A STUDY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

IN

NON-DENOMINATIONAL STATE SECONDARY

MIXED SCHOOLS IN ENGLAND

By

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ABSTRACT

This study is practitioner led research into collective worship in secondary, non-denominational, mixed state schools in England. It focuses upon a number of key questions: what are the functions of collective worship in the twenty first century? What were the functions of collective worship in the previous two centuries? How is it possible to explain why successive governments have not reworked the law on collective worship in non-denominational state schools? What is the future of collective worship?

This research begins by identifying the issues underpinning the practice of collective worship, for example its history and the philosophical, sociological and spiritual aspects of it. These are then addressed in the two literature chapters – the first taking an historical approach tracing the legislation and the second exploring other angles but including an overview of collective worship in the light of Wright Mills' (1959) analytical framework.

The methodological approach is qualitative using a combination of surveys, case study schools and a reflective journal. What emerges is a picture of teachers leading assemblies which hinge on what they consider to be a common morality, not necessarily religious and strong evidence of an ignoring of the 'Christian worship' dimension of the current legislation. Reasons for teachers' non-compliance with the law, range from pupils' largely secular backgrounds to compulsory worship not being intrinsically educational.

Dedication

"O that You would bless me indeed and extend my territory; that Your hand would be with me and that You would keep me from evil that I may not cause pain and that You would grant me what I've requested." 2 Kings....

For my husband, Eddy, you have enriched my life for thirty nine years, empowering me to be who I am: when I wanted to give up this work because of lack of time and the necessary finances, you insisted that I hung on in there with this research and for getting me over this hurdle alone, I am eternally grateful to you. You have also been my source of technical expertise, so thank you for your patience.

For my children, Matthew, Daniel, Natalie and Alex, thank you for always seeing as important what is a priority to me and for your belief in me as a person and as a student.

To my grandchildren, Chloe, Christian, Saul, Isabelle, Cole, Isaac, Alexander, Joel, Maisie-Lou, Lacey, Louis and adopted granddaughter, Kayleigh, I hope you will always love learning and so grow as people; proud of you all and thankful for your lives!

I would also like this piece of work to honour my brothers, John and Paul who were never able to realise their potentials in life; John dying at the age of 6 months and Paul at the age of 33. I am grateful for the opportunities I have had in my lifetime as well as the pleasure and fulfilment this research has given me.

Finally, I would remember two young people who lost their lives in 2010: one of my own students, Jamie Helme-Sagar aged 18, just two months away from becoming an

undergraduate at Birmingham University and Jordan Russell, aged 8 an adopted grandson; remembering you both always.

Kathy Inglis, 2012.

Acknowledgements

In 1988 I studied for a Master's degree at Manchester University and in completing an essay on collective worship, I read John Hull's book, "School Worship an Obituary". When I realised that John Hull lectured at Birmingham University I contacted him and proposed that I should research collective worship for a degree under his supervision. So in 2002, I began my studies. However, John, after his retirement later moved to Queen's to work within an Anglican Seminary in Birmingham and so it was that I sought the help of Clive Harber, who was then the Head of the School of Education. I had just read his book, "Schooling as Violence" and found that this resonated with my MA dissertation on "The consequences of the use of informal corporal punishment in state secondary schools", I was intrigued to meet Clive and to see if he would supervise my work – thankfully for me, though hard pressed for time in his working life, he generously agreed to do so.

I am grateful to both these professors, in the first instance for inspiring me by their own writing, but then also for their professionalism and patience; working with John for two years and Clive for four, each approaching my topic from very different standpoints, the contrast of which has been very helpful to my thinking. On two separate occasions on account of the needs of both my immediate and extended family I had to take a year out from the tutorship of both my supervisors and I thank the Academic Board for their understanding of the intricacies of my life – on both of these occasions my professional life was simultaneously complicated by a change of school.

I'm told that I'm not a very 'manageable' person, but I have sought to be teachable and to listen to advice: I am grateful for the wise counsel of my supervisors. I have loved every minute of this work, although at times it has felt like a luxury I couldn't afford for a whole host of reasons.

I am grateful to the pupils I have taught over the last thirty one years in particular. The leading of collective worship in secondary schools was my favourite role, and it was because of reflecting on the dynamic of it all, in the light of my own Christian faith, as well as considering what could reasonably count as a profitable educational experience for pupils in a state school, that motivated me to undertake this research. Many pupils thanked me on corridors, in lessons and in private, for assemblies I had delivered and this too added to my understanding of the potential power of this educational time and fed my curiosity to give time to the in-depth study of this (often unpopular) phenomenon.

Thank you to the Evangelical Fellowship of Congregational Churches (EFCC) for the financial contribution to my fees that they gave me one year and also for helping me with the distribution of the surveys to Christians within their journal mailing.

This study would not have been possible without the co-operation of Head Teachers and in turn, their staff. The pre-pilot of the interview questions and questionnaires were

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ABBREVIATIONS USED WITHIN THIS RESEARCH

BHS – British Humanist Society

CW – collective worship

EDM – Early Day Motion

HMI – Her Majesty's Inspectors

ICT – Information and communication Technology

INSET – in-service training

KS – key stage

LA – local authority

Ofsted – The Office for Standards in Education

PACE – The Parental Alliance for Choice in Education

PEN – Personalised Education Now

PSHE – Personal, Social and Health Education

RE – Religious Education

SACRE – Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education

SEAL – Social and emotional aspects of learning

SLT – Senior Leadership Team

TEAR Fund – The Evangelical Alliance Relief Fund

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

"If you put a frog in water and slowly heat it, the frog will eventually let itself be boiled to death. We too will not survive unless we actively respond to the radical way our world is changing" (Charles Handy, 2002: back cover).

A fundamental aim of this research is to bring to the foreground of education the assembly or collective worship. Sutherland (1988:47) defines a collective as a group of individuals, "... united by some common purpose which they jointly try to achieve." Now link this to worship and it must be that there are common activities and / or a message that unifies the disparate members of a maintained secondary school during their time in one hall together. One response to this is that the pupils and staff gather because that is what legislation and so the school both require – their common bond, probably at a minimal level – membership of the school; their very attendance.

Clearly faith schools have some uniformity of religious belief and basic consensus on values: secular schools can only loosely be bound religiously by Britain's historic Christian tradition and the educational legislation that dictates religious education must have its place within the curriculum and acts of worship should be a daily feature of school life. It would appear that the introduction in many schools since 1988 of form tutor based 'thought for the day' practice addresses adherence to the 'daily' factor of the letter of the law and so satisfies Ofsted inspections in this sphere.

The term assembly is what is used in schools by both staff and pupils however the legislation, as well as Ofsted reporting, always refer to 'Collective Worship'. This could be seen as a demonstration of the gap between the theory and practice that exists in this sphere of education and is illustrated by figure 5 in chapter 6 where what is experienced by pupils is at least five levels of experience removed from the politicians who legislate for it. In my thirty five years' experience as a teacher and during the course of this research, I have not found one school whose staff ever spoke of Collective Worship, although respondents did sometimes indicate that they recognised the differences inherent in these two terms. One expert witness, who is an Ofsted inspector, certainly spoke with confidence of schools differentiating between the two. Indeed there have been calls for 'collective assembly' to replace the legal term of 'collective worship' as the latter expression is considered unusable, in a theological sense, with it seen as what Hull calls a 'self-contradictory' concept (Hull, 1995:4 and the Churches Joint Education Policy Committee Working Party Report, November 1994).

For the purposes of this study, I use the terms assembly and collective worship inter-changeably in recognition of the two contextual realities of the legislators and inspectors whose preferences are overtly for the latter and the schools who in practice speak of assemblies, regardless of their content. Later in this study, there is discussion around the implications of these terms: language is important and for legislative purposes always carefully chosen on account of the potential ramifications. Although I use the terms synonymously in this study, as a working definition I would define collective worship as having content of an important and potentially spiritual nature and on occasions, religious;

the material presented prompting listeners to broadly reflect on themselves, their lives as well as those of others and the immediate and wider communities of which they are a part. It can be seen that most of the aspects identified in Table 5, (the assembly grid developed to be able to observe the collective worship of the two case study schools) would reflect this general statement. Such material could be seen as falling into the category of collective worship or perhaps more correctly, 'spirituality'. In contrast, however, an assembly is a bringing together of pupils for the benefit of 'information giving' – this could be in the form of careers talks, notices about school activities, voting, etc. In an assembly little or no attempt is made to challenge thinking about character or values, individual or corporate – it is a more sterile and insignificant learning environment – it is related to the ordinary and the mundane.

Figure 1.

A diagrammatic representation of the complex web of issues underpinning the

practice of collective worship.

Figure 1 indicates the complexity of the issues surrounding collective worship. Perhaps this to an extent explains why successive governments have preferred just largely to restate earlier legislation or tinker with peripheral issues, such as the time of day that it can happen as in 1988, rather than attempting to justify more radical changes to all of the interested parties in society. The religious, cultural, philosophical, educational and

sociological aspects of this would all need to be rationalised in any major changes to be made. I consider that the world's religions are a subsection of the 'spiritual dimension' of figure 1 and as such each is likely to have their own 'theology' of collective worship and how it can be understood and practised. These areas are touched upon by this study in the second of the literature chapters, chapter 3, whilst chapter 2 tracks the legislation historically as well as looking at the present situation, bringing this perspective up to date.

This study's research methods are comprised of questionnaires, case study interviews and observations as well as the expert witness statements and a participant observation reflective journal. The strands of thinking illustrated in figure 1 are reflected in the nature of the questions included in the surveys. Then in the reporting stage, (chapters 5,6,7,) themes that could be considered subdivisions of these areas of meaning are used to categorise the findings.

Collective worship and education

Educational research and generic educational literature rarely include any reference to collective worship. Clearly it is not often seen as a phenomenon worthy of study. The law governing collective worship and its relationship to the nature of state schools, its function within them, the nature of modern British society, what is educationally valid in this sphere, all require due consideration and it is to this thinking that the present study hopes to contribute. Borne out by the lack of reference to assemblies in educational literature, they

are not being seen as a poignant factor in pupil education, yet my experience as a teacher belies this and tells me that it is a dynamic tool with a fundamental citizenship thrust.

On a personal level leading assemblies was my favourite role as a Year Head because I was so aware of its potential. This led to me including in the postal questionnaire a grid for teachers to complete with ratings of their various roles from running extra-curricular activities to liaising with parents. It was, in part, my belief in the significant value of assemblies that made me determined to study the subject in depth and to gain some perspective on the reality of the practice in this country, as well as ascertain the views of key people. My position seems to be the antithesis of what people generally are demonstrating by their unwillingness to see collective worship as being significant enough to write about or include in their educational volumes.

The structure of this research

This study makes unique contributions not evidenced in any way within the literature on collective worship to which the author has referred; it does so on a number of levels; its practitioner perspective means that it is written from the 'inside' and so produces a narrative only possible from someone who has played an active part in the life of schools. It offers ways of thinking about the subject (hopefully, most useful to teachers) that are summarised and clarified in the form of diagrams and tables. This study has offered a vehicle for the key questions pertaining to collective worship teachers are grappling with in their daily lives at school. The writer as a Christian and a teacher straddles two important

worlds relevant to the collective worship debate and so makes sense of the legislation and current practices in schools, in the light of these pivotal positions. There is also a strong sociological vein running throughout the work that is not evidenced in any work to which the author has referred: the Wright Mills' model (1959) of analysing organisations offers a means of looking at collective worship in a twenty first century context. Chapter 2's focus on Hansard's records also gives insight into the nineteenth and twentieth century contexts of collective worship. The assembly as a tool for citizenship as well as individual and community identity (seen as modern functions of collective worship) are visible threads throughout this study and the literature review of chapter 3 gives some attention to these issues.

This study contributes to the body of research drawn on by those practitioners and academics concerned with spirituality in schools, pupils experiencing citizenship education and collective worship as a sociological phenomenon within school life. The research questions are four fold and responded to in a range of ways: What are the perceptions of the function of collective worship in the twenty first century? (Chapters 3, 5, 6 and 7 all link into this question and range from what the teachers think through to what Christians and academics think.) What appear to have been the functions of collective worship at the end of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century? (Chapter 2 largely deals with this question and it can be seen how England as it was then shapes the viewpoints put forward by the politicians.) How is it possible to explain why successive governments have not reworked the law on collective worship in non-denominational state education? (Chapters 3,5,6 and 7 all offer responses to this and reflect combinations of the educational

and social issues of the various eras.) What do people consider to be the future of collective worship? (Chapters 3,5,6 and 7 suggest some answers to this question drawing together arguments that hinge upon diagram 1 – whether collective worship is possible or nonsensical; whether a multi-cultural and religious society can adhere to the legislation as it stands or necessarily requires change and the possible ends that a modern assembly could achieve.)

This research uses a range of methods to achieve answers to its central questions; these are further described in chapter 4 but it will be seen that the sub-headings used in reporting the findings are frequently different rather than uniform across the case studies and various questionnaires. This resulted because of a desire to allow the data to self-declare its shape rather than forcing what was found into pre-created categories. This led to an organic freedom in line with qualitative research practice. The two case study schools were deliberately reported under the same headings in chapter 6 (once they had organically emerged from the case study 1 data) and in relation to the material gathered there was no significant outcome that was not served by them. This was useful for ease of comparison between the two schools. Clearly a number of the sub-headed themes are replicated across the data outcomes and in chapter 7 these are drawn together to show the multiply layered outcomes obtained by the various methods.

Chapter 5 is a chapter that focuses on the findings of the primary methods used and deliberately leaves interpretation and analysis to chapter 7 where the relevant parts of the

literature chapters are also integrated with the key findings. It is hoped that this format is

user friendly for the reader.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

'Organised blasphemy'.
Mr. Lindsay MP, in the 1940s, quoting colleagues of his and their view of collective worship,
(Hansard 397 H.C. DEB. 5 s / 2398).

Introduction

This literature review chapter looks at the statute books for the actual wording of the

legislation and at Hansard to ascertain what the arguments of the day hinged upon in

relation to collective worship. It also tracks the relationship between Church and State and

the arrangements that were being made between these two important groups in society. In

the nineteenth and twentieth centuries religious education and collective worship were

closely linked in the minds of most people, indeed, it is only within the 1988 Education

Reform Act (ERA) that the two are strategically separated to what purpose is a discussion

that takes place within the paragraphs on that Act. History is always illuminating as it shows

the roads travelled before arriving at the present situation. By looking at the origins of

collective worship in the early education Acts, it is possible to understand how current policy

is shaped by its historical roots. Similarly, the debates around each Act, reveal the

controversies of particular eras and so the intellectual forerunners to the state of play in

2011.

A main focus of this study is to take a snapshot of how collective worship is

functioning in the early twenty first century but it is essential to find out what went before –

what has been retained and what has disappeared along the way and why. In chapter 7, I

analyse the discussions of the Acts and try to relate them to society then as well as linking

them to current legislation and British society in the twenty first century. Also, by examining

the parliamentary discussions around the acts it is possible to begin to understand what

purpose people were considering an act of collective worship to have. One of the research

questions of this study is, "What were the original functions of collective worship?" It is

hoped that inferences can be drawn from what was being said at the time in order to arrive

at some kind of intelligent and useful answer about its intended purpose at the points of

inception. I deal with the Acts in chronological order and it will be seen that religious

education and collective worship appear intertwined in the Acts prior to 1988 but at this

point the changes that had taken place in the teaching of religious education from a

confessional to a non-confessional position necessitated a parting of the ways so that the

two activities became distinct.

The Charitable Trusts Acts 1853 – 1869

These Acts sealed the ending of the religious bodies using their catechism classes as a

vehicle for education – these groups were no longer encouraged to thrive by government

sponsorship. The Acts were also attempts to ensure that all children were treated fairly in

respect of educational opportunities regardless of their religious or non-religious stances

finances indicated this as it was said that money was not to be granted to schools on the

basis of either religious affiliation or none:

"The conditions required to be fulfilled by an elementary school in order to obtain an annual parliamentary grant shall be those contained in the minutes of the Education Department in force for the time being, and shall amongst other matters provide that after the 31st day of March 1871:

(1) Such grant shall not be made in respect of any instruction in religious subjects:

(2) Such grant.... but such conditions shall not require that the school shall be in connexion with a religious denomination, or that religious instruction shall be given in the school, and shall not give any preference or advantage to any school on the ground that it is or is not provided by a school board."

This means that the legislation was very specific about being impartial on religious grounds. Schools set up by the school boards were not to be affiliated to any Christian denomination and no grant could be given to a 'Sunday School' that was giving education to its adherents. Secular, free, state education was divorcing itself from the churches. The Sunday and Ragged Schools Act of 1869 granted exemption from rates to all churches, chapels and other places of worship and spoke of "..putting a liberal education within the reaches of children of all classes...." (Statute Books 1869:287). However, as Cruickshank notes, in "... Sunday Schools.....teaching of the secular subjects was of the most meagre kind" (1964:2).

It can be seen that in the latter half of the nineteenth century, care was taken by legislators not to discriminate against non-conformists or those with no religious faith at all regarding education. Sunday Schools were not being seen as 'grant-worthy' vehicles for generic secular education and the state clearly wanted to move a liberal education into wholly state controlled educational territory as opposed to the religious teaching of the Sunday Schools offering basic literacy to its membership.

The 1870 Elementary Education Act

This act marks the parting of the ways of denominational schools, (predominantly

Roman Catholic and Church of England,) and non-denominational ones, the latter supported

by the non-conformists and frequently referred to as 'secular' schools. The act stated:

"It shall not be required as a condition of any child being admitted into or continuing in the school, that he shall attend or abstain from attending any Sunday School, or any place of religious worship, or that he shall attend any religious observance or any instruction in religious subjects in the school or elsewhere, from which observance or instruction he may be withdrawn by his parent, or that he shall, if withdrawn by his parent, attend the school on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his parent belongs..." (Statute Books 1870:445).

W.E. Forster, the main influence behind the Act, was a Quaker and a Radical, but

Maclure (1978:98) points out that he had to steer a course between the two policies

advocated by the major organisations campaigning for educational reform at the time – the

National Education League, (NEL) a Radical body emanating from Birmingham and the

National Education Union of Manchester, (NEU) constituted of Conservatives and Anglicans.

The first was a pressure group for secularism and the second, a pressure group for Church

control (Silver 1983:81). The Act provided for school boards to be set up in areas short of

schools. The Education Department had the task of causing boards to be formed where

necessary. London was to be treated as a single school district; other school districts

mirrored borough lines and in the case of country areas, there were civil parishes. Essential

to the Bill was a compromise on the religious issue. Forster, in his speech, introducing the Bill

to parliament stated that his object was to,

"...complete the present voluntary system, to fill up gaps ......and welcoming as much as we rightly can the co-operation and aid of those benevolent men who desire to assist their neighbours" (Maclure, 1978:100).

Also, from this time the inspection would not be 'denominational': '....one of the conditions

of public elementary schools shall be that they shall admit any inspector without any

denominational provision..." (Maclure 1978:101).

