. 17.
16. Fountain, 1989, p. 20.
17. McGeorge, 1981, p. 9.
18. Snook, 1967, p. 111.
19. Ibid., p. 111.
20. Nyhouse, 1980, p. 82.
21. Blamires, 1960, p. 79.
22. Johnston, 1952, p. 140.
23. Vriend, 1972, p. 4.
24. Ibid., p. 13.
25. Van Brummelen, 1972, p. 71.
26. Vriend, 1972, p. 7.
27. Van Brummelen, 1972, p. 74.

28. Jeffreys, 1946, p. 40.
29. Hathaway, 1989, p. 8; Barker, 1985, Matthew 5:13 - 16.
30. Olthuis, 1972, p. 153.
31. Weeks, 1988, p. 1.
32. Ibid., p. 1 & 6.
33. Carvill, 1972, p. i.
34. Leeson, 1957, p. 95.
35. Storm, 1989, p. 10.
36. Martin, 1979, p. 66.
37. Betteridge, 1948, p. 164.
38. Olthuis, 1972, p. 31.
39. Mechielsen, 1980, p. vi.
40. Storm, 1989, pp. 30, 37, 40, 55, 56, 60 & 66.
41. Blamires, 1960, p. 6.
42. Olthuis, 1972, p. 21.
43. Vriend, 1972, pp. 6 & 7.
44. Adams, 1982, p. 62.
45. Barker, 1985, Matthew 18; John 17:21.
46. Olthuis, 1972, p. 29.
47. McGeorge, 1981, pp. 35 & 36.
48. Storm, 1989, p. 21.
49. Personal communication from A. B. Masterton, 31 October 1989.
50. Weeks, 1988, p. 88.
51. Ibid., p. 79.
52. Personal experience.
53. Storm, 1989, pp. 34 - 66.
54. May, 1988, p. 80.
55. Adams, 1982, p. 63.

56. *Ibid.*, p. 63.
57. Weeks, 1988, p. 8.
58. Oliver, 1989, 21 April.
59. Mulholland, 1989, April.
60. National Christian Conference on Education, 1980.
61. Weeks, 1988, p. 94.
62. *Ibid.*, p. 94.
63. Reference Codes for Quotations:

The top right hand corner of each questionnaire (Appendix A) was marked with code letters and numerals to indicate the respondent's:

1. School type - C = Christian, S = State,
2. School level - P = Primary, S = Secondary,
3. Sex - M = Male, F = Female,
4. Age = first two numerals,
5. Length of teaching experience = second two numerals,
6. Christian Group = last two letters, see Appendix B,
7. Reference number = Last numeral(s).

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APPENDIX A

This questionnaire is part of an M. Ed. research project on the concerns and needs of Christian teachers in State and Christian schools.

A. YOUR BACKGROUND. Please circle or write in your responses.

1. Male/ female
2. Age _____ years.
3. Church/denomination _____
4. School you work in at present: State/ Christian / Primary / Secondary.
5. Location of your school: In Christchurch/ outside Christchurch
6. Your position in your school (e.g., assistant, senior teacher, head of department) _____
7. If you are a secondary teacher, what subjects do you teach ?

OR

If you are a primary teacher, what special responsibilities for particular subjects or activities do you have ?

8. How many years teaching experience do you have (excluding training) ?

B. YOUR EXPERIENCE. (Use the attached sheets to record your answers. Please remember to number your answers.)

1. What problems/concerns/ issues do you, as a Christian, face as a teacher ?
2. What sort of training courses or other forms of assistance do you think might help you deal with these problems/concerns/ issues ?
3. Have you already taken part in any courses or other activities which were helpful to you as a Christian teacher ? (Please describe them)

APPENDIX B

Christian Groups as a Percentage of the Sample, as a Percentage of the
N.Z. Population and According to the Subjects' Type of School