With regard to Collective Worship and the timing of such, the Act says:

 "The time or times during which any religious observance is practised or instruction in religious subjects is given at any meeting of the school shall be either at the beginning or at the end or at the beginning and the end of such a meeting, and shall be inserted in a timetable to be approved by the Education Department, and to be kept permanently and conspicuously affixed in every schoolroom; and any scholar may be withdrawn by his parent from such observance or instruction without forfeiting any of the other benefits of the school" (Statue Books 1870:446).

Of clause 7 of the 1870 Elementary Education Act, (the right to withdrawal from

religious education, but the right to an education) it is said:

"...that principle was in our minds the most perfect protection of the religious opinions of the Dissenters and of the secularists – of every parent, in a word, with regard to his views of religion or even against religion" (Hansard 3/CXC1X:1947).

There were arguments at this time over more assistance being given to one denomination than another – the established (Anglican) church being thought of as being prioritised – this controversy was apparent in the newspapers. Forster denies any bias and says (Hansard 3/CXC1X:1948):

"My object and I must say our object in framing the Bill has been education and education alone. We are determined that nothing we might do should discourage religion, and surely we should have been blamed if we had discouraged it.......we would not treat one religious sect with greater indulgence than another..."

and he believed they had carried out that principle. (That is, no bias in favour of the Church of England.) Popular phraseology such as 'persecution' and 'illegitimate proseletyzing' are indicative of the nature of the disagreements at this time (Hansard 3/CXC1X:1948). It also seems that the clergymen in the rural parishes were putting undue pressure on pupils to not attend dissenting Sunday Schools and this pressure was exerted through the denominational schools that children were forced to attend in the rural areas. Clause 7 was supposed to prevent this happening, as Forster questioned: "What more can we do than give the power of election to the parents?" (Hansard 3/CXCIX:1945).

Curtis and Boultwood (1970:162) comment that it had become an urgent matter to decide upon some form of assistance to the voluntary schools. These were now mainly Church of England and Roman Catholic as the majority of the schools which had been founded under the supervision of other religious bodies had been handed over to the School Boards.

Again, the themes of discussions by the politicians and the nature of legislation point to almost, 'a parting of the ways': Catholicism and Anglicanism held out for thoroughly religious denominational teaching in their schools, in full awareness of the financial implications it would have for their organisations, whilst the non-conformists saw a distinction between church and school and so were prepared to keep Sunday School teaching as quite separate from the generic and secular education that would be provided by the school boards. The Forster Education Act was careful to permit parents the right to withdraw their children from the religious instruction and collective worship of the schools – even if their nearest school was a denominational one. Thus, demonstrating respect for the very individual matter of faith or not.

The Cross Report of 1888

The Cross (majority) Report of 1888 had a particular focus on the religious and moral training of children and it found that witnesses were practically unanimous in believing that religious training was desired by parents. It supported biblical instruction, rejected the separation of religion and secular instruction, and coupled this with the need to observe the conscience clause scrupulously: "Her Majesty's Inspectors' (HMIs) first duty should be to inquire into and report on the moral training and condition of the schools" (Maclure 1978:129). Interestingly, the minority report produced by eight members of the Royal Commission, accepted the importance of character formation, but doubted whether 'moral training can satisfactorily be tested by inspection' (Maclure 1978:130). The denominational tension which was the cause of the Commission being set up, and which led to a divided

report, did not grow any less in the years which followed its publication. The conflict between the Church party in education and those who supported non-denominational schools was a feature of School Board politics and at the national level came to divide the Unionists and the Liberals.

Dr. Cross declared that after hearing the arguments for wholly secular education his reporting group had come to the following conclusions:

"1. That it is of the highest importance that all children should receive religious and moral training.

2. That the evidence does not warrant the conclusion that such religious and moral training can be amply provided otherwise than through the medium of elementary schools. *(So the Sunday Schools and other such bodies were seen as inadequate.)*

3. That in schools of a denominational character to which parents are compelled to send their children the parents have a right to require an operative conscience clause, so that care be taken that the children shall not suffer in any way in consequence of their taking advantage of the conscience clause.

4. That inasmuch as parents are compelled to send their children to school, it is just and desirable that, as far as possible, they should be enabled to send them to a school suitable to their religious convictions or preferences.

5.   We are also of the opinion that it is of the highest importance that the teachers who are charged with moral training of the scholars should continue to take part

in the religious instruction. We should regard any separation of the teacher from

the religious teaching of the school as injurious to the morals of and secular

training of the scholars" (Cross Report part IV, Chapter 1, pp. 122-7).

'Moral education' was a new angle to the debates of the legislators. No distinction

was to be made between teachers' responsibility for pupils' religious and moral education

and any other curriculum area. Also, in terms of the general sweep of children in society –

the most efficient vehicle for passing on morality was perceived to be the elementary school

as opposed to that which was inherent in the religious teaching of the Sunday Schools.

The Balfour Act 1902

The 1902 Balfour Act was considered to be the 'modernising' of the 1870 legislation,

with the King, in his speech, referring to education as the, "..means to enable the

intelligence of the country to be applied to the work of life to best advantage.......better able

to help themselves and better able to serve their country" (Statute book 101:95).

In the King's speech, the education bill is referred to and the comment made that: "We all

see how we have fallen behind in education and we all realise the immense importance of

having a better system than we have now. I hope that whatever the government do they

will introduce a system on broad democratic lines, maintaining popular control......" (Statute

book 101:108). Again the democratic theme is paramount as is the input of parents and 'the

man on the street'. Earlier (Statute book 101:7) "..the introduction of harmony and

completeness into our educational system" was hoped for and that the bill could "....be

approached in a conciliatory spirit by all schools of thought." Then (Statute book 101:8) it is hoped that party feelings will be subordinated, as well as "....sectarian rivalries in favour of a satisfactory and comprehensive scheme of education."

Balfour wanted the religious instruction of the pupils to be as elastic as possible in order to meet the wishes of parents (Statute book 105:856). He declares himself to be one standing apart from narrowness of spirit and any inclination to proselytise in favour of any particular creed.

Sir William Anson on the 24th March, 1902, speaks in parliament of the effect that he believes Christianity has on character: "But I do feel that religious teaching is a matter of the gravest importance to the country, not only because of its effect on character ..... but on the ground of justice to the parents" (Statute book 105:907). He was also disenchanted with the new proposals enabling people to build a school to reflect the religious persuasions of parents, where one does not exist and there were sufficient parents to warrant it. Such a school would be maintained by rate payers' money but built at the initial expense of the parents.

The Duke of Devonshire on the 5th December 1902, spoke of it being 'monstrous' that in schools, wholly supported by the state, it would be impossible for a non-conformist to be a head teacher. Equally monstrous he said was that it would be possible for a 'secularist' to become a head teacher.

In parliament on 2nd July 1902, Mr. Goddard raised the question of whether the state should pay for religious instruction. As a non-conformist he said that it didn't fall within the province of any government to teach religion to the people and he couldn't see how any government could undertake to do so without falling into injustice or immorality. This was because the State would be setting itself up as a higher judge of religious truth, selecting one against another or assuming that all doctrines and rites are of equal value, so patronising all alike and this would be "eminently immoral" (Hansard 110:540). He goes on to argue that religious training should be the care of the churches and the responsibility of parents. This is an interesting argument because it hinges on a philosophical understanding of 'truth', which Benson and Stangroom touch on in their book, "Why Truth Matters" (2006). They quote Nietzsche as saying: "Facts are precisely what there are not, only interpretations." They therefore conclude that if one interpretation 'makes us feel lost in space, we might as well pick another' (Benson & Stangroom, 2006:2). The authors go on to say that opinion has now become a substitute for truth and that in the past people were liberated from the responsibility of thinking by authoritarian figures in society telling them what they should believe and think or at least what to 'appear' to believe and think (Benson & Stangroom 2006:3).

So in collective worship terms there are several implications that can be drawn from these statements – perhaps what it is we should be looking for in assemblies is interpretations of life and that which represents truth to particular people: pupils not being encouraged to imagine that there are figures who can tell them what they should believe –

that responsibility is theirs. What leaders of assemblies can indicate is what has proved to be 'truth' for them.

Returning to Mr. Goddard's 02/07/1902 speech, in essence he was saying that it was immoral for the government to set itself up as the purveyor of 'truth' in the religious sphere and equally as immoral to set all the denominations up as equally valid. He, therefore, points to the conclusion that only the churches, can rightly educate the young, in accordance with the wishes of the parents who take them there for the purpose of such instruction.

Mr. Humphreys-Owen, in the House of Commons, on the 21st October, 1902, highlighted the fact that in Board Schools, the school day should open and close with religious worship and that religious instruction should be based upon the reading of the Bible.   He moved his amendment because "..he could not believe that it was possible for the schools to be carried on without moral and ethical teaching being given in addition to the ordinary subjects of education" (Hansard 113:361 & 362). Here it is possible to see that morality and ethics were inextricably linked in the British mind at that time to Christianity.

Balfour declared in his speech in parliament on the 24th March, 1902 that,

"We are agreed about secular education. We are not agreed about religious education ...
We have as a community, repudiated responsibility for teaching a particular form of religion
..... As we have ... left to the parents the responsibility for choosing what religion their
children are to learn, surely we ought .... to make our system as elastic as we can in order
to meet their wishes..." (Maclure 1978:152).

So, religious education is the 'thorny' issue; the secular curriculum uncontroversial. Parental responsibility for religious upbringing is seen as paramount and the school is simply a purveyor of a non-denominational form of Christianity not reflected in the real world, but seen as an appropriate form of spirituality for impressionable young minds. There is also some debate as to the 'right' religious persuasion of head teachers in leading a school of staff and pupils, clearly in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries absolutes were more palatable than today.

The 1944 Butler Education Act

Ballard (1966:17) reflects on this Act of a coalition government as 'possibly one of the last great Acts of English Christendom' indicating how it seemed to serve the interests of the Church and Christianity - particularly obvious in the actual making of collective worship compulsory by law for the first time and similarly the teaching of religious education. Until this legislation it appears from the discussions that follow that teachers in schools would naturally have fulfilled these roles without question, but clearly more liberal tendencies in society were threatening these assumptions and so prescription was deemed to be necessary.

Hull says that, "The 1944 Education Act required schools to provide worship while education was to foster the spiritual" (Hull, 1995:27). The general curriculum including religious education would contribute to the section 7 injunction to local education authorities, "... to contribute towards the spiritual, moral, mental and physical development

of the community..." (Education Act, 1944). Each school though must provide an act of

collective worship for pupils on a daily basis.

Finch (1984) comments that negotiations with church leaders occupied a

considerable amount of time for Butler and his civil servants in the period which preceded

this Act,

".... and undoubtedly were the most politically delicate aspects of the 1944 settlement. The
churches could not be ignored because of their significant contribution to the provision of
education and because of the politically powerful lobbies they could muster" (1984:15).

Hansard reveals the nature of the discussions that were taking place in parliament

about the proposed legislation. On the 26th November, 1942, Mr. Ivor Thomas, asked Butler

whether the Board of Education had issued or was preparing to issue suggestions to teachers

as to how they could, ".. put before their pupils at an appropriate age, the democratic ideals

for which we are fighting and so prepare the children in our schools for their responsibilities

as citizens?" (Hansard 385 H.C. DEB 5 s / 860). Butler responds in the affirmative saying that

guidance has been given in the handbook of 'Suggestions to Teachers' and that the matter is

then best left to the discretion of those responsible for the administration and teaching in

the schools. Interestingly, two further observations are made on this matter. Dr. Russell

Thomas asks: "Will my right hon. friend bear in mind that there are many different

definitions of democratic ideals?" Then Mr. Sorensen's question was: "Is the right hon.

gentleman linking up this matter with the consideration he is giving to religious and ethical

instruction in schools, as democracy is intimately linked up with these two principles?"

Butler responds with: "Yes, Sir, I bear all these matters in mind." Here we see the

intertwining of ethics, religious instruction and the teaching of democracy, which the President of the Board of Education assures his fellow parliamentarians he is recognising in the legislation that will follow.

Mr. Sorensen on 11th February 1943 asked whether "...in any conclusion he may reach respecting the translation of religious beliefs to schoolchildren, the ethical criterion will be paramount, with particular emphasis on democratic principles?" (Hansard 386 H.C. DEB. 5 s /1418). Butler replied that he had no further comment to make beyond the answer that Sorensen had been given on July 9th 1942, on the same matter. In researching this there is some discussion about the agreed syllabuses for religious instruction and Sorensen's disquiet that these are many and varied and that the Board actually has little familiarity with the content and so doesn't know to what degree, religious instruction, ethics and democracy are being taught and in what combination. Mr. Ede (Parliamentary Secretary for the Board) answers, stating that, in fact, they had no idea how many agreed syllabuses there were, but a Professor Savory interjects with a query as to whether the Board is familiar with the religious syllabus of Northern Ireland, agreed to by the Church of Ireland and the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches, saying that it had given 'universal satisfaction'. Ede's response is to declare that he has seen a copy and adds, "..but I am an Englishman, and I like to have my religion made at home." (In English twenty first century culture such a politically incorrect remark, particularly from a politician would cause a furore and provoke accusations of racism.)

Mr. Harvey, The Member for the English Universities, states that, "This and the following Amendment would make the clause read: "In every county school and in every auxiliary school facilities shall be given for each school day to begin with a collective act of worship." Harvey speaks of the very greatest importance having been attached by large numbers of those 'deeply' interested in education regarding this daily act of worship. He then expresses his feeling that that there has been on the part of many a very great misunderstanding of the existing position, ".. because it is already the all but universal practice in council schools for the day to begin with a collective act of worship. But it has not been made a statutory duty..." He then describes how he feels it would be a mistake both for the state and for religion to enforce, " ..something which, in its essence, no parliament and no external authority can enforce" (Hansard 397 H.C. DEB. 5 s / 2396). He expresses the desire for the Act of Parliament to say, "There shall be the fullest facilities for worship" (Hansard 397 H.C. DEB. 5 s / 2395). Harvey continues with,

"...I believe it will make the greatest difference .....if it is understood that this act on the part of the teachers is a voluntary act, that facilities are required, but that the act of worship itself is a holy and wonderful thing which cannot be enforced by Act of Parliament...." (Hansard 397 H.C. DEB. 5 s / 2395).

He goes on to say that he wants it to be 'true' with teachers 'invited' to co-operate in "this vey great service to their school" (Hansard 397 H.C. DEB. 5 s / 2395).

A fellow parliamentarian, Nicholson restates his view that the child is the paramount person in this instance and not the teacher,

"We are not considering the teacher's act of worship, but the opportunity for the children to take part in an act of worship. The children are in the hands of the teacher while they are in school, and the Clause lays it down that the teacher shall be bound to give them this opportunity" (Hansard 397 H.C. DEB. 5 s / 2397).

Mr. Richards expresses his view that Clause 24 seems to suggest that a corporate act of worship is not almost universal in the schools, going on to say that he knows of no school where the day does not begin with the corporate act of worship. His view is that, "It has all the greater value in my opinion because it is entirely voluntary" (Hansard 397 H.C. DEB. 5 s / 2397). Richards considers it a very dangerous principle to attempt to enforce on the teachers what they are only too willing to do in a really voluntary spirit. Mr. Lindsay adds that many Church of England friends of his who are headmasters and directors of education went so far as to say that this clause was encouraging "organised blasphemy": "We had had in every school for years a corporate act of worship. Now we are being asked to do this, because the Bill says so" (Hansard 397 H.C. DEB. 5 s / 2398). Reference is made to the large number of children who are completely irreligious and that the schools are being blamed for this. He contends that this state of affairs is due to things that happen outside the school. He also goes on to say that there is a strong and very widely held feeling that by enforcing a thing in school you are not doing a good service to the Church itself.

Lieutenant Commander Gurney Braithwaite reflects on his own experiences of a Quaker School which Mr. Harvey had also attended, asking Harvey to remember the ridicule that developed amongst the scholars at the number of times they were compelled to attend compulsory religious observances. He also made clear that the experience produced the

opposite effect of that which the governors had intended. Professor Gruffydd highlights the difficulty of there being no guarantee that an atheistic headmaster with an atheistic staff will not conduct public worship in school. (Now commonplace in the twenty first century, hence teachers' rationalising of the 'worship' element.) Gruffydd speaks of a child's early life being contorted and distorted by a head master whom the children can evidently see is not associated with anything spiritual, conducting a 'service' (Hansard 397 H.C. DEB. 5 s / 2401). Butler replies that there is a great deal of nonsense talked about schools being God-less and about there being no worship or religious instruction. He emphasises that schools are doing great work in this field, but that they are rightly only playing 'a part' and cannot do everything – the denominations and family circles must take the 'great part of the responsibility for this religious worship or instruction" (Hansard 397 H.C. DEB. 5 s / 2402).

Mr. Cove argues that the religious content of the bill is much weightier than the educational aspect and amounts to an "..endowment of compulsory religious teaching throughout the whole state system of education," (Hansard 397 H.C. DEB. 5 s / 2402 & 3) but warns that it is possible it will make religious teaching very unpopular and will lead in the opposite direction from the desired effect of honourable members' intentions. He adds that religious papers are commenting, "..that religion is being used, or hoped to be used, as a sanction for reactionary social policy" (Hansard 397 H.C. DEB. 5 s / 2403). He says that he has been brought up, "...a Nonconformist. I have not been brought up under any totalitarian and regimented system of worship" (Hansard 397 H.C. DEB. 5 s / 2404). He argues for religious teaching in the schools to be voluntary – that it is given every facility for developing religious knowledge, emotion and feeling but 'begs' the state not to bring in compulsion for

any act of religious worship in the schools of this country. Butler considers the references to totalitarianism and compulsory worship, inappropriate, given that any parent can withdraw their child from the worship if they wish to do so.

Mr. Gallacher presses for an understanding of what the act of worship is for, and what it represents. He suspects that it is concerned with the Church of England tightening its grip on the country (Hansard 397 H.C. DEB. 5 s / 2406). He states that, "..a mere act of worship means nothing" (Hansard 397 H.C. DEB 5 s / 2407). Mr. Colegate in contrast says that the Clause is one of the most popular Clauses in the Bill because it represents "..an absolutely universal belief that the education of this country must be built on a firmer spiritual basis" (Hansard 397 H.C. DEB 5 s / 2411). Earlier Mr. Gallacher had argued that, "It is obvious that religion has had to force itself on the state, or force the state to come in, to give it some hope of survival" (Hansard 397 H.C. DEB. 5 s / 2405).

Mr. Davies raises the issue of the lack of freedom given to the teacher to withdraw from worship. He says that the word 'shall' (instead of 'may') for teachers does not imply the same freedom as the children have to be withdrawn from the worship. Mr. Driberg contends that the Clause is "... one step in the process, which has been going on in recent years, of developing a kind of 'national religion' in this country comparable to the German Christianity which has been developed in Nazi Germany," (Hansard 397 H.C. DEB. 5 s / 2412). He uses wording from Martin Luther's thirty nine articles to declare that "..it is much more likely not to serve true religion at all but to make of it 'a blasphemous fable and a dangerous deceit' " (Hansard 397 H.C. DEB. 5 s / 2412). He also makes the observation that

the Clause only allows for the parents to withdraw the child from the worship and not for the older child to make that decision as an individual, as they may have developed views different from their parents.

A Mr. Magnay brings in the point of saying 'grace before meals' being a 'seemly' thing to do. Sir Richard Ackland expresses his fear that compulsory powers are being used as a substitute for keeping a practice running. He suspects that the 99.5% of schools who then voluntarily began the school day with worship would in twenty years' time have dwindled to 90% or75%. "We are at a crisis point in the affairs of the world, and the truths of Christianity have to be interpreted to keep abreast of the times" (Hansard 397 H.C. DEB. 5 s /2419). Under clause 37, there are no penalties imposed against a child being absent from school "on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs." Commander King-Hall speaks of the difference between a religious and an ethical act of worship (Hansard 397 H.C. DEB. 5 s / 2423).

On the 10th March 1944 Mr. Brooke requested that the word 'Christian' should be inserted in order to clarify the fact that the act of worship and religious instruction would normally be 'Christian'. Sir Hume later reinforces this point on account of the frequent use of the word religion instead of Christianity precisely and he further adds his anxiety about the word 'Bible' not appearing anywhere within the Act. Brooke saw the use of the word 'Christianity' as a protection against what Lindsay had called "State religion" emerging from the schools as a result of the Act and that these were in accordance with the views of the Christian Churches of this country. Mr. Ede then picks up the debate adding that parents

generally want their offspring to "...have a grounding in the principles of the Christian faith as it ought to be practised in this country" (Hansard 397 H.C. DEB. 5 s / 2426). He challenges those whom he considers to be 'sneering' at this legislation as breeding 'school religion' and says it is "...something far better, far wider than that, as is shown by the general adhesion of the churches to the various agreed syllabuses in the country" (397:2426). Mr. Gallacher, though, was pressing for an 'opting in' system rather than an 'opting out' system for collective worship and religious instruction. He refers to some of his fellow parliamentarians as "self appointed passengers to paradise" and criticises them by saying that he cannot see from anything said there that the act of worship has been of any benefit in producing anything in the nature of a spirit that is helpful to the speakers.

"Our education should produce citizens who will be helpful, in the real sense, to their fellows, and I am sure we have not got that on the other side of the Committee, no matter how many acts of worship they have made" (Hansard 397 H.C. DEB. 5 s / 2427).

On account of this, he satirically feels able to view his "..own woeful position, my own predestined damnation, unperturbed and with equanimity" (Hansard 397 H.C. DEB. 5 s / 2427).

Mr. Thomas laments the 70 years of un-denominational religious instruction that has taken place in the schools, saying that the results are very unsatisfactory. He quotes 15% of the population as being the recognised figure for practising adherents of the Christian faith and says that the empty churches are those "...where there are vague half-believers in casual creeds" (Hansard 397 H.C.DEB. 5 s / 2433). He says that a problem is that un-

denominational religious instruction in the schools does not attach a school leaver to a worshipping community, as the young person will not find in the churches the kind of religion experienced at school. So inevitably the school leaver drifts away from religion and Thomas blames the Cowper-Temple clause (of 'broad' Christian truths being utilised, as opposed to denominational teaching) for this.

Thomas proceeds to argue against those who would say that religious instruction should be given by parents, saying that dentists extract children's teeth, shoe repairs are dealt with by trades people and so similarly, religious instruction specialists are the best people to deliver such teaching and not the parents (Hansard 397 H.C. DEB. 5 s / 2435). Commander Sir Archibald Southby declares that "...unless we found the home, the country and the world on some system of Christian ethics we shall go wrong. In the same way, if we are to start a new system of education, unless we do it on some system of Christian ethics it will fail" (Hansard 397 H.C. DEB. 5 s / 2438 & 9).

Major Mills states that parents' wishes should be adhered to as far as possible in the matter of religious teaching, but he would not support religious tests for teachers and he laments that: "A very large number of parents, however, are only too indifferent to the religious teaching given to their children. I only wish that through this Bill, we might educate them" (Hansard 397 H.C. DEB. 5 s / 2440).

On the 20th July 1944 Mr. Hugh Lawson asked if the instruction on the duties of citizenship would include a consideration of the duty of the citizen to defend international

law and the reply from Butler was that he was seeking the advice of the central advisory

councils that would be set up under Clause 4 of the Education Bill on the content and

methods of instruction in the duties of citizenship.

Finally, after such debate as is cited above, the 1944 legislation regarding collective

worship read as follows:

"..the school day in every county school and in every voluntary school shall begin with
collective worship on the part of all pupils in attendance at the school, and the
arrangements made therefore shall provide for a SINGLE act of worship attended by all such
pupils unless, in the opinion of the LEA or, in the case of a voluntary school, of the managers
or governors thereof, the school premises are such as to make it impracticable to assemble
them for that purpose" (Statute Books 1945:243).

Leonard (1988:24) sees this 'let-out' clause as having been used over the decades as a means

of schools modifying or avoiding the legal obligation to have a daily act of worship. Clause

26 adds that: "…. the collective worship...shall not be distinctive of any particular

denomination.... and the religious instruction shall not include any catechism or formulary

which is distinctive of any particular religious denomination" (Statute Books 1945:244).

These exchanges show how some people felt that to legislate for worship was to be

in danger of committing the sin of blasphemy. Collective worship was all the more valid if it

were 'voluntary' on the part of teachers. Others felt it was developing a 'nationalistic' brand

of Christianity that lacked the vitality of any one denomination, so ending up diluted to the

point of blandness. However, this all gave away the idea that there were those for whom

the function of collective worship was to be producing faithful church adherents: Mr.

Thomas's complaint, for example, was that having left school, teenagers were not attaching themselves to churches. As this legislation was passed towards the end of the Second World War, there were remarks about engendering patriotism in young people and how to encourage brave and noble democratic citizens. Concern was expressed about the irreligious nature of many young people and the schools were apparently blamed for this, rather than families and wider society. There was also the view that the collective worship and religious education element of the Act was about strengthening the position of the churches in an age when adherence to Christianity was dropping. Another assertion was that the compulsory element was a protection against schools allowing the practice of collective worship to fade away. Smith says that secularisation was already taking place in the 1940s and that, "The 1944 Act has perpetuated the fiction that the church and the state are partners in education" (Smith, 1969:97).

1988 Education Reform Act

This Act of the then Conservative government, Cheetham contends (2000:71) in contrast to the heavily Christian input into the 1944 legislation, 'had to cope with the tension between those who wished to maintain the heritage and influence of the Christian faith and those who wanted a more open, inclusive, even handed and multi-faith approach.'
On the 1st December 1987, Kenneth Baker, in response to a question about the status of religious education within the curriculum stated the following:

"I confirm that religious education in our schools is secured in statute by the Education Act 1944. This Bill reinforces the position of religious education as a compulsory subject. I

reassure my hon. Friend (Dr. Alan Glyn) and all hon. Members on that point. Clause 6 places a duty on heads, governors and local education authorities to ensure that religious education is provided. That is an advance on the 1944 Act" (Hansard Volume 123:774).

He makes clear that it had already had a statutory position and that "We are now strengthening its position as a subject that must be taught" (Hansard Volume 123:774). He then goes on to refer to collective worship, reiterating that the government is absolutely committed to a daily act of collective worship, but that clause 79 ensures that if a school does not want to hold this first thing in the morning, but rather at some other more convenient time this is perfectly permissible. Also should a school want a different act of worship for its fifth formers from that of the 11-year-olds then it will be allowed to organise this and that this particular flexibility has been requested by the churches.

Mr. Michael Alison thanked Mr. Baker, on behalf of the church authorities for clause 1(2),

"... with its outstandingly bold and uninhibited formulation calling for the promotion of the spiritual, moral and cultural development of children at school......As it stands, clause 1(2) appears to be stronger than the well-known section in the Education Act 1944 which defined the purposes of the statutory system of education. That is to be warmly welcomed" (Hansard Volume 123:834).

Alison then goes on to say that the reference to religious education was a somewhat modest sub-sectional clause, but felt that this was akin to "....the proverbial mustard seed, capable of astonishing powers of accommodation" (Hansard Volume 123:834). However, he complains of the clause on collective worship (clause 79) being divorced from any reference

to religious education, whereas in 1944, Section 25 set an important precedent by linking religious education and worship under the general heading of religious education.

Sir Rhodes Boyson suggests that the status of religious education would be helped by being a foundation or core subject:

"I believe that man's knowledge of his place in the universe and the purpose of his life is more important even than English and maths. These days we have more moral than political problems. And many political problems would go away if we could solve the moral problems" (Hansard Volume123:843).

Mr. Harry Greenway then asks the question: "Does my right hon. Friend agree that no school will operate at its best unless and until religious education is properly handled, well taught and at the centre of school life?" To which Boyson retorts: "...I will not say that a school led by agnostics, with agnostic staff could not be a good school, but in most cases a school will be better if it has religious unity and feeling" (Hansard Volume 123:843).

Leonard (1988:3) comments on the phrase 'and society' in the wording of the Act: ".... that it (the curriculum) should be a balanced and broadly based curriculum, which promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society....". Leonard sees the reference to 'society' as almost "a throwaway line". He considers that the meaning is not clear and suggests that, "As a subject for discussion it has possibilities; as a phrase which the courts may have to interpret, its value is open to question." As Hull makes clear, the wording of legislation is vitally important as it

may need to be scrutinised and interpreted by the legal system, Ofsted inspectors, Christian theologians as well as those of other major world religions and not least by parents and other interested parties in society (Hull, 1995: 28).

Hull also points out that in the years following the 1988 ERA, several complaints were received by the Secretary of State for Education regarding the content of collective worship. However, the framework within which complaints are dealt with is essentially legal and courts need definitions of what collective worship content should be but this was sadly lacking. Similarly, Ofsted inspectors needed to know what it was that they were looking for as being satisfactory content or otherwise (Hull, 1995:28).

So the 1988 ERA reinforced the legal position of collective worship but introduced various new factors such as the qualifying phrase of collective worship being, "..wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character" (Education Reform Act 1988 , Section 7,1). The timing was now permitted to be varied at any time during the school day and collective worship could be delivered to any groupings of pupils relevant to the school setting. Flexibilities of practice were instigated but greater specificity about the religious nature of the worship was also brought about.

John Hull also cites paragraph 12 of the 1988 Act which says, "... that where a school finds that it would be inappropriate for collective worship to be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character, an appeal for a determination may be made to the local SACRE."   His view of these is that,

"..the whole notion of these determinations is incompatible with the concept of collectivity. It represents a sort of extension of the parental right to withdraw the child, except that the withdrawal is only from the norm and not from collective worship as a whole. It is less acceptable because pupils are withdrawn on the basis of their group religious identity and not solely on the basis of parental conscience, and thus collective worship is divided along specifically religious lines" (Hull, 1995:31).

Hull does not see the introduction of determinations as a step forward with regard to

collective worship and in his view, ".. most religious communities would like their children to

stay with children from other communities unless the religious basis of the activity becomes

so explicit as to become alien" (Hull, 1995:5). His view is that the determination procedure

is actually detrimental to people's understanding of what collective worship should be as it

pre-supposes, ".... that worship should take place in faith-specific groups and so be the same

as the worship conducted by practising believers" (Hull 1995:5).

Hull points out that the determination clause enabled one astute authority, the

London Borough of Ealing, to apply for collective worship that would, "..consist of a general

religious, moral and ethical content which is not distinctive of any one faith or religion"

(Ealing News Release 897/89, June 1989). What Hull concludes from this is that it:

"..creates the possibility of a new understanding of what might be inappropriate in collective worship. The confessional and religionist assumption implied by the legislation and made explicit in the Circular (1/94) is that collective worship would be inappropriate if pupils of one religious background were required to worship in accordance with the character of another religion. That is true, but there is another interpretation. One could decide that Section 7 is an inappropriate piece of legislation and wrong in principle in that it creates a high and divisive theological profile instead of emphasising educational collectivity" (Hull,1995:6).

On account of the variety of religious backgrounds of the children in a school it may be that

collectivity rather than specificity of religion becomes paramount. Hull suggests that, 'This

may not be in the spirit of the Act, but we must ask whether in that case the Act rather than

the school is at fault' (Hull, 1995:33). In this way collective worship would draw on the

spiritual resources of the entire community.

Umar Hegedus, the Muslim member of the executive of the National Association of

Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education (NASACRE) says that there are

tremendous variations in how applications for determinations are to be made and publicised

throughout the country:

"In some LEAs it is a relatively simple matter and easily achieved. In others it is a minefield
of confusion and obfuscation, with almost no determinations granted despite the fact that
the conditions appear to be fulfilled," (Hull, 1995:36).

Circular 1/94

This document dedicated to 'Religious Education and Collective Worship', the

audience of which is stated as LEAs, SACREs, Head teachers and governing bodies, teacher

training institutions, Diocesan bodies and others, is actually most prescriptive in aspects of

its description of practice. It offers guidance on how literally the word worship is to be

interpreted and in the first line of its stated aim says: 'Collective worship in schools should

aim to provide the opportunity for pupils to worship God......' (Circular 1/94: paragraph 50).

Then in paragraph 57 'worship' which it acknowledges is not defined in the 1988 legislation

is said to be:

'...its natural and ordinary meaning. That is, it must in some sense reflect something special or separate from ordinary school activities and it should be concerned with reverence or veneration paid to a divine being or power.....'

Later, in Paragraph 63, clarification about the content of collective worship is included saying

that, 'It (an act of worship, that is) must, however, contain some elements which relate

specifically to the traditions of Christian belief and which accord a special status to Jesus

Christ.' It is thought that pupils from non-Christian families, '.... should be able to join in the

daily act of collective worship, even though this would, in the main, reflect the broad

traditions of Christian belief' (paragraph 65).

Then collective worship and assemblies are said to be '.....distinct activities. Although

they may take place as part of the same gathering, the difference between the two should

be clear' (Paragraph 58). Significantly it is assumed that it is either obvious or that people

will have their own definitions of the difference between collective worship and assemblies.

The aims of the government are spelt out in the introductory sections:

'..the central aim for the school curriculum that it should promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils and of society, and prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. The Government is concerned that insufficient attention has been paid explicitly to the spiritual, moral and cultural aspects of pupils' development...'(paragraph 1).

Paragraph 2 speaks of the,

'...shared values which a school promotes through the curriculum...expectations governing the behaviour of pupils and staff and through day to day contact between them will make an important contribution to pupil' spiritual, moral and cultural development and should be at the heart of every school's educational and pastoral policy and practice'.

Religious education and collective worship are said to,

"make an important, although not exclusive, contribution to spiritual, moral and cultural development. These activities offer explicit opportunities for pupils to consider the response of religion to fundamental questions about the purpose of being, morality and ethical standards, and to develop their own response to such matters" (paragraph 4).

The government also explicitly states its aim in this document as being, '.. to improve the quality of the religious education curriculum for pupils in order to ensure that they have the best possible opportunity to develop through this area of the curriculum" (paragraph 5). Earlier in paragraph 5 it is noted with 'deep concern' that religious education and collective worship are activities not taking place 'with the frequency required or to the standard which pupils deserve'.

Circular 1/94 makes absolutely clear (through repetition in paragraphs 2 and 4) that the government sees collective worship as functioning very particularly within the spheres of morality, spirituality and cultural development as. Special emphasis is expected to be laid upon the Christian faith in that it is said that pupils should have a "...thorough knowledge of Christianity reflecting the Christian heritage of this country..." and so a culturally historic angle is brought into play (paragraph 7).

Hull explains how in 1992 the Parental Alliance for Choice in Education (PACE) sought clarification from The Secretary of State for Education regarding the nature of the worship that should be taking place in schools: "It would greatly help to know the identity of the being or power that was being revered or venerated in the act of worship at the school." Hull notes that this is a curious situation where on the 'mainly' Christian worship days, the Triune God of Christianity is the focus of worship but on a minority of days, "... worshippers would then...switch their reverence or veneration from one God to another" (Hull, 1995:29). Hull supports The Secretary of State's wise decision to decline to answer PACE's question. His response was that he did not have to discern the identity of the object of worship; it was sufficient to be reasonably satisfied that there was one (Letter of 07.07.92).

This circular also distinguishes between what Hull calls 'heritage religion' and 'represented religions' and thereby 'heritage children' and 'represented children' – inferences based on the wording of Section 8(3) of the 1988 ERA that says that any new agreed syllabus must, "..reflect the fact that the principal religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian whilst taking account of the teachings and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain" (Circular 1/94, paragraph 7). By implication, Christian worship is then normative and 'the standard' as Hull puts it (Hull, 1995:31). Further, Hull makes the point that no matter how long and well established the Jewish community is in Britain, "..Jewish children are not part of the heritage of this country according to Circular 1/94, which confines its interest to 'Christian heritage,'" (Hull, 1995:31).

Umar Hegedus says that the Islamic Accord informed the Secretary of State for Education in October 1994 that they were uneasy about the, "..divisive emphasis on specifically Christian worship ...." (Hull, 1995:36), and that they are campaigning for its repeal. He adds that he is prayerful that within a year they will have received a response from the government that is, "...rational, sensible and acceptable .....to the almost universal disquiet provoked by this invidious attempt to equate belief in Christianity with full status of British citizenship (Hull, 1995:36).

Laurie Rosenberg, Executive Director, Education Department, Board of Deputies of British Jews, says that, "The law and flawed guidance on the law have contributed to a lessening of spirituality" (Hull, 1995:36).

The role of the SACRE

Linda Rudge, lecturer in the School of Education and Lifelong Learning and Director of the Keswick Hall Centre for Research and Development in Religious Education at the University of East Anglia, in November 2002 at a Birmingham University seminar, said not only that, "SACREs are active and politically and socially aware" but also that the National Association of SACREs is influential. The Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education was not invented by the 1988 Baker Act; some had existed on a voluntary basis since the 1944 Education Act. What 1988 did was to make them compulsory and provide a definition of constitution, role, powers and accountability and in 1993 a National

Association of SACREs was founded (NASACRE). The great majority of SACREs are affiliated to this body which assists its members in the fulfilment of their responsibilities.

A SACRE is a body constituted by the LEA that has four representative groups within it:

(1) representatives from the Christian Church and other religions reflecting the faith

traditions of the locality;

(2) The Church of England (except in Wales)

(3) teachers' associations that the LEA feels should be represented;

(4) the LEA itself.

The SACRE is also empowered to co-opt non-voting members. Each of the four membership categories has only one vote, regardless of the number of representatives within it. The SACRE can run itself by consensus rather than by majority vote. However, the 3 non-LEA groups have the power to require a review of the Agreed Syllabus for RE, even if this review is not the wish of the LEA.

The SACRE:

(1) makes decisions on applications from head teachers to deviate from the norm of

‘broadly Christian', setting up something different for their school. *How* these

applications should be made is for each SACRE to decide;

(2) handles complaints about Collective Worship directed to it by the LEA;

(3) must publish an annual report of its activities and decisions in the course of the year, a

copy of which is expected to go to each school.