Christian Group	Total	S %	P %	School Type	
				Christian	State
Anglican (An)	30	18	24	11	19
Apostolic (Ap)	5	3	*	2	3
Assembly of God (AG)	2	1	*	1	1
Baptist (Ba)	33	19	2	20	13
Brethren (Br)	15	9	*	7	8
Catholic (Ca)	8	5	15	5	3
Carmel Chr. Centre (CC)	3	2	*	2	1
Christian (Chr)	5	3	*	2	3
Christian Fellowship (CF)	5	3	*	5	0
Charismatic (Ch)	1	1	*	1	0
Elim (El)	4	2	*	4	0
Judah Fellowship (JF)	2	1	*	0	2
New Life (NL)	11	6	*	6	5
Methodist (Me)	12	7	5	1	11
Pentecostal (Pe)	8	5	*	6	2
Presbyterian (Pr)	13	8	18	5	8
Reformed (Re)	7	4	*	7	0
Salvation Army (SA)	3	2	*	0	3
Union Church (Un)	1	1	*	0	1
Non-denominational (ND)	2	1	*	0	2
Total	170			85	85

* = Not listed in the Census or less than 1%

% = Percentage to the nearest whole number

S % = Percentage of the sample

P % = Percentage of the N.Z. population according to Religious

Profession, as per the 1986 Census of Population and Dwellings, Series
C Report 14, in the N.Z. Department of Statistics 1988, p. 13.

APPENDIX C

A. Categories of Concerns / Problems / Issues (Question 1)

1. **Behaviour / discipline:** standards of behaviour and discipline, manners, responsibility, honesty, aggression, teachers as role models, offensive language e.g. blasphemy
2. **Curriculum:** course content, e.g. evolution, perspective of subjects studied e.g. Christian, humanistic, secularist, evolutionist
3. **Organisation:** a) of individuals, and groups e.g. class size, time and priorities, guidelines
b) legal boundaries, political concerns
4. **Philosophical and religious:** moral and religious values, beliefs and their expression, e.g. Christian witness, discipling, Bible knowledge, Sunday sport, raffles
5. **Relationships:** social activities and conflict resolution, communication and expectations, personal interaction in various situations involving combinations of teachers, pupils, parents, and administrators, counselling
6. **Resources:** a. people
b. materials, e.g. books, equipment, money
7. **Training:** retraining, training new teachers
8. **Nil responses:** None, blank space (i.e. no response),
No major problems, No strong concerns or problems.

APPENDIX C

B. Categories of learning and assistance (Questions 2 and 3)

1. Learning Modes:

- a) **Informal** - discussions, social fellowship e.g. dinners, Teachers' Christian Fellowship, support / home-group, observation and understanding of other teachers, being led by the Holy Spirit, personal Bible study, prayer, experience

- b) **Formal** - staff meetings, seminars, conferences, church based teaching e.g. of biblical knowledge, Inter-School Christian Fellowship

2. Assistance /Resources:

- a) **people:** e.g. parental assistance,
travelling teacher gleaning and sharing ideas
- b) **materials:** books, equipment e.g. audio visuals

- #### 3. Nil responses:
- N/A, ?, No, Nil, None, Don't know of any, Don't consider any necessary, Not really, Not recently, Not specifically, -, X, Doubt if any training any advantage, Not sure.

APPENDIX D

Forms of Assistance Experienced and/or Desired by Teachers

Administration

Apologetics

Audio-visuals

Bible College Courses

Bible Study

Books

Church Courses e.g.
 Children's ministries
 Leadership training

Conferences, seminars e.g.
 Accelerated Christian Education
 Light Educational Ministries
 New Zealand Association of Christian Schools

Counselling courses

Correspondence study

Curriculum Development (Christian perspective)

Discussions - informal

Group meetings:
 Inter-School Christian Fellowship
 Parent/teacher meetings
 Prayer meetings
 Social gatherings
 Staff meetings
 Teachers' Christian Fellowship

Maori spirituality & awareness courses

Reading and study

Refresher/Inservice courses

Resource person

Teachers' College (Christian)

Teachers' College
 Advanced Studies for Teachers Units (Christian Perspective)
 Values Course

University (Christian)