The clerking and funding of the SACREs' activities are the responsibility of the local authority (LA). Parents who do not wish their children to worship at all in school must make application for them to be withdrawn. The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) 2006 report on the SACREs says that the SACREs believe their hands to be tied when it comes to the non-compliance of schools regarding collective worship. 31% of SACRE reports make little or no mention of it and the belief is that non-compliance with legislation in secondary schools remains high. Two SACREs have called for a national initiative on collective worship and have contacted the Secretary of State to ask for a change to the law. Several others comment that they would like to see a change in the statutory regulations. SACREs observe that schools sometimes need to be reminded of the difference between assembly and collective worship (QCA SACRE report 2006:15). It is stated that the reports reflect the ambivalence of SACREs in this area of collective worship.

The London Borough of Lambeth in its SACRE's guidance on collective worship distinguishes between the terms corporate and collective and then goes on to outline its view of the value of collective worship to a school, saying that it enables pupils to reflect on:

- what it means to be a human being

- questions of meaning, purpose and value

- the best that human beings can be – inspirational, exemplars (people of faith or not) who have demonstrated (what is noble) through their actions, lives and qualities. Examples will come from religious and non-religious sources

- personal beliefs and values.

The 1988 Act was careful to retain the compulsory status of religious education and collective worship. It modernised practice giving more flexibility over times of day for worship to happen, as well as permitting different groupings of pupils, as opposed to the whole school gathering. SACREs also became compulsory for LEAs to set up, whereas in 1944 they had been voluntary. These compulsory bodies were now given very clearly defined powers too that were supportive of schools and the nature of the spiritual work they were obliged to undertake.

Leonard (1988:24) bears in mind the changes that have taken place in the school population, ethnically and religiously since 1944, as well as, 'the reduced extent of formal Christianity'. He thinks also that there have been developments in theological awareness so that several hundred pupils meeting together from a variety of backgrounds, to sing incomprehensible words together,"...and to mumble what was called a prayer but for most of them did not merit the description" is odd in a way that it wasn't in 1944. Leonard suggests that 'to a thoughtful observer such a performance bears almost no resemblance to an act of worship' (Leonard 1988:24). So this study asks the question and seeks an answer to the important question: "Where do we go from here?" In the wording of the research question, "What is the future of collective worship?" It is also clear that some SACRE bodies are seeking changes to the legislation on collective worship – could the current laws have outlived their usefulness? Perhaps this is where we should be heading now, in the direction of a change in the law.

The Report of the 1997 Consultation: Collective Worship Reviewed

This report was undertaken by The RE Council of England and Wales, the National

Association of SACREs and The Inter Faith Network for the UK. It was sponsored by The All

Saints Trust and The Saint Gabriel's Trust and published by Culham College Institute. Its

forerunner was a 1996 report which had two parts, the first entitled Collective Worship 1944

– 1996, which was in the main, historical, tracing half a century's debate about collective

worship, including attempts to define its educational justification and the longstanding

preference for schools to use the term 'assembly' whereas the 1944 Act and subsequent

legislation used the term 'collective worship'. It concluded with this statement:

"But in the considered view of a wide range of groups concerned with education the
government's attempts to preserve the nation's Christian heritage, through tighter
definitions of the legislation concerning collective worship, had raised very difficult
theological, educational and practical issues" (Collective Worship in School, pp 37-8).

Part two of the report was entitled Key Issues and divided the material into a further ten

sections: "Defining worship; Corporate or collective worship; Educational school worship;

Wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character; According a special status to Jesus Christ;

How 'religious' are assemblies and 'subjective worship'?; Collective worship in Circular 1/94;

The place of other faiths and world views; A 'daily' act of collective worship?; Assessing

current attitudes."

Overall the report, published in 1996, in good time for the first of the conferences

relating to the 1997 review of collective worship, was widely welcomed as offering an

excellent summary of 'the story so far'. It was considered a good starting point for

preliminary thinking and the first stage of the consultative process for the 1997 study which

consisted of three conferences of discussion groups and plenary sessions. 34 delegates and

observers from a range of organisations, plus 15 steering group members, who chaired the

discussion groups, were the interested parties who had input into the conferences. At each

conference specific questions were put to the groups for discussion: four at the first, three at

the second all focused on the statutory requirements and eight for the third conference.

The review concluded that its findings would provide helpful background information

and suggested that there was a need,

"... to establish whether there is in practice a sufficient consensus in favour of a new
approach to make it possible to commend it to the Government and others as a way of
meeting the concerns which have been expressed for some time about the present
requirements for collective worship" (1997:19).

Further outcomes of this 1997 review of collective worship are included in chapter 3 under

the relevant thematic headings.

21st century collective worship practice rooted in the 1988 legislation and Circular 1/94.

The collective worship landscape of the twenty first century has been fundamentally

shaped by the ERA and Circular 1/94. Academics like Hull, Copley and Leonard have not

always seen these milestones as enhancing pupils' educational experiences. As was stated

earlier the 1988 Baker Act did allow the act of Collective Worship to take place at any time of

day, convenient to the organisation and the law permits a single act of worship for all pupils at the school *or* separate acts of worship for pupils in different age groups or school groups. Hence the emergence of year assemblies, form assemblies and house assemblies. This was in contrast to the 1944 Act which had stated that unless there was not a hall large enough to house the whole school then the latter grouping would be the usual assembly format, i.e. whole school worship. Leonard (1988:24) comments that, "Even a school without a hall of any kind could meet the requirements as it is now, by holding separate acts of worship in the classrooms", indeed, from this time, thoughts for the day in classrooms began in schools as a way of complying with a 'daily' act of worship. The collective downplayed when in a class group but the 'worthwhile' contemplated, if only for a few minutes amidst the practicalities of tutors preparing their pupils for the school day.

This 1988 Act also introduced a 'relevance' clause, by which it was stated that the nature of the worship organised in a school, ".. shall be such as may be appropriate having regard to any relevant considerations relating to the pupils concerned ..." These considerations relate to any family circumstance, for example, religious belief, relevant to determining the appropriate character of the collective worship, along with recognition of the ages and aptitudes of the young people concerned. It should be borne in mind that the Act refers to that which is 'educationally' appropriate. When the question of collective worship was debated in the House of Lords in the early summer of 1988, the then Bishop of London, Dr. Graham Leonard, spoke of the requirements which any proper legislation should possess. One of these was that collective worship should not, "..break the school up

into communities based on the various faiths of the parents, especially in that it makes some groups feel that they are not really part of the community being educated in the school" (Hansard, Lords, 7/7/88).

In county schools the Act dictated (Leonard 1988:23) that " ... the collective worship required shall be wholly or mainly of a 'broadly' Christian character." So denominational or sectarian approaches continue to be ruled out, but as the parliamentary debates made clear, politicians were keen to eliminate what they considered to be a multi-faith 'mishmash'. Yet they recognised the need for other faiths to be accurately described and respected. The spirit of the Act is such that the Bible will be used for some assemblies, but ethical and moral themes will be used as part of a diet in which recognisably Christian values and material are presented for pupils to consider. The recommendation of Terence Copley (1989:19) is therefore, that careful planning ahead of themes and materials should be able to demonstrate that the 'overall' range conforms to the Act's requirements. The 'Christian' clause of section 1 of the Act indicates that every single act of worship does not need to comply with the legislation but that, "taking any school term as a whole, most such acts which take place in the school do comply with that sub-section." So the word, "broadly' is taken to mean the worship should reflect the "broad or all embracing traditions of Christianity', without being distinctive of any one denomination (Leonard 1988:23).

Parents can apply to the head teacher to make alternative arrangements for

worship, distinctive of a particular faith, but *not* a denomination within a faith. After

discussion with the school's governors, the head teacher must apply to the local SACRE to

allow an alternative form of worship to take place in the school. Such an arrangement must

be reviewed by the SACRE every five years, or on request. The act of worship need not be

distinctive of the principal religions of the world, (likely to be taught in the RE. classes,

though,) it could represent a small independent faith, it just must *not* be a denomination

within a larger faith.

John Hull in "The Act Unpacked" (1989) emphasises the fact that the 1988 Act is

clear and consistent in refusing to describe school worship as being Christian. Christian

worship is part of religious worship, but it is 'religious' collective worship that is

compulsory for schools, *not* Christian, which is "optional'. The 1944 Act did *not* say what

the content of Collective Worship should be, but did say what it shouldn't be - that is,

"distinctive of any particular religious denomination" (1944 Education Act Section 26).

However, most agreed syllabuses have offered guidance on what the content of Collective

Worship *might* be.

Hull (1989) argued that dialogue and exchange between different ways of

worshipping and different religious traditions were ideal regarding collective worship. He

also stated that what the 1988 Act did rule out, as did the 1944 legislation, was the kind of

assembly itself that had become secular and administrative, having lost all contact with

worship; notices and 'moralising' messages intended to maintain school 'tone' abounding

(Hull 1989:20). John Hull suggests a number of antitheses that shed light on the potentially

sensible rather than insensitive interpretations of the Education Reform Act: "..sensibly not

dogmatically, educationally not evangelistically, spiritually not confessionally and always

consistently with dialogue" (Hull 1989:21).

Current media discussions

The Mail Online on December 28th, 2010 reported that,

"Headmasters .... claim that many schools already ignore the 'collective worship'
requirement, despite it being set in stone since the 1944 Education Act' and so they support
the National Secular Society in its proposition that the legislation 'discriminates against
young atheists and non-Christians, and infringes human rights'."

Keith Porteous in his letter to Michael Gove says, 'we are confident that you would

not wish to perpetuate a law that is routinely disregarded. We hope that, under your

leadership, the law will be changed so that it is brought out of disrepute' (The Mail Online,

Neal Sears, 28/12/10).   The general secretary of The Association of School and College

Leaders reinforced this view saying: 'Many schools aren't doing the daily act of collective

worship and theoretically they are breaking the law.'

The Tameside Advertiser on 21st April 2011, included a reader's letter on the subject

of "Struggling to fill moral void". Lee Borrell of Bamford Grove, Hazelhurst, wrote:

"..... whilst I empathise with any feelings ... about society's continued fall into disrepair, it is

not capable of being repaired by going backwards to simple Christian doctrine of yore,

however halcyon those days may appear to be." He continues: "...simply sticking simple

Christianity of yore back into a moral void will not service today's ills in a world that needs a

new spirituality......a bigger spiritual picture that lends life meaning...."

Regarding collective worship it is easy to imagine that the government wishes to

retain the Christian Worship element of the legislation so that pupils are imbibed with

Christian teaching that will give moral direction to their lives. However, maybe it is that a

bigger spiritual picture of twenty first century England can be painted by the varied accounts

of a range of believers: all of whom will be providing stimulus for pupils and none of whom

will be looking for worshipful compliance. People could explain the meaning that faith

brings to their lives and in this way pupils will begin to understand aspects of spirituality as

evidenced in their world.

Gill (2004:194) says that,

"Calls for the amendment of legislation have consistently failed to reach a consensus
(Culham College Institute, 1998): nevertheless only the primary and voluntary sectors meet
official requirements. As a step towards a more realistic approach an advisory document to
supersede Circular 1/94, DfE which recognised the actual situation in schools would be
welcome. It is interesting to note that recent Ofsted reports (2001, 2002) replace earlier
statistical references to collective worship with similarly quantified comments in respect of
spiritual development, perhaps quietly acknowledging current practice."

Herein lies a useful practical suggestion to begin a way forward for the future legislation of

collective worship – an advisory document rooted in current practice and with cognisance of

recent research in this field would be a sound starting point.

With regard to a 2011 telephone survey of 1743 adults undertaken by ComRes and commissioned by BBC Local Radio a small majority of 51% of those aged 65 and over believed collective worship should be enforced, compared to fewer than 29% of 18-24 year olds (The Press Association online 06/09/11).

The Bloxham Project and collective worship

The Bloxham Project is an organisation brought about to support the spiritual dimension in education. Linking school leaders, chaplains and teachers, the Project works to foster spirituality in schools and to bring religious insight to bear on educational practice. Its key aims as made explicit on its website are to:

" Promote a whole-person understanding of the educational process;
Provide challenge and support for school leaders and others working to embrace spirituality in their holistic vision of education;
Support the development of values-based leadership in schools and colleges;
Stimulate thought, reflection, debate and research on the spiritual dimension in education;
Link education professionals concerned with spirituality in a creative and developing network;
Create dialogue from a Christian perspective with other religious traditions engaged in education."

The Project grew out of a conference held in 1967 at Bloxham School, Oxfordshire where issues of faith and spirituality in schools were explored. The Project believes that,

"School worship can be a significant and powerful ingredient in enabling pupils to develop a thoughtful and reflective understanding of the world around them, and a sense of meaning and purpose."

Such a rationale is compatible with a range of world views and not limited to a traditional Christian framework as the only route to understanding meaning and purpose.

Responses to the research questions in the light of this literature review

This historical record of the legislation has enabled a picture to emerge of what people seemed to consider were the functions of collective worship as state education emerged from the work of the Sunday Schools. Religious education was inextricably linked to collective worship until the 1988 ERA and the original description of "Religious Instruction" indicates the indisputable nature of the material, which was not to be debated but in which pupils were to be instructed – see figure 3 in chapter 3 of this study and appendix 10 for the implications of such terminology. Indeed, Mr. Humphreys-Owens in 1902 said that RE should be based upon the reading of the Bible. So similarly for there to be an assumption that Christian worship should take place daily at least at the start of the day and if not at the end as well was not surprising. Discussions about the faith stance of teachers show how the Christian teacher was considered to be superior to an atheist or agnostic as a role model to pupils and as a head teacher leading both staff and pupils.

In 1944 concerned reference is made to the large number of irreligious children in society (Hansard 397 H.C. DEB. 5 s / 2398). The 'intentions' of the politicians in making school worship and religious teaching compulsory are questioned and the inference is that these young people should be 'religious' with all the behaviours that would typify practising Christians (Mr. Harvey and Mr. Cove, cited earlier in this chapter). Then there is a view

expressed that the school worship was important because it was about education being built on a firmer spiritual basis (Hansard 397 H.C. DEB 5s / 2411) and later it is said that the home, the country and the world should be founded upon some system of Christian ethics (Hansard 397 H.C. DEB 5 s / 2438 & 9). Conversely, Mr. Gallacher believed that compulsory school worship indicated the Church of England tightening its grip on the state to guarantee its survival (Hansard 397 H.C. DEB 5 s / 2405). Sir Richard Ackland suspected that the compunction to worship in school was because otherwise it would slip from practice (Hansard 397 H.C. DEB. 5 s / 2419). In discussing the language of the Act use of the words Christian and Bible are requested in order to be prescriptive and the view is put forward that parents want their children grounding in the Christian faith as practised in England (Hansard 397 H.C. DEB 5 s / 2426). Sixty seven years later, parental support for collective worship appears to be quite different: a survey commissioned by BBC Local Radio and conducted by ComRes spoke to 1743 adults by telephone and found that 60% of the public were not in favour of enforcing the law prescribing a daily act of collective worship in schools.

Mr. Thomas also considered it unsatisfactory that when pupils leave school they no longer attend church and that church attendance statistics generally in the country are so low. So what these dialogues illustrate are the functions of collective worship between 1870 and 1944 hinging upon pupils adhering to the Christian faith and the moral standards inherent in its Biblical teaching – the Christianising effect that it could have upon them. Even as late as 1988, Sir Rhodes Boyson is speaking of the superiority of religious education over other subjects for indicating to man his place in the universe and the purpose of life and Mr.

Harry Greenway adds that this is the marker of a school operating at its best (Hansard Volume 123:843).

Finch described the religious aspects of the 1944 legislation as, 'the most politically delicate' and the churches as comprising 'politically powerful lobbies' – seventy years on neither of these factors appears to have changed, which offers some explanation as to why successive governments of different political persuasions have been keen to ignore pleas from a range of organisations to alter the legislation and / or Circular 1/95. The most recent survey of collective worship conducted by ComRes for BBC Local Radio concluded in the words of Andrew Hawkins, Chairman of ComRes that this, "....poll tells a story of declining support for Christian worship in schools evidenced in three ways: firstly, relatively few parents said their children's school complies with he law; secondly support for the current law is best described as lukewarm; thirdly, the headline figures are driven by a striking age gradient showing younger parents as the most likely to say the law is not enforced and should not be, while older parents are more inclined to say the opposite" (TruthDive, online, 06/09/11). So this adds to the weight of key organisations currently requesting a change in the law, alongside the politicians with their Early Day Motion, a 60% support from the general public surveyed.

Conclusion

Paragraph 57 of circular 1/94, states that as the legislation does not define the term worship, "..it should be taken to have its natural and ordinary meaning. That is, it must in

some sense reflect something special or separate from ordinary school activities and it should be concerned with reverence or veneration paid to a divine being or power." Then three paragraphs later, clarification is added: "In the light of the Christian traditions of Great Britain, section 7(1) of the Education Reform Act (and the corresponding section of the Education Act 1993) says that collective worship organised by a county or equivalent grant-maintained school is to be '*wholly* or *mainly* of a broadly Christian character'. (The present author's italics.)

Worship cannot be compelled by definition however, the word 'worship' can be 'diluted' and interpreted as meaning that which is of worth ('worth-ship' from the Anglo-Saxon word roots), rather than a focus on an objective being beyond this material world. This is a concept that Copley (1989: 14) develops in his writings about assemblies and good practice as well as Slee (1990:5). As opposed to corporate, collective worship describes the fact that people are gathered together in one place, focusing on one message, rather than unified in that message and being of one mind such as places of worship will typically be. This is why Mr. Lindsey, in the 1940s spoke of 'organised blasphemy' because from a spiritual perspective to imagine that any group of young people gathered together saying particular words, singing particular hymns as being tantamount to worship is naïve and to some believers positively blasphemous. In their view it is offensive to have 'a pretence' of worship and anything but absolutely heartfelt words is totally unacceptable. This is also why some non-conformists felt it was preferable to keep religion out of schools and just have a secular education, leaving religious teaching and worship to the churches and parents. To only be able to have in schools some diluted version of Christianity that did not actually exist

in society, was seen as unacceptable.

As early as the 1860s politicians were keen to be seen as fair minded in their dealings with the various religious groups in society as they legislated for education. At that time central issues pertained to inheriting educational provision from the Sunday Schools were that the Biblical teaching had primacy and the basic literacy elements were secondary to this. Also, there was a need to ensure that non-conformists were not discriminated against because they were not part of the established church and so the necessary dilution of teaching and worship followed in order that it should be free of any denominational character.

The right of parents to withdraw their children from religious education and collective worship is a consistent strand throughout the legislation. In 1944, to the consternation of some politicians, collective worship and religious education were made compulsory. One parliamentarian of the day, Mr. Harvey, 'begged' Butler not to do this. Many felt that this was ironic and inappropriate but Butler won his argument and the Bill became law. What has changed over time (in 1988 to be exact,) are peripheral issues such as the time of day at which the collective worship can happen and the modification of the groupings so that year groups or house groups, rather than the whole school can be drawn together to 'worship'. The role of the SACRE was made compulsory and its powers also strengthened in 1988.

In December 2009, the Archbishop of Canterbury accused the government of being

feint-hearted over Christianity, yet this is not what the current legislation on collective worship would suggest. It is still felt to be appropriate for pupils to experience such an act of worship each day. Has the Archbishop overlooked this element of the promotion of broadly Christian traditions?

The media discussions that have taken place over the last couple of years reflect wide ranging disquiet amongst ordinary citizens writing to local papers as well as key organisations making formal protestations about assemblies viewed as a vehicle for Christian worship and its use as 'a moral void filler'. An organisation such as The Bloxham Project, as one that has specialised in the spiritual aspects of education since 1967 has a sound contribution to make to understanding in this field. This literature review has tracked the legislation as a backdrop to other chapters where wider educational themes are explored that feed into the collective worship / assembly debate in the twenty first century: citizenship, democracy, identity with community and sociological, as well as philosophical approaches to the meaning of education, belief and worship.

CHAPTER 3. A LITERATURE REVIEW OF THE KEY THEMES PERTAINING TO COLLECTIVE WORSHIP IN NON-DENOMINATIONAL STATE SCHOOLS.

The arguments pertaining to collective worship are:
" ...... rooted in profound questions, concerning the nature of religious belief and its truth, the philosophy of education and how matters of faith are to be handled in public contexts (especially state schools) in a plural, liberal society which has still not entirely lost the influence of its Christian heritage" (Cheetham 2001:4).

This chapter, as its title suggests, (unlike the previous one which focused on legislation and reports of related organisations chronologically), seeks to review key literature in a topical way, very much linking back and sub-dividing the aspects of figure 1. Themes such as a philosophical and educational rationale for collective worship, the mass media and 'the market-place of values' are included, because they are pivotal concepts within the swathe of arguments pertinent to this particular study.

A social analysis of collective worship in maintained secondary schools using Wright Mills' (1959) model of three key questions.

This section is of sociological significance regarding collective worship and schools because Wright Mills (1959) suggests that classic social analysts have consistently asked three sorts of questions about society and as this research is about secondary schools, then it is argued that the school as a microcosm of society can be analysed in this way for the academic purposes of this study. The first question Wright Mills' asks is:

"What is the structure of this particular society as a whole? What are its essential components and how are they related to one another? How does it differ from other varieties of social order? Within it, what is the meaning of any particular feature for its continuance and for its change?"

The second:

"Where does this society stand in human history? What are the mechanisms by which it is changing? What is its place within and its meaning for the development of humanity as a whole? How does any particular feature we are examining affect and how is it affected by the historical period in which it moves? And this period – what are its essential features? How does it differ from other periods? What are its characteristic ways of history-making?"

The third:

"What varieties of men and women now prevail in this society and in this period? And what varieties are coming to prevail? In what ways are they selected and formed, liberated and repressed, made sensitive and blunted? What kinds of 'human nature' are revealed in the conduct and character we observe in this society in this period? And what is the meaning for 'human nature' of each and every feature of the society we are examining?" (1959:6).

In response to Wright Mills' first question, this research links the answer to an analogy drawn between Goffman's Asylums (1961) and schools as organisations in the twenty first century. A school is a society that, like closed institutions, desires conformity, compliance and deference. Its essential components are made up of pupils, teachers, ancillary staff, the curriculum, leisure periods and facilities, uniform, rules, aims and mission statements, policies and procedures, links with parents, the community and so on. These are the structural components of a school, but the individualised answers to question three will shape schools – the senior leadership of a school, and especially the head teacher, along with these structural features will influence its ethos and the nature of what pupils experience each day. The particular feature of a school central to this study is collective

worship and so in turn, what the meaning is of this is for its (the school's) continuance and change. It would appear though that the law relating to collective worship does not currently reflect British society in the way that previous acts of parliament since 1870 have done. Many aspects of educational life have changed and evolved as society has, yet collective worship has remained with little modification. It is difficult to account for why it should be left untouched and this is indeed one of the research questions, to try to account for why this legislative strand of educational life seems so impervious to contemporary society.

Responding to the second of Wright Mills' questions, this society – the school, stands in the twenty first century in a technological world that is information rich - an age that values democracy, human rights and freedom, with much talk of a 'global village': one that has known the tragedies of 9/11 and 7/7 and the fear engendered by these incidents; as well as the suspicion of Islam that has been linked to these acts of terrorism. State schools, in general, reflect this modern Western society by making generous computer provision for pupils and staff and the subjects studied have developed to embrace new ways of thinking and acting that would not have been in evidence in the curriculum in previous generations. The school day is often a 'continental' one, starting early and finishing for most between 2.30 p.m. and 3.15 p.m. Schools these days have borrowed learning and practice from the business sector to help them be more efficient and manage budgets effectively, the latter not being a responsibility that head teachers traditionally had to bear.

The modern world is largely secular, with pockets of religious belief in particular states and strands within the modern democracies. So it is difficult to see how collective worship is tracking the changes in British society and globally, that other aspects of school life have. At one time (and indeed this is still typical of the private sector) hymns may have been sung, prayers said, instruments played and a sermon of sorts given, but in the twenty first century this has largely disappeared. In multi-cultural Britain, state schools draw out the common messages of morality from the world's religions, in this way focussing on unity rather than what divides the religious groups and so by implication the school community. Many of the virtues from religion could equally be subscribed to by atheists and agnostics and so, in fact, become almost humanitarian themes. Yet the legislation remains unchanged with its overt commitment to predominantly Christian worship.

Clearly, schools have a fundamental role in shaping their population. Their contribution to 'humanity' is significant, for better or for worse. This research suggests that collective worship is the 'mass media' of the school and so as such this aspect of school life is influential in shaping character and values as demonstrated by the media in society generally: influential, in terms of the ethos of the organisation, as well as its impact on the individuals within it.

The third of Wright Mills' questions raises the issue of the various types of people who prevail in this society and period. Within non-denominational state education, there will only ever be a handful of religious teachers as the religiously persuaded often want to work within a denominational school where they can express their faith and have an ethos

that reflects their values. So the staff will be men and women, largely agnostic or atheistic; some subscribers to major world religions other than Christianity; the majority probably heterosexual, a minority gay and an exceptional few will be physically disabled in some way. They will all, though, be required to conform to professional standards of respect for others, whether staff or pupils, illustrated by equal opportunities policy documentation.

With regard to Wright Mills', 'selection, formation, liberation, repression, sensitising and blunting of its people', schools will influence staff and pupils by their management styles and practices of sexism, racism, ageism or conversely, equality, in other words their hidden curriculum. Such factors will influence who is employed and how staff develop and to what extent they conform to the prevailing culture of the school. The conduct and character of teachers is often under scrutiny as they are seen as the role models for pupils and so should be 'exemplary' by standards that are somehow the 'norm', yet in a secular and multi cultural society.   A not untypical report in the Daily Mail on Monday 29th October, 2007, quoted, 'outraged' families who forced a private school teacher to resign 'on moral grounds' over her affair with a colleague's husband. This is reminiscent of the parliamentarians over the years, quoted in chapter 2 who expected that teachers should epitomise something of an ideal citizen: "We should regard any separation of the teacher from the religious teaching of the school as injurious to the morals of and secular training of the scholars" (Cross Report part IV, Chapter 1).

'Its people' in relation to a school, could equally be seen as the pupils. As already stated, the ethos of a school, as determined by the Head Teacher and senior leaders, will be

crucial to shaping the development of young people. Goffman (1961:5) largely sees the suppression and 'blunting' of those within total institutions and so as such, in more 'closed' schools, pupils will not find the liberation of their personalities or their intelligences. Handy (2002:176) wants schools to recognise pupils' different forms of success and different types of intelligence. He points to the 'de-skilling' of more than one third of the school population who leave school without one single mark of achievement. Handy and Aitken (1985:28) point to the loss of identity and sense of anomie of many pupils in an organisation that values the academic over other experiences and achievements.

Mason (1975) in his paper, "Dewey's Culture, Theory and Pedagogy" says that,

"The places, the ethnic traditions, the clashing values, the social and economic strivings which constitute the lives of pupils on the streets, on the playgrounds and in the homes which make up school neighbourhoods are educational media. We are reminded that our town, our neighbourhood, our city form an organisation of physical things in space. We are reminded that it is a way of life – that is, a way of begetting and food gathering and wedding and dying. Finally, we are reminded that it is a complexity of ideas and values in the form of ethnic, religious and political traditions," (Mason, 1975:118).

His argument is then honed to emphasise the distinctive nature of communities, but bear in mind the sense that Wright Mills (1959) has of each era's time and place in history – each age is different, necessarily ever evolving and the past cannot rigidly be held on to: something that was once seen to be educationally, culturally and spiritually acceptable will not necessarily have the same effect on today's pupils. Collective worship as a practice is one such example as tracked by this study from the 1870 Education Act to 2012,

demonstrating how the law has remained remarkably similar since 1944. Mason argues that

life consequently becomes unrealistic and artificial because it is not reflecting reality, but a

former state of the nation. Mason later summarises (Brickman and Lehrer, 1975:120) it like

this: "If the mission of teachers is to facilitate learning, the substance of educational

diagnosis is social diagnosis" (Mason, in Brickman and Lehrer, 1975:119).

Clearly the message is that it is society 'now' that teachers, academics and politicians

must address. An honest reappraisal of where collective worship is up to in the second

decade of the twenty first century.

Osler and Starkey (2005) also argue that we need to be provided with,

"... a framework from which a school or any other learning community can derive a set of
explicit, shared democratic values. These texts provide us with a set of principles against
which we can critically reflect on our own culture, values, beliefs and behaviours and those
of our fellow citizens" (Osler and Starkey 2005:20).

Indeed, this could be seen as a twenty first century definition of Collective Worship: values,

principles, culture, beliefs, behaviours; there is no possible topic for an assembly that could

lie outside of this framework. The grid devised for this research which can be found in the

appendices and is used for observation of the collective worship at the case study schools,

embraces many aspects of this framework. On the same page, Osler and Starkey (2005) also

suggest that, "Education for Cosmopolitan Citizenship, founded on human rights, will enable

learners to recognise our common humanity and provide a sense of belonging to a global

community." It would seem reasonable and appropriate that twenty first century collective

worship should reflect Britain and the wider context of the world, so that pupils can see

themselves as part of a much bigger picture than the often closed world of the immediate

school community where they are gathered. The grid (appendix 8) helps staff to reflect on

their collective worship practice listing headings such as, belonging; being a valued member

of school; society; the world and within political literacy, democracy and other ideologies,

the politics of school, locally, nationally and internationally. Such topics within the assembly

framework can enhance pupil identity with a broader understanding of who they are, as well

as where they are in the 'world' context.

Marilyn Mason, Education Officer for the British Humanist Association, in BHA

publications available on their website says that,

"Humanists endorse the educational value of school assemblies and their role in supporting
shared values and the school community and ethos, but think that worship and prayers are
inappropriate in situations where there is no shared religious faith. School assemblies can
and should include the whole school community."

Beadle also (Ed. 1999) said,

"Many teachers share this view and, while they do not wish to lead worship, would be happy
to contribute to assemblies which inspired their pupils to lead good lives or to think deeply
about moral issues."

The empirical research discussed in chapters 5, 6 and 7 of this study bear out the

observations of these writers.

Spirituality

Of any educational aspect of schooling, it is the act of collective worship that would

most obviously, in terms of a traditional interpretation of spirituality appear to contribute to

the spiritual development of pupils. Worship and spirituality seem necessarily to be

inextricably linked. Hull (1995:27) argues that in the 1950s and 60s two interpretations of

what school worship was to be about, developed. One emphasised its subjective character

and the other its objective aspect. He likens the distinction between these two strands to

that of the theological thinking of Paul Tillich who distinguished,

"...God as that which evokes our ultimate concern, that which we take seriously without any
reservation (the subjective side of religion) and that reality which is the ground of being, the
power of being, or being itself (the objective meaning of religion)" (Tillich, 1953:14).

Hull suggests that the latter interpretation is, in principle, the narrower one – "..worship

offered to God as a supreme being or almighty creator" (Hull, 1995:1). Alternatively,

"..school worship could be understood as the expression of serious concern and the

affirmation of that which should be taken with deep seriousness" (Hull, 1975:27). This is the

subjective interpretation of school worship according to such a way of thinking. Crucially,

the objective definition has to become more explicit and prescriptive because, "..definition

of the content and object of worship is required" (Hull, 1995:27).

Hull speaks of "the bi-polar nature of the concept of collective worship" (Hull,

1995:28). By this he is referring to the objective and subjective meanings already discussed

as being reminiscent of Tillich, either emphasising the 'collective' or the 'worship' – by definition the usage of the term tries to hold them in tandem. The 1988 ERA, Hull suggests,

"..minimised the subjective interpretation of worship and thus undervalued the collective emphasis. With the objective side of worship emphasised, an attempt was made to grasp the implications for the language of theology. Worship was not defined, but its content was" (Hull, 1995:28).

Hence the introduction of section 7's stipulation that worship should be, "... wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character" (Education Reform Act, 1988, Section 7,1). This is then what Hull calls the beginning of the process of theological definition which he considers to be, ".. interminable because the character of theological definition is to generate distinctions which themselves require further theological definition" (Hull, 1995:28). So inevitably answers to the questions such as what the "broad traditions" of Christian belief are will need to be found. These are probably not the finely tuned debates with which ordinary teachers or head teachers are going to want to be involved, though generally the local SACRE will offer some basic guidelines about collective worship so will have grappled with the concepts to some degree.

Umar Hegedus, the director of Amana and a member of the executive of the National Association of Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education (NASACRE) said in his response to John Hull's address at The (1995) Templeton Lectures at the R.S.A. in London that,

" ...it is precisely the interpretation of the 'special status accorded to Jesus Christ' as a second person of the trinity and partner of God which the Department for Education wishes to be understood and acted upon by schools. By so clearly spelling out this interpretation, the Department has effectively excluded from acts of collective worship all Muslim teachers and over 300,000 Muslim pupils in schools in England. Everything we have heard and read encourages Muslims to believe that schools wish their collective worship to be an inclusive occasion to which all pupils can contribute. County and non-denominational schools want collective worship to provide learning experiences to enable the values of the school community to be underlined and celebrated; to heighten pupils' awareness of religious, moral, social and ethical issues; and to emphasise the spiritual dimension of human life" (Hull, 1995:36).

Here it is demonstrated that a leading British Muslim and one who is confident that he is

speaking on behalf of the nation's Muslims, actively wants Muslim pupils to be included in

collective worship that is educational in content, underlining the values of the school

community and extending pupils' understanding of key issues in life, as well as emphasising

that which is 'spiritual'. He also then goes on to say that Muslims would like their children to

be able to be involved in collective worship without it causing any religious conflict to them;

he recognises that from the point of view of the schools, ideally, they do not want any pupils

excluded from their assemblies:

"We call for all pupils to be able to participate in school activities without compromise to the integrity of their faith or non-faith. Non Christian pupils must not be excluded from that important part of the school life, nor do most non-denominational county schools wish this to happen" (Hull, 1995:36).

The 1997 review of collective worship by three national organisations, published by

the Culham College Institute, recognises how,

"It is difficult for those with a commitment to a particular faith tradition to engage in worship with another faith tradition, or within a 'syncretistic' framework. It is also difficult for those without any religious conviction to participate actively in worship, as this is commonly understood, on a regular basis without being compromised or feeling hypocritical"(1997:16).

This statement succinctly summarises the anomaly of the legislation which somehow expects pupils from a range of world faiths or who are committed to an atheistic view of life, to be able to join together in worship of (a) God(s).

With regard to a specifically religious and spiritual activity that has classically been embraced by collective worship, namely, prayer, Gibson (1995:142) found from his research in Scotland that 35% of pupils agreed with the given statement that, 'I think saying prayers in school does no good' and added to the 43% who were not certain about this proposition, this gives a picture of 78% of young people (admittedly not in England, but parallels could probably be drawn) who do not see any virtue in the use of prayers in assemblies. This current study found the use of prayers limited: 47% of the overall teacher cohort using prayers within assemblies this dropped to only 3% if it was a prayer which young people were expected to recite together; similarly low figures were found in the two case study schools with 50% and 17% using prayers and 12% and 0% when the prayer was one that the young people were also supposed to recite. It can therefore be concluded that teachers are rightly perceiving that the majority of pupils see little value in prayer and so their practice veers towards their omission - pupils are just not supportive of specifically 'religious' activities.

Prior to the 1988 legislation, chapter 2 of this study shows how the thinking of politicians and presumably those educational experts who guided their law-making considered RE and collective worship to be intertwined and predominantly the areas of the curriculum responsible for the delivery of pupils' spiritual education. However, the 1988 Act separated the two and opened the way for broader and less religious interpretations of spirituality (Gill, 2004:192).

From thereon in emerged notions of spirituality which were about the emotive responses of pupils to material of an artistic or supremely talented kind; senses of awe and wonder – Rudolf Otto's 'numinous' experiences (1924:7) of the universe; its people and their achievements. Other areas of the curriculum apart from RE and the act of collective worship were increasingly considered to be playing a part in the spiritual education of pupils, subjects such as art, music, even geography and history with their references to wonders of the world and accounts of remarkable people and happenings. This very much paved the way for more liberal interpretations of what was appropriate material for the spirituality of acts of collective worship. As chapter 2 tracks, though, the ERA was then followed by Circular 1/94 which proceeded to define the object of worship, thereby restricting the interpretation according to Hull's thinking to the objective and this in turn further created problems of definition in a pluralist, multi-cultural society.

The 1997 review of collective worship undertaken by three national organisations and published by the Culham College Institute, suggested as they looked to changes in legislation that,

"...the content of these new gatherings might in practice not be substantially different from what many schools are already using. But with the removal of a requirement for collective worship, the aim would be primarily to promote reflection on the material used in them and to provide opportunity for a personal response.......the assumption is that the majority of the material used would be drawn from the religious traditions to which the majority of children in the school could relate, whether or not on the basis of personal commitment" (1997:17).

On the 27th October 2011, world religious leaders will gather at the invitation of Pope Benedict XVl to board a "Peace Train" travelling from the Vatican to the town of Assisi. Marking the twenty fifth anniversary of Pope John Paul's "Peace Summit" which had drawn together 150 religious leaders representing 15 different religions, this event goes a step further in also involving secular scientists, philosophers and academics. Such a phenomenon of collective worship on a global scale must have some exemplary theology, practicalities or meaning that can be drawn upon by the English education system. Linking to the next section of this chapter – it would appear to be a convergence of many values – indeed 'a marketplace'. What the Roman Catholic Church has been keen to make clear is that it is not a meeting where the people of faiths and no faith will be attempting to become one in worship in a syncretistic way but, rather it will be a uniting of those from different standpoints upon the shared value of world peace. (Radio 4's 'Sunday' programme, hosted by Edward Sturton 23/10/11.) Similarly, it is not respectful of the world faiths' grasp of truth to be expecting pupils in English non-denominational schools to be engaged in 'worship' led by any individual, but what can meaningfully happen is a oneness brought about by focus on important shared values.

Collective worship and the notion of 'a market-place of values'

I have found this concept helpful since the 1990s in relation to collective worship. I don't know its origins – at one time I thought it had been coined by John Hull, Bill Gent or Terence Copley since it was for a Master's degree essay that I was writing on collective worship when I came across this seemingly helpful phrase. I have subsequently been unsuccessful in my attempts to link this expression to an author. During the course of this research several eminent respondents have expressed their dislike of the notion and cited the commercial values it implied as opposed to spiritual ones as the reason for this. It is probably not helpful to give the phrase allegorical connotations, but my liking of the concept hinged on the idea that values were being 'displayed' for pupils in assemblies – by 'owners', that there would be vibrancy and interest as well as a 'rooting through' of what was available and that in the marketplace the consumer has the final say, no matter how forceful the seller might want to be.

Jeanette Gill (2004:186f) considered it important to make clear in her research that,

"...pupils express widespread support for the provision of a secular assembly which, when well-presented, has relevance to their needs, contributes to as sense of identity and community, celebrates achievement and serves a socio-moral purpose."

This indicates pupil preference for non-religious material and their understanding of the ways in which they benefit from such an experience including moral ways of behaving in society. Gill (2004:187) found that,

"Some multi-faith schools make arrangements often known as faith assemblies for their pupils. Most, however, prefer to keep students together in order to avoid division, the content of provision differing little from that in other community schools."

(Note that Gill uses the term 'community schools' to describe state schools.) This current research deliberately does not include the study of denominational schools but Gill's findings indicate even in a singularly faith environment, precedence is given to the school community bonding over and above the desire to meet pupils' (and parents') worship preferences. So the collective is more important than the 'worship' which is one of the propositions given to expert witnesses (see appendix 8) as part of this current research. 'Even' in the faith schools, values beyond that of particular faith groups are superseding traditional worship and faith and so broadening the bases of assemblies. Non-denominational education can surely learn lessons from the remarks of pupils in the faith school sector who are largely from religious backgrounds.

Gill also uncovers a resistance to the religious elements of collective worship (2004:187f) as pupils get older; turning from "an unquestioning acceptance of the ritual of worship when they first enter school" (at key stage 1 that is,) to ".... a wide rejection of its practice by the time they leave." This supports the notion of pupils wanting an assembly diet that is broader than a monochrome Christian message – Christianity presented within a market-place of values would seem to be a viable alternative as pupils and especially the boys, she notes, point out that assembly material is not presented for discussion but prescribed for belief, in contrast to their experiences of RE. For example, Marie, a Year 6 pupil in a voluntary controlled school says:

"Well, I think they could do it if they wanted to, but give us a choice and discuss it with us so that if we want to we can and if we don't want to then we can listen but think about it" (Gill,2004:188).

If this is the view of an eleven year old pupil at a faith school; feeling that a singular view is being pushed to the exclusion of others then how much more so must pupils at non-denominational secondary schools feel that they are having Christianity thrust upon them. Later, Gill explores how pupils appear to judge that the school has no right to interfere in this private domain of religion and in faith schools even practising members of religious traditions, "offer their own reasons for rejecting collective worship" (Gill, 2004:189).

A Year 11 pupil in a community school comments:

".....that's fine if you believe in what he (*a local vicar invited in to lead assembly*) believes in, but there are a lot of people that don't and then assembly isn't assembly, because they don't pay attention and they ignore what people say and they talk and it defeats the whole object of assembly" (Gill, 2004:188).

Clearly this pupil considers that there should be an ambiance that draws everyone into it during assembly time – inattentiveness and fractured dissenting groups are contrary to what s/he perceives to be the very purpose and definition of an assembly. So an inclusive framework, such as this study recommends, offers something of a solution. Tariq a Year 10 pupil from a Voluntary Aided school seems to agree with this as he remarks: "It should be in RE .... in assemblies you can talk about lots of other things more interesting, about social life, than just religion" (Gill, 2004:189).

A strong pupil conclusion is that, "... they cannot, with any integrity, participate in worship" (Gill, 2004:189).   Gill concludes that,

"For many students, therefore, unsure of the value of prayer and uncomfortable with much of the traditional Biblical material they meet, participation in prayer and worship has no meaning and they would prefer the school assembly to take into account the needs of all students" (Gill, 2004:191).

All of these remarks point to pupil support for the removal of worship and the singularity of the status of Christianity from the legislation and a much broader definition of an assembly framework, to be offered to teachers. Gill says that pupils want,

"...the incorporation of material about current affairs, as well as from other world traditions and Christian denominations, about which they claim to know little" (Gill, 2004:194).

This is surely just a different way of describing 'a marketplace of values' and what better vehicle for expression of these than by the adherents themselves, from wherever they may be drawn.

Gill sees a change in contemporary society pertinent to the nature of collective worship today and that is in,

"..the concept of education which adopts an approach which is objective and rational in areas of significant controversy (Hirst, 1972). This is reflected in teachers' concern for neutrality (Cheetham, 2000) and in the approach adopted in RE which has become increasingly detached from collective worship" (Gill, 2004:192).

Modern society is characterised by pluralism, consumerism and secularism (Gill, 2004:192) and so objectivity and rationality and the sense of issues being multi-faceted rather than there being unilateral answers that can be declared by a leader of collective worship is the reality of twenty first century English society and so reflected in the schools.

Cheetham (2000:72) points out that, '.. several recent publications have emphasised the centrality of the issue of "truth" for a plural society in which many competing and apparently contradictory world-views and truth claims exist side by side (for example, MacIntyre 1988: O'Leary 1996)'. In previous generations Christianity had a singular voice but in the twenty first century although the faiths' adherents may well believe that they possess the truth, it is no longer seen as appropriate for a democratic government to be partisan. In *The Hungry Spirit* (1974) Charles Handy speaks of an open society where individuals are able to work out for themselves what the purpose of their life is, without having formulae imposed upon them:

"My hope stems from a hunch that many people share these doubts and worries, that they know that life is not just a business. They sense that, maybe, it is love and friendship, a responsibility for others or a belief in a cause of some sort, not money, that makes the real difference to the way life goes, that it is in the end, important to believe in a purpose for our lives, even though it may be hard to work out what it is" (Handy, 1974:4).

These sentiments seems to tie in with the non-denominational school, where it makes sense that pupils are given access to the "Marketplace of Values" during collective worship in order that they should be able to work out their own sense of life's purpose, religious or otherwise.

Collective worship as the mass media of the school

This is a proposition peculiar to the current study and one that seemed to puzzle some expert witnesses. Siraj-Blatchford (Meighan and Harber 2007:62) defines the mass media as, "the massive network of public communication which includes newspapers, television, radio and cinema.....the internet." She then goes on to say that it has been of interest to sociologists how the mass media influences attitudes and experiences in more hidden ways, "The mass media provide much of the knowledge upon which decisions are made and attitudes formed" (Siraj-Blatchford, 2007:62): national elections and advertising are cited as examples.

The school as a microcosm of society has many voices; for example, its staff, lesson content and school councils, through which voices can be heard and actions observed. However, the fractured nature of the school curriculum and extra-curricular activities means that no two pupils are likely to have exactly the same experience of school life and its key characters. There is one time in the school day, though, when a message is given about life and its people when hundreds of pupils will receive the same communication, for better or for worse and that is in the assembly hall. It is for this reason that head teachers and management teams usually figure highly in their leading of such a time because it gives them visibility with the pupils and a capacity to shape the thinking and understanding of the pupils before them in ways that they consider to be desirable. Interestingly, many teachers now use power point presentations in their assemblies and these may well include television

clips, so keying into the highly technical and visual world of twenty first century young

people.

Siraj-Blatchford uses a quote form Plato's Republic as an introduction to her chapter

on the mass media:

"Then it seems that our first business is to supervise the production of stories, and to choose only what we think is suitable, and reject the rest. We shall persuade mothers and nurses to tell our chosen stories to their children, and by means of them to mould their minds and characters which are more important than their bodies. The greater part of the stories current today we shall have to reject" (Meighan and Harber 2007: 62).

This is extremely relevant to collective worship as this is the time in the school day when

there is a distinct possibility of deliberately 'moulding' pupils and when material, religious or

otherwise is selected by leaders for its suitability. The time, the place and the currency of

that particular school's life will undoubtedly influence the choices that are made and that

which is rejected as inappropriate.

In examining media bias Siraj-Blatchford (Meighan and Harber 2007:65) comments

that, "..the mass media are not owned by the masses, but tend to reflect the attitudes,

opinions, tastes and preferences of dominant groups in society." Perhaps this indicates why

Rutter et al (1979:63) praise the inclusion of pupils in the taking of assemblies and also

explains Copley's (1989:31) suggestion that pupils should work collaboratively with staff on

an assembly committee to plan themes for each term as well as making decisions about

outside speakers.

In dealing with black people and the media, Siraj-Blatchford comments that they are

often presented as:

"....mindless aggressors or passive and hopeless victims waiting for the benevolence of
Western governments and charities to raise enough money to feed them. Children take
particular note of these images because schools often help to raise the money, but the
schools tend to fall into the same trap as the media by offering little explanation to children
of how these situations arise. In fact, the teachers have often absorbed the media
explanations .... issues of trade, Third World debt and the reasons for initial poverty and
political instability are largely ignored" (2007).

This then appears to advocate assemblies that deal with such citizenship issues as fair

trade and the profiling of people whose lives have been catalysts for change such as Oscar

Romero. He speaks of himself as having been vilified, by his government for asking the

reasons why the masses in El Salvador were hungry, rather than just getting on and feeding

them, as a Catholic priest should.

The Institute for Public Policy Research studied the work of Copland Community

School in North London (BHA 2006:21) and found it achieved much success by, "... setting

aside space and time for Muslim prayers and by having a school ethos and assemblies which

reflect and respect the many faiths and cultures within the school." This approach was not

only popular with parents and the community but was found to be "..good for the self-

esteem of pupils." The careful use of non-Christian holy books and references to their key

religious figures in assemblies all help to present positive 'media images' of world faiths and cultures other than Christianity, to the pupil population.

This notion of seeing collective worship as the mass media of the school also embraces the work of the hidden curriculum. Where it is mainly males who lead this part of the school day a message is automatically conveyed to pupils that they will unconsciously be assimilating about power and authority being predominantly male. Meighan and Harber (2007:75) give an initial list of eight different types of learning to which students will be exposed in schools many of which have been a key theme to assemblies I have delivered. This is the way in which I argue that collective worship or more properly assemblies 'can be' the antidote to the total experience of school.   The second list Meighan and Harber give (2007:76) could be similarly used in an assembly context again as I have done in the past.

Jeanette Gill's research (2004) cites Comber and Galton (2002) as having found that the first formal assembly after transfer (*from primary school*) is one of the places where each institution reiterates its own requirements and intentionally identifies a broad change in culture for its newest members (Gill, 2004:185). This would seem to support the view that the assembly is the mass media of the school, where socialisation is an overt aim and expected norms are spelt out to pupils.

In the summer of 2011, I learned of a number of local primary schools allowing assemblies to be exploited in the North West region of England for commercial gain by a particular business. A business representative presents a moral message to primary school

children, all the while demonstrating immense skill in using a yo-yo with the moral acronym on it "NED" (Never give up – Encourage others and Do your best); the children are informed that they too can be as skilled as the demonstrator in using such a toy, if they buy one that will be available for purchase for a limited time at the school. Naturally, the children respond with appeals to parents and other relatives to buy the merchandise. The yo yos cost between £5 and £11 (with a singular one priced at an extraordinary£150.00) and other products are priced from 25p to £3.00.

This is the first time that I have ever come across an assembly being used as a purely 'commercial' slot almost proving the point that it is the 'mass media' of the school; an ideal vehicle for an advertisement and the like, that even outside agencies recognise. Clearly the head teachers who have given this business access to their pupils have not seen anything immoral about exploiting their captive audience or putting their families under financial pressure for the trivia of a yo-yo. This suggests that these senior leaders have little respect or understanding of the purpose of collective worship and what is or isn't acceptable content for this educational time. Appendix 11 is the letter that I wrote in protest to my local authority's SACRE regarding the tacit sanctioning of this commercial venture which is altogether different from the usual charities encouraging fundraising activities through assemblies. The latter represent worthy causes in society and involve pupils in various activities of their own choosing in order to raise money whilst also informing them of the nature of the charity's work. It may be, of course, that the SACRE knows nothing about this organisation or the schools that have given it access to their assemblies   Appendix 12 is the

inadequate response of a councillor regarding the issue, whose letter fails to address the key issues and merely states the lack of jurisdiction that the SACRE has over schools' practices.

A philosophical and educational rationale for collective worship

Copley (1992:74) highlights the prolific amount of literature produced for teachers to use in their leading of collective worship, but the lack of writers prepared to undertake exploration of the, "..contortions required to equate education, worship and compulsion." He cites a number of authors such as Norman Bull (1954) who out of 232 pages of recommended content for teachers to use in assemblies has only 6 pages on a discussion of the nature of worship itself. Then, D.M. Prescott (1965) had no pages at all dedicated to rationale out of a possible 19; A.R. Bielby's (1968) "6th Form Worship" had just one and a half pages out of 189 and J. Thompson's (1988) "Reflecting" had none out of 139 pages and so the list goes on. Copley remarks that these books are illustrative of: " ... a tradition that has developed to provide allegedly useful material, without probing deeper issues. One wonders whether unreflective teachers can produce reflective children" (1992:74). Copley is intimating that teachers who want to get through their leading of collective worship by the use of pre-prepared material suggesting approach and content, without wanting to arrive at an understanding of what they are delivering and why to these specific pupils at this point in time, are manifesting a shallowness of thought that is less than ideal.

As a researcher I was interested in Copley's observations about the lack of literature on the rationale for collective worship. At one stage in this current work I had wanted to

note the large number of generic educational books I had consulted that offered absolutely

nothing on collective worship and if they did it was just a paragraph at best. Having been

offered a model of this by Copley I would briefly make the point that well respected works

such as Rutter et al's "*15,000 hours*" (1979) includes less than 2 pages on collective worship

and Titus's "*The Citizenship School*" (2001:96) just a paragraph.

Philosophy, Berkson (1975:112) says,

"..begins with analysis and criticism of existing formulations of beliefs, but it also must
reformulate beliefs which are logically well ordered, consonant with new knowledge, and
effective in advancing the growing ideal of the community which the philosopher represents.
Whatever else the philosopher does .... it is valuable in the measure that it aids in laying a
basis of assumptions and formulating educational aims. The needed principles and ideals
are not only scientific and intellectual, but also moral and social; and social means political
and, to some extent, economic."

This is helpful in advancing an understanding of how underlying assumptions, principles and

ideals, as well as the aims of education will have an impact on where collective worship is

placed within schools and how it is handled. Berkson also gives a useful definition of

Western culture as being that which includes the Judeo-Christian ethical and spiritual

heritage, the Hellenic love of reason, music, art and the Roman sense of law in its double

aspect of positive and natural law. To this must be added the modern scientific approach, as

well as the principle of democracy which is not only a political and social methodology but

an ethical system, which Berkson defines as being "... based on a trinity of human absolutes

– the unique individual person, the equality of all races and the unity of mankind"

(1975:113).

It is therefore culturally little wonder that these aspects of his definition of democracy are in evidence (in my experience generally as well as in the course of conducting this research) in most acts of collective worship in schools. However, that pupils should be actively engaging in worship is not reconcilable with the notions of the first two of Berkson's trinity because the uniqueness of the individual means that no assumptions can be made about their religious or non-religious affiliations and the equality of the races assumes that particular cultural norms which include religion, will be valued and respected in their own right, no matter how diverse. A multi-cultural school and society has to be just that – respecting (and not negating) of the various cultures represented as well as recognising those positioned beyond its parameters in other parts of the world.

Regarding popular themes for assemblies many these days (as in that of case study school 2, discussed in chapter 6) focus upon rewarding pupils and giving out prizes in order to motivate them to work hard when they are in that collective situation. However, Kohn (1993) opposes the use of rewards as motivators to learn and in this his philosophy is in keeping with Dewey's view that 'sugar-coating' learning is a disservice to the character building of pupils who need to engage their will and effort alongside motivation in order to be successful in their studies (Brickman and Lehrer 1975:13).

Gill sees a change in contemporary society pertinent to the nature of collective worship today and that is in,

"..the concept of education which adopts an approach which is objective and rational in areas of significant controversy (Hirst, 1972). This is reflected in teachers' concern for

neutrality (Cheetham, 2000) and in the approach adopted in RE which has become increasingly detached from collective worship" (Gill, 2004:192).

Modern society is characterised by pluralism, consumerism and secularism (Gill, 2004:192) and so objectivity and rationality and the sense of issues being multi-faceted rather than there being a unilateral answer that can be claimed by a leader of collective worship is the reality of twenty first century English society.

Hull comments on books offering guidance for school worship, that it is striking how seldom a rationale is offered for school worship, for example a quote from Berry 's manual of school worship for teachers illustrates this (1946:20):

"Religious worship, in secondary schools, as everywhere else, must be nothing less than the rendering unto Almighty God of the honour, the veneration and – most perfect of all worship – the adoration which is due to Him as Creator and Redeemer, and the love which is due to Him as Himself eternal Love" (Hull, 1984:8).

Hull says that, "What is needed is some consideration of the role of this daily school gathering in relation to the school's work as a whole." He asks whether the school assembly may have any potential for contributing to the general educational work of the school. Hull also suggests that,

"..... a theology of the school assembly must be developed which will be faithful both to educational and theological norms......it is doubtful if this can be done as long as the assembly is thought of as worship. We begin therefore by asking what other potential it may have"(Hull, 1984:9).

So, Hull clearly sees worship and education as irreconcilable, but does indicate that it may have other functions within school life. Certainly the empirical research for this study supports these comments and points to some of the unique and worthwhile contributions that assemblies make to the school's educational work as well as making clear the undesirability of worship within assemblies.   Wringe (1995:285) says that,

"Certain outcomes which in liberal democratic societies are regarded as undoubted components of the individual's right to education, run all too frequently, into confrontation with traditional groups who perceive them not only as misguided and spiritually dangerous to their members, but as threatening to their group's identity and even its continued existence."

So it may well be that faith groups, especially Christianity, with its historically protected status within the collective worship legislation will consider the possibility of, 'a market-place of values' being a new basis for collective worship as a threat to 'British' identity and running counter to the health of Christianity in the nation.

The 1997 review of collective worship undertaken by three important national organisations and published by the Culham College Institute considered that changes to the legislation were an important element of the way forward for collective worship. It highlighted how guidance in Circulars could more readily be revised in the light of experience than statutory provisions (1997:19). It was also hoped that some of the requirements (those that go beyond the statutory statements) in Circular 1/94 could be withdrawn through a new Circular, ahead of a change in the 1988 legislation (1997:19). The changes it was recommending would avoid, "..an undesirably detailed prescriptive framework" (1997:19).

Morality

As chapter 2 of this study illustrated morality has always been a key feature of the teaching of religious education and the staging of collective worship. Keith Porteous, executive of the National Secular Society wrote in a letter to Michael Gove, Education Secretary, that, 'we recognise that assemblies with an ethical framework have a vital contribution to make to school life' (Mail Online, Neal Sears, 28/12/10). However, Lawrence Kohlberg's view (1970:67) is that, ".....the values of justice which themselves prohibit the imposition of beliefs of one group upon another." In other words it is unjust for beliefs to be anything other than freely and rationally adopted - an important point in any discussion of collective worship and government requirements for Christian worship to be taking place. Though he then goes on to explore the view that, "The school is no more committed to value neutrality than is the government or the law" (1970:67). So in this way no organisation, schools included, can be void of values and he goes on to be explicit about the view that not all value systems are equally sound, even though there is a need for overt respect for individual rights.

R.S. Peters (1975:55) says his conception of moral education is indistinguishable from the ideal of a liberal education. He summarises this as being the pursuit of that which is intrinsically worthwhile and is incompatible with authoritarianism and dogmatism. Qualifying the last factor he says,

"This is because a liberal education is based ultimately on respect for truth which depends on reasons and not on the word or will of any man, body or book. This means, of course, not that there is not an important place for authority in social life, but that it has to be rationally justified – as indeed it can be in the bringing up of children......Respect for truth is intimately connected with fairness, and respect for persons, which, together with freedom, are fundamental principles which underlie our moral life..."

So in relation to collective worship being a vehicle for sound moral education, using Peters' framework it needs to focus on the worthwhile, as writers such as Hull have contended (1975:14), be set within the widest of religious and ideological ways of thinking, as well as being delivered with the utmost respect for persons and their pursuit of truth themselves, thereby escaping the imposition of 'truth' as claimed by others. Arthur et al similarly say that, "..values are now increasingly free-standing and no longer seen within the Christian context" (Arthur et al, 2010:35).

Bettelheim, in his lecture for the Harvard Graduate School of Education in the spring of 1968 (cited in Gustafson et al 1975:87), reflects on how morals were once,

"...viewed as God-given, immutable, absolute....the only book worth reading was the Good Book... one can live successfully and learn well in school as long as one's growing up begins with a very firm and stringent morality of absolutes, based on fear..."

Bettelheim quotes Darwin, Nietzsche and Freud as examples of people who grew up with this absolute morality instilled into them as children which in turn, "made them strong enough, later on in life, to try to reshape the world by their now more mature moral concepts" (Gustafson,1975:87).

According to this way of thinking school children should be taught about absolutes of morality as a firm basis from which they can later, in a more sophisticated way, begin to analyse and work out their own code of ethics. Bettelheim draws an important distinction between the mature and the immature mind and grasp of morality as well as the quality of experience that age brings with it.

In contrast to Bettelheim's absolutes that should be taught to children, Arthur's research project of 2010 found that teachers believed that it was the work of the school to develop values in pupils, but there was no consistent understanding of what they are and how they relate to areas of school life ".... and the processes through which values can be developed" (Arthur, 2010:56). It was also noted that secondary school teachers, "..... tended to focus on moral development through academic performance," whereas primary teachers emphasised moral issues. Crucially, Arthur's findings say that:

"Schools and teachers did not appear to have a big influence on pupils' values and character development. For most schools, less than 60% of pupils believed that their teachers had an important role in developing their moral character," (Arthur, 2010:56).

Arthur describes how, "The Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum (1991) commences its discussion paper by acknowledging, " that:

- values are linked to fundamental beliefs;

- when we teach we communicate values;

- values permeate educational activity;

- values are not always held consciously;

- a consensus on values is unlikely" (Arthur, 2010:65).

Then, Arthur argues that what this document goes on to list as a set of values, he personally considers are principles from which values could be derived:

- "an appreciation of learning;

- respect and caring for self;

- respect and caring for others;

- a sense of belonging;

- social responsibility" (Arthur, 2010:65).

He summarises the main emphasis in Scotland by saying that the focus is on the development of four capacities: "successful learning, individual confidence, responsible citizenship and active contribution" (Arthur, 2010:65).

Citizenship

Citizenship education featured in the historic narratives of chapter 2's exploration of legislation and in the twenty first century has gained even more currency: widely recognised as an important aspect of formal education. Collective worship / assemblies provide messages about the values, character and behaviour of 'good' citizens. Indeed, this is one of the arguments I would put forward as to why collective worship / assemblies are the mass

media of the school. It is here that SLTs encourage participation, responsibility and other aspects of school citizenship as well as wanting to open up the bigger picture of society and global citizenship to pupils.

However, it could also be argued that effective citizenship education could actually be at odds with the values schools are trying to inculcate in their pupils. Sadly, as a teacher, I have found that rarely do senior managers actually value the pupils who organise a petition, write letters of protest or stage 'sit-ins' over some controversial school policy: many will prefer deference and compliance and so it could be a disillusioning experience for young people who may then discern the 'cosmetic' nature of the citizenship education and experiences that their schools are offering. All too often, the school council is not a genuine arena for pupils to shape the policies and practices that they would like to see in place in school life.

Consider the citizenship education implications of Ecclesall Church of England Primary School in Sheffield which states in the collective worship policy, available to view on its website that its,

"..collective worship is set within the context of 'assemblies' – which may include other features besides those required of collective worship.

Worship has a wide range of meanings and forms of expression. For some people this might be devotion to a divine being, power or personal God; for others it might mean

reflection on and understanding of those elements of life which are of value and worth. At

Ecclesall, we theme our assemblies over two years around 22 values that are the foundation

of a fair and equitable society, such as co-operation and tolerance"

(www.ecclesalljunior.co.uk).

Clearly, "a fair and equitable society" points to pupils learning about their

participation in such a society. The 22 values provide the framework for this church school's

collective worship and assemblies and so it is not a prayer book, the Bible or a manual that is

shaping the topics, but those values that are fundamental to social justice. If this is the case

even in a denominational school, how much more relevant would it or should it be in a non-

denominational school?

The Report of the Advisory Group on Citizenship states that citizenship education

should embrace three main areas throughout the key stages of school life: social and moral

responsibility, community involvement and political literacy (Crick 1998:40f). The citizenship

curriculum is to aim to bring about democratic values and dispositions in young people, skills

and aptitudes, as well as social, moral, political, environmental and sustainable development

knowledge (1998:44f). The Advisory Group acknowledges the way in which citizenship

overlaps with Personal Social and Health Education and recognises that other curriculum

areas such as the humanities will be contributing to the whole school experience of

citizenship for pupils (1998:52). It says that:

"Learning in citizenship education is influenced by a number of factors:

There is increasing recognition that the ethos, organisation, structures and daily practices of schools, including whole-school activities and assemblies have a significant impact on the effectiveness of citizenship education. Through such climate and practices schools provide implicit and explicit messages which can have a considerable influence, both positive and negative, on pupils' learning and development. Schools need to consider how far their ethos, organisation and daily practices are consistent with the aim and purpose of citizenship education and affirm and extend the development of pupils into active citizens" (1998: 36).

Pring (cited in Dancy 1980:102) defines ethos as the values, aims, attitudes and procedures of a school which interrelate and which remain a relatively permanent feature of the school. Dancy also suggests that to get at the ethos of a school, you need to examine the various stable procedures through which business is conducted at three levels: towards the individual and his or her work, towards the community as a whole and towards those outside the school.

Hargreaves (1982) probes more deeply into the underlying values of schools – the individualism and the importance attached to academic achievement. Bear in mind that this has now been exacerbated since the 1988 Education Reform Act which introduced league tables with testing at 7,11,14 as well as the historic summative public examinations at 16, to a degree that Hargreaves could never have envisaged. Many head teachers now feel and know that their school's very existence is threatened by the examination performance of their pupils, upon which they will be judged and applications made or not made for their school as a consequence. A pupil's own perception of their worth reinforces the significance of the question he poses: "What is the impact of the curriculum as a whole upon the sense of personal worth experienced by each pupil?" (1982:103).

Hargreaves goes on to argue that in comparison to academic achievement, personal and social values are excluded; there is a narrow interpretation of success; a limited view of 'worthwhile' culture; a diminishing significance attached to the expressive arts and to emotional intelligence. All of these factors conspire to negate the dignity of the working class child in his view. Hargreaves (1982:103) argues that the educational values of the school are embedded in the culture of the organisation, but rarely made explicit to pupils. Hargreaves' solution is to think of school much more as a community, rather than as an aggregate of individuals and to work out ways in which the sense of solidarity might be fostered. This view has important ramifications for collective worship. This is the time when the community is visible; when all pupils are present as equal citizens of the school; when everyone shares some kind of corporate message about 'the state of the nation' and can reflect on it or put it into practice that very day and / or subsequently when an issue arises, so that pupils experience the real world application of collective worship theorising. Collective worship is in my experience, a definite mechanism through which community solidarity can be welded. Laughing together, crying together, listening, performing, disagreeing, participating are all powerful shared emotions that help people to become more emotionally intelligent and bond them together as a group as is evidenced even by public displays of emotion such as Princess Diana's funeral in September 1997 and the royal wedding of Prince William and Kate Middleton in April 2011 where so many people express their feelings very publicly.

Tawney (1938:117) rightly said that what a community requires, as the word itself suggests, is a common culture, because without it, it is not a community at all. So British

multi-cultural society still needs to find ways in which the school community can have a shared culture. My contention is that collective worship being potentially the platform for 'the market place of values' means that any believer or group of believers can lead that time and 'own' their faith, their political and ideological stance, quite simply because they are part of that community or an invited guest of that community. They do not need to water down their views to make them palatable to the atheist or agnostic or believer of a different persuasion – they quite simply say it how it is for them. Then it is up to other people to bring their diversity to the collective worship, adding breadth and balance in the longer term plan. Nothing is imposed on anybody, but in an atmosphere of mutual respect, an individual is able to share their beliefs as entirely theirs, with no intention of overtly influencing anyone else to join them. Others are equally free to consider their own agreement or disagreement and discussions spilling over from such stimulus are likely to occur naturally in classrooms and corridors.

So the challenge for our era, quite differently from Tawney's is to find the common culture of the school, within the embrace of multi-culturalism in a democracy. Such a common culture could be seen as the procedural values that underpin citizenship education – mutual respect, fairness, free expression, reasonableness and a critical stance. Such a common culture still needs to recognise the needs of the individual. Hargreaves (1982:104) says that there is a connection between a sense of community (or of social solidarity) and personal dignity. Holley (2007:1) argues that "individuality always implies 'group membership". Philosophically, to draw attention to the individual must mean for it to be set in relief against the group.

I have consciously continued to contribute to the educational system in this country, yet I am aware of the negative impact it has on so many people and their self-image. Handy and Aitken (1986:28) describe individual loss of identity and anomie as well as 'disintegrating tendencies' in schools where academic qualifications are over emphasised and other experiences and achievements under expressed. The organisation Personalised Education Now (PEN) in its advertising pamphlets distributed at a PEN in-service training conference in 2007 profiles their view that there is a need for,

" .... education for young people that does not treat them as cogs in a machine. Each person is unique and they need to be responded to as such .... we believe that all children are very special and that is how we treat them."

An assembly is an ideal vehicle for impressing upon young people their uniqueness, how special they are and their right to be treated by everyone in school and beyond with respect. I have met many adults who have clearly succeeded in life, 'in spite of' their educational experiences. Hence the relevance to this study of those critical of the harmful effects of schooling such as Inglis (1994), Harber (2004) or those of the 1960s and 1970s such as Illich and Holt reviewed in Harber (2009).

The assembly can be something of an antidote to the harm that schooling can cause. Durkheim comments that,

"There can be no society which does not feel the need at regular intervals to maintain and strengthen collective sentiments and ideas which constitute its unity and personality," (Richard, G., 1994:92 in Pickering, W.S.F. Ed.) This surely is the assembly at its best with a message that is worthy of focus and a format relevant to the context of the school society.

Berkson in his essay on "Science, Ethics, and Education in Dewey's Philosophy" states that,

"Education must be rooted in the cultural heritage of a community; its aims are to be found in the intellectual and artistic achievements, in the traditions and ideals, in the ethical aspirations and political organisation developed in the course of time. This is true whether we think of education as a means of individual development or of social preservation. The self, which always retains a sense of uniqueness, never can be realised fully within the institutional organisation. But if the self is to develop at all, it can do so only through participation in a community life and through identification with a pattern of ideas" (Berkson,1975:111).

This gives insight into the development of the pupil self and their relationship to the school community, most overt in its gathering for an assembly. If the pupil is to identify with the pattern of ideas explicitly presented in assemblies as opposed to being alienated from them then these need to be relevant and inclusive, rather than irrelevant and divisive. Educational legislation surely has a higher calling in the service of youth, than to merely preserve the social order. The strand that has run throughout this work that refers to the dismantling of self and the lack of identity that schools can breed could equally be linked to Berkson's remark that the uniqueness of individuals can never be fully realised within the institutional organisation (Berkson, 1975:110) – it is frequently the latter elements that kill the child and

the teenager and it is left to the more humanising aspects of schooling, such as the assembly, to attempt to redeem them or at least offer balance.

To quote Berkson again, he says that, "The concept 'growth' has value in its admonition against mechanistic learning processes; it has constructive implications also for personal development within the framework of community purposes" (Berkson,1975:110). Assemblies should not be a time of pupil compliance and of mechanistic learning, but in contrast, should be stimulating and engaging, so carrying with them the possibility of personal development within a framework of Berkson's (1975:111) community purposes (school, local, national and international).

Gorbutt (1972) is quoted by Meighan and Harber (2007:305) as making the point that:

"The observer must be careful to recognise that different parties in any interaction may have different interpretations of it and that these interpretations cannot be assumed in advance of empirical investigation. We cannot merely describe a school assembly, for example as a consensual ritual which binds staff and pupils together. This indeed may be the stated intention of the headmaster but the interpretation put upon the event by others, even though they may outwardly conform, cannot be assumed."

This raises the question of the different perspectives that participants or attendees will have on assemblies. For many staff it will quite simply be the fulfilment of the law; for others it will be a focal point of school life and for pupils a further exercise in compliance which typifies much of their educational experience.

Arthur (2010) calls his cohort of 14-16 year olds studied, 'Citizens of good character' (2010:110). He claims that his research has, '.... implications for the relationship between character, aspirations, social change, school cultures, citizenship, identity and religion' (2010:110|. This resonates with the current study that has sought to demonstrate the links between these areas, particularly the last five in the list. The key findings of Arthur's study say that, '...... students are concerned about values and character and about the quality of their communities and the society in which they are growing up' (Arthur, 2010:110). Students also, interestingly, identified school as a place that could do more to develop character (Arthur, 2010:111). There was then no further probe as to the ways in which pupils thought that schools could improve their influence on character development, but the assembly time along with PSHE lessons and Citizenship education are occasions when young people are challenged to consider who they are, how they conduct their lives and why, as well as considering what qualities they admire in others.

Arthur's research project further found that religion, "..despite the distinct secular orientation of many European societies, remains a particularly strong source of identity .." (Arthur, 2010:92); also that it could be, "... a constitutive factor in defining the self and the other," and that, "A person's identity as a citizen co-exists with their religious identity," (Arthur, 2010:92). Such evidence points to the importance of pupils more generally having a sense of identity, for some this may well be derived from their religious background, for others, strong family ties that make them proud of and comfortable with who they are, but for the many who lack both of these potentially positive elements of religion and family in their lives, the school can offer them possible sources of identity, such as role models,

experiencing success, the adoption of aspirations for their future and so on. Collective

worship / assemblies have an important part to play in enhancing the experiences of all

pupils in these ways and in enabling them to identify with the school community.

In 1988, prior to the ERA, Baroness Hooper, in the House of Lords, emphasised the

importance of the 'community' function of collective worship as against the confessional

acts of worship which she said could only be "... properly pursued by practising Christians

and members of other faiths" (Hansard, House of Lords, 7th July, 1988:441):

"First we wish as far as possible to ensure that the act of collective worship provided
for in statute is indeed collective. It is because such an act of worship can perform an
important function in binding together members of a school and helping to develop their
sense of community that we in this country make collective worship in schools a statutory
requirement..... This educational value of worship must be clearly distinguished from
confessional acts of worship which are properly pursued by practising Christians and
members of other faiths" (Hansard, House of Lords, 7/7/88).

John Hull (1995:30) talks eloquently of this vision of collective worship as one

characterised by a "...sharing, of mutuality, of inclusion and of all that makes for community"

and it being, ".. part of the spirituality which the collective worship should be promoting."

However, as Hull point out, the more prescriptive the theological definitions of collective

worship become, then "...the less possible will it be for all pupils to participate, the less

appropriate will be the resulting worship for at least some of the pupils" (Hull, 1995:30). So,

the more prescriptive the theology the less inclusive is the experience for the community

and this will influence the sense of identity that an individual young person might draw from

such an experience.

If looking for definitions of citizenship, Dagger (1997:196) is quoted in Arthur et al (2010) as listing six liberal republican virtues for a citizen:"...respects human rights, values autonomy, tolerates different opinions and beliefs, plays fair, cherishes civic memory and takes an active part in the community" (Arthur et al, 2010:34). If these aspects are touched upon, within the content of collective worship, then pupils will be encouraged and challenged in their understanding of citizenship.

Indoctrination and education

Many critics of collective worship consider it tantamount to indoctrination and this came through from the expert witnesses in particular those whose comments are featured in chapters 5 and 7. Schools are places of education not of worship in the sense that a church, synagogue, mosque or temple is. Pupils learn about religion and from it, in school, but surely should not be compelled to behave as if they embrace it for themselves; the kind of compliance asked for by what Gent (1984:16) has called the mini-church model and which are many people's historical experiences of assemblies. In discussion about indoctrination, R.S. Peters (1966) speaks of it as lacking respect for the learner and of having the intention to produce a state of mind where an individual has either no grasp of the rationale underlying their beliefs or a type of foundation which encourages no criticism or evaluation of beliefs (1966:42). In this way critical thinking is the enemy of indoctrination. Cheetham (2000:76) found in his research on collective worship that teachers highly prized the personal integrity of the pupils.

Tom Sutcliffe in The Independent Online (28/12/10) reflects on his own experiences of collective worship at school:

" .... it occurred during a discussion of compulsory services at our school. One of the teachers present explained how offensive he found it when non-believers declined to bow their heads during collective prayers and so 'flaunted' their views. Being hopelessly meek I made some concurring murmur at the notion that what was at stake here was simple good manners. And ever since I've regretted not having the wit to ask him what he would do if the circumstances were reversed and he was forced to attend a daily assembly of atheists and take part in a chanted avowal of scepticism. Would he regard his own beliefs as an awkward anomaly and decorously conceal them? Or might he perhaps have done some "flaunting" of his own?"

This emphasises the differential power relations of the teacher and the pupil, the latter struggling to challenge in the context of the classroom / school.

Crick's Advisory Group (1998:56) takes for granted that, '...educators must never set out to indoctrinate' but also acknowledges that to be completely unbiased is simply not possible. They then go on to spell out how teaching, "...pupils how to recognise bias, how to evaluate evidence put before them and how to look for alternative interpretations, viewpoints and sources of evidence....." are good safeguards against anything akin to indoctrination. This report suggests that religious education '...probably embraces the very essence of controversy, dealing as it does in foundations of moral behaviour and the purpose and meaning of life' (1998:57). All of these factors would equally apply to the content of assemblies. Teachers are urged not to resist dealing with the subject matter of

controversial topics of that particular day – moral, economic, political and religious or to

ignore the timeless social issues of war and peace, discrimination, oppression and justice,

religious issues concerning the supreme value of human life, environmental concerns and

'our response to spiritual values' (1998:57). So the very 'bread and butter' of assembly

material is spelled out as being sound 'citizenship learning and the omission of which they

say would be a gap constituting the, '....very essence of....a worthwhile education'

(1998:57).

Clearly indoctrination is not a viable educational aim in a democratic society and so

the school assembly should avoid any aspects that could be identified with this position.

Bias is a similarly dangerous stance and one that is close to indoctrination on the spectrum

of imparting knowledge and information to people. The Report of the Advisory Group on

Citizenship is helpful in spelling out eight very specific practicalities to be avoided by

teachers and leaders in order to be as objective as possible in the presenting of controversial

issues, whether in assembly or elsewhere:

"Unfairly emphasising some information over other material that is equally as
relevant; presenting information as the 'only' interpretation; setting themselves up as the
sole purveyor of fact and opinion; presenting opinion and value judgements as facts; giving
their own accounts of others' views instead of using the actual statements of opinions;
revealing personal preference about what is being said through body language; not opening
up discussions to all pupils and by not, ...challenging a consensus of opinion which emerges
too readily" (1998:58).

The 1996 Education Act is cited as making it a statutory requirement that pupils are

not presented with only one side of political or controversial issues (Crick 1998:56).

Interestingly, the Advisory Group Report says that, '...to be completely unbiased is simply

not possible, and on some issues, such as those concerning human rights, it is not desirable'

(1998:56), thereby overtly and somewhat paradoxically indicating that some viewpoints are

those which the 'status quo' intends pupils should adopt, in this instance the validity of the

Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Harber and Mncube in a forthcoming book for 2012 differentiate between (political)

socialisation, indoctrination and genuine education for democracy. Their analysis is that in

contrast to political indoctrination and socialisation, a genuine education for democracy is

not a form of social and political control:

"It does not aim for the inculcation of a right answer or a particular viewpoint. It is an attempt to create critical awareness of political phenomenon by open, balanced discussion of a range of evidence and opinions. It encourages individuals to make up their own minds about issues after considering the arguments and evidence. Education for democracy is not neutral – no education is neutral – but it does not, either deliberately or by default, transmit one-sided views of substantive values (e.g. in relation to controversial issues such as privatisation, the environment, nuclear weapons or abortion) as 'true'."

On the other hand, Harber and Mncube (2012) argue that socialisation is the learning

of preferences and predispositions towards values and attitudes, though often in contexts

where other viewpoints are available. It is just that some ideas and values are taken far more

seriously than others and are acted upon in a way that gives them superior status to the

others that are seen to be available.

Harber and Mncube (2012) also consider the impact of the hidden curriculum on pupils – how a multitude of factors, related to the daily life and environment of the school from displays to the subjects on the curriculum influence the values they see as acceptable or valid. These are the ways in which the hierarchy of the school can create a particular ethos – by design usually or for the less reflective perhaps by accident and to a greater or lesser extent the values seeping through from the hidden curriculum will be those of the central government of the time.

Hull (1984:182)) outlines useful distinctions between education, instruction, socialisation, evangelism and indoctrination:

"The instructed pupil thinks what he is told to think. The socialised pupil thinks what others think. The evangelised pupil comes to think what the evangelist thinks. The indoctrinated pupil does not think at all, but merely conforms or echoes. The educated pupil thinks for himself."

He then goes on to explain how the nurturer of religion, the evangelist and the indoctrinator have in common their intention to create or deepen their pupils' commitment to the content of their lessons, whereas the teacher intending to educate wants pupils to be critical of the content of lessons (Hull, 1984:182). Hull (1984) comments that choice about what stance to take on matters can potentially be confusing but makes the point that, "Democracy is more confusing than dictatorship and thinking for yourself is more confusing than being told what to think. Nothing could be more secure or simple than accepting indoctrination" (1984:183).

Figure 2.

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Educating
───────────
Teaching
───────────
Socialising
───────────
Mentoring
───────────
Nurturing
───────────
Evangelising
───────────
Training
───────────
Instructing
───────────
Catechising
───────────
Conditioning
───────────
Indoctrinating
```

A hierarchical ladder of learning

In thinking about the distinctions various writers like Hull (1984) and Snook (1972) have put forward regarding indoctrination, I constructed a diagram, using the format that Davies, Harber and Schweisfurth (2009) utilised to illustrate their ladder of participation in observing the interplay between teachers and pupils in classroom lessons (2009:30). The ladder devised for this current study shows **education** as the highest goal for the pupils of our schools whilst at the bottom of the ladder is **indoctrination** which it is hoped could and should not exist in English state schools in the twenty first century. A more detailed analysis of the terms on the ladder are described in appendix 10. Snook's view is that the kind of terms in the ladder belong to, 'a family of concepts' (Snook, 1972:1).

It is important to establish some understanding of all of these degrees of learning from indoctrination to education because state schools as well as centres of religious faith need to know exactly what it is they are engaging in with their pupils. If school worship is to be educational there needs to be some analysis of what that might mean and whether or not those who contend that it is indoctrination have any grounds for such an accusation.

A different view of indoctrination in schools was profiled on the Radio 4 'Sunday' programme (20/02/11 – presented by Jane Little and Phillip Barnes) in a discussion involving Professor Trevor Cooling and a Reverend Pollitt, the argument flowed something like this:

"Humanism is a non-religious stance: humanism is secularism and pervades all other subjects on the timetable, in a highly secularised society. Secular indoctrination is what is happening in schools, it is not neutral. RE is a kind of social engineering because community cohesion has failed; people like to think that there are neutral objective values in education, but it is actually state sponsored secularism under the guise of 'neutrality'. This raises the question as to whether social and moral development can be done across the board in schools."

According to this view, the indoctrination taking place in schools is an unselfconscious secularism of the hidden curriculum which most people do not detect imagining that in some way non-denominational state schools are value free and so neutral.

Hull (1984:8) quotes the West Riding syllabus of 1966 as saying that it, gives approval to the assembly as a powerful means of unconsciously inculcating doctrine and quotes Williams' philosophy (from *Leading School Worship)* which was endorsed by this syllabus: "....all acts of worship are attempts to communicate a faith without giving direct instruction."

Education and Democracy

Not only can school assemblies contribute to citizenship education but they can also have an impact on wider notions of education for democracy (Carr and Hartnett, 1996). Indeed in chapter 6 I point to the criteria on the grid as ways in which assemblies could be measured for content and process in relation to democratic citizenship.

Education in emotional intelligence is an important dimension of what takes place in many assemblies. Often topical events from school life or wider society are picked up and commented on and role models, positive or negative, identified. There is also a therapeutic angle to this, as for example when 9/11 happened or the British and the Americans originally invaded Iraq. Without taking politically charged stances it is perfectly possible to challenge pupils to think through the implications of the world of which they are a part and to stimulate their empathy and compassion on a humanitarian level. It is naïve to imagine that pupils do not want to discuss and face the real issues of their world as they unfold. Alan Mumford calls this 'incidental learning' (Handy 2002:183).

The assembly can offer a wider rationale for the whole educational process itself, what Holley (2009:7) calls 'the race meaning' given that schooling so often appears to be: " ...... a course to be run, an activity to be completed as smoothly and efficiently as possible without reference to what the race means." This helps pupils in a democratic way to appreciate that certain behaviours and attitudes are counter-productive or impossible given the context of the school. They will pick up on this respecting of their intelligence and

harnessing of their good will. In this way, in Handy and Aitken's terms (1986) the pupils are seen more as co-workers than as clients, customers or products (1986:43). In "The age of unreason" Handy praises the notion of pupils seeing the point and purpose of what they are doing at school and having a sound understanding of the world they are entering when they leave (Handy, 2002:174).

Handy speaks of an educational culture where everyone is learning always and it being characterised by excitement, questioning, experimentation, exploration and adventure. He says that none of the latter can survive under a reign of fear, neither can it be imposed, it needs to be encouraged by demonstrations of warmth for all that is good and by celebration. This is the ideal descriptor of assembly material, including the important facet of the negation of pupil 'fear' as an emotion within that setting. This could be contrasted with the old style assembly as evident in Barry Hine's novel "A Kestrel for a Knave" (1968) where the pupils are subjected to a mini-church model style of assembly, common to that era, ironic in its biblical reading of a passage about Jesus and his tender attitude towards children, juxtaposed against the intolerant and despotic behaviour of the Head teacher towards his pupils.

Gill (2004) explores changes in society associated with contemporary liberalism: "... a growing awareness of a division between the private and the public domains which is accompanied by a strong sense of individual rights,' (a view further supported by Wringe, 1995 and Jonathan, 1997). Her argument is that children absorb this while in the primary school and they then begin, '... to assert their independence from adult authority in the

matter of religion, which they regard as private" (Gill, 2004:192). Pupils do not want to be told what they should think – they are well aware of their right to freedom of thought and belief and want this to be respected in the area of collective worship. Claire and Holden (2007: 7) are committed to this view as they believe that, "a free and uncensored forum is at the heart of democracy".

Hull fears that the 1988 ERA and the subsequent Circular 1/94 have led to,

"..detailed theological distinctions which are inappropriate for political and civil life in modern Britain. A context has been created which is impossible for head teachers, governing bodies, and school inspectors to manage. Moreover, a climate of opinion has been created which cannot but lead to a deterioration of religious and community relationships in Britain. This situation cannot be allowed to continue" (Hull, 1995:33).

The damaging effects relate to Section 7 of the 1988 ERA which introduced the notion of collective worship of a broadly Christian character and in turn necessitated Section 12 relating to determinations. Hull would like the expression 'collective worship' removed from the legislation and replaced with 'collective spirituality', (a suggestion to John Hull from a 'Laurie Rosenberg') as well as the repealing of Section 7. Removal of the latter would mean Section 12 on determinations would be superfluous (Hull, 1995:33). He sees these legal amendments as a way forward in the sphere of collective worship practice:

"The amended law would require pupils to take part in acts of collective spirituality whose main purpose would be to make a contribution to the spiritual development of the pupils and the school. Problems, controversies, and misunderstandings associated with collective worship would disappear, and schools would be provided with a powerful vehicle for promoting spirituality. There seems little doubt that this simple solution would commend itself to most if not all of the religious communities and would be acceptable to the teachers'

unions. Any problems are likely to come from a small group of Christians and from some politicians" (Hull, 1995:33).

Secularisation

In an increasingly secular society, collective worship is something of a spiritual oasis. Hirst (1974:1) defines 'secularisation' as 'a decay in the use of religious concepts and beliefs'. This means that supernatural interpretations of experience have been progressively replaced by others. The status of science, morals, aesthetics and other modes of thought are now such that 'religious considerations can be ignored'. This does not mean that,

"all religious beliefs can be shown to be unintelligible or false. It is rather that they come to be seen as of no consequence, having nothing to contribute in our efforts to understand ourselves and our world and to determine how we are to live," (Hirst, 1974:2).

So it is no surprise that generally young people in secondary schools are 'sceptical' about this time, as one teacher respondent said of their pupils.

Hirst (1967) suggests that the values upon which the common school must be based should be 'acceptable to all irrespective of any particular religious or non-religious claims" (Hirst, 1967:330). Public values – those of the school - must be distinguished from these latter 'private values' (Hirst, 1967:331). According to his thinking religious and non-religious

beliefs are personal to individuals and so belong to the private domain, whereas public

bodies such as schools are about 'public' values, common to all, (Hirst,1967:331).

In a society in which religion has become privatised Hirst argues that, "the widest

range of attitudes to religious beliefs is acceptable, provided they are never allowed to

determine 'public' issues and it is a mark of the secular society that it is religiously plural,

tolerating all forms of religious belief and practice that do not contravene agreed public

principles," (Hirst,1967:3).

The process of secularisation in society is distinguished by Hull from secularism. Hull

sees 'secularisation' as the historical process whereby social and intellectual life has been

freed from dominance by theological concepts, and 'secularism' as being the stronger claim

that has the (logical or psychological) consequence of rendering religious belief (actually or

apparently) meaningless and irrelevant (Hull, 1984:233).

Hirst takes the view that,

"...the specialised roles in urban life are essentially pragmatic in character, focusing on the
attainment of limited ends, there is in general no place in them for religious considerations;
they are essentially secular. Religion is then a matter for the private area of personal life
which impinges on the public life of society only through the selection of functions and rules
which individuals take on,"(Hirst,1967:5).

Other areas of public life, such as hospitals, prisons, councils, workplaces, are not

vulnerable to religious dominance so it is difficult to rationalise why the case should be

different in schools. As chapter 2 of this study bears out, the government in drawing up the

earliest of the educational legislation always respected the issue of religious faith,

agnosticism or atheism being a private and individualised matter which was why parents

have always been given the right to withdraw their child from religious teaching and

worship.

Cheetham's research into collective worship found that religious belief was

understood as an, "..individually chosen, private, practical guide to living," (2000:71).

He also says that,

"The way in which teachers are responding to the challenge of leading collective worship is a
vital clue and a rich source of data for our understanding of the nature and status of
religious belief in wider society because it is one of the few places where the variety of
religious beliefs has to be handled in an official and public way," (Cheetham,2000:71).

This will clearly be a puzzling role, posing conflict for teachers who individually have no faith

stance of their own, yet have to publicly perform within an assembly in a way that is

compatible with the legislation for 'broadly Christian worship'.

Charles Taylor (2007) describes three forms of secularisation, the first being the shift

in the West, away from unchallenged and unproblematic belief in God to this being just one

option within a range of possible stances. Secondly he speaks of the clash of world views

between believers and non-believers. Then thirdly, the process whereby religious beliefs

and institutions lose political and social significance and "religious practice progressively

declines over a period of time," (Arthur, 2010:93). Arthur's research study with pupils found

that the first analysis of secularisation was the most evident amongst respondents – religion

to them was simply one option among many – what could be described as one value within

the whole range of what this study calls 'the market-place of values'.

The 1997 review of collective worship undertaken by three national organisations

and published by Culham College Institute exposed the concerns of delegates regarding the

risk of secularisation of the assembly. The hopes pinned on legislative change that would

liberate teachers from acts of 'collective worship' to "statutory assemblies of a spiritual and

moral character" (1997:17), had a potential danger of totally secularising the assembly. The

report sought to make clear that there was no intention to do this which is why the new

style assemblies were defined as being,

".. of a spiritual as well as moral character; their main focus would be not simply on values
but also on beliefs and the spiritual dimension of life. Nor are values 'source free'! It is to be
expected that in these assemblies the sources of these values and the way in which they
have been energised by, and expressed in, the lives of individuals and communities would be
explored, even if the main focus is likely to be on values which are held in common by a
number of different religious traditions and belief systems," (1997:17).

Here it is clear that the view of a range of experts is favourable towards removing the term

'collective worship' from the statute books but not tantamount to the secularisation of

assemblies; what it will do is take away the impossible task of staging 'worship' in schools

and instead enable spiritual and moral dimensions to be presented as rooted in real people

who live lives shaped by their philosophy of life.

The 2011 telephone research into collective worship in schools, commissioned by BBC Local Radio and conducted by ComRes, led Craig Henderson, Head of BBC English regional programmes to say, "The role of faith in our communities.........our listeners will have strong views about the role of religion and secular teaching as a daily part of the English education system" (The Press Association online, 06/09/11).

The practices related to collective worship

Norman Bull (Copley, 1954:76f) commended the value of the practice of silence in collective worship as early as 1954, saying that its use should be explained to pupils and that there should be a period of silence both at the start and end of an assembly. Copley also points out that in the 1960s some Leicestershire schools produced devotional or quiet rooms that were always open for quiet thought and prayer and which served as a symbolic reminder to the members of the school '...of the spiritual nature of man' (Copley,1992:77). Interestingly these rooms were apparently adorned with sculptures, mosaics, art and 'the best library chairs' (Copley, 1992:77).

Jones (1969:98) suggests that silence is useful for pupils to make any kind of personal response to the assembly material that has been presented whether that be thinking, feeling or reflecting on intentions. Copley links the emerging use of silence as in the manual *Living Together – Handbook to the 1975 Birmingham Agreed Syllabus* with the growing confidence, characteristic of that time about teaching multi-faith RE (Birmingham 1975:3).

Hull (1975), Copley says, saw a value in collective worship that was related to encouraging "a reflective approach to living", a way of transcending "..the immediacy of experience and offering a different level of self-understanding to that of the classroom lesson" (Hull, 1975:27). Copley notes that the prolific publications to assist the deliverers of collective worship with instant material, make scant reference to the use of silence – in his words: "..almost no reference to the creative use of silence" (Copley 1992:77). The handbook to the 1975 Birmingham Agreed Syllabus also offers silence as an option for personal prayer, reflection contemplation or meditation. Yet Copley points to the fact that in all the literature produced to support teachers with the content of collective worship, there is no mention of the use of silence within this time (Copley,1992:77).

Woolley (2010:98) speaks of collective grief being shared in school life – times when children and staff share bereavement experiences and he then goes on to cite examples of national and international grief and mourning, for example the death of Diana Princess of Wales and the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and 7th July 2005, Holocaust Memorial Day, (Woolley, 2010:98f). He points to the "....wide range of emotions around these times: fear, anger, insecurity, empathy, confusion and uncertainty". He also advises that adults need to,

"... listen carefully to the ways in which children respond to global issues and crises and to acknowledge that sometimes there are no easy answers in complex circumstances. We can also create the opportunity to reflect on ideas and to feel the sense of the moment. At times, words are inadequate and our feelings are too complex and immediate to express. Allowing space for silence – and sharing silence together – can help us to gain a sense of being together that brings a sense of security and wholeness in difficult times. These times also provide the opportunity for adults to model the sharing of feelings and to acknowledge that they too find the situation difficult," (Woolley, 2010: 99 and Adams, Hyde and Woolley, 2008).

Such assembly experiences are essential catalysts for thought and interpretation in the lives of young people and provide a model of learning in emotional intelligence.

The review of collective worship undertaken in 1997 by three well respected national organisations and published by Culham College Institute cited as a difficult issue, "..the lack of adequate training for staff leading collective worship and of appropriate resources for use in them," (1997:19). This is an important point as INSET on the leading of collective worship is virtually non-existent appearing to indicate yet again its marginalisation within school life. However, conversely, as this study makes clear, texts and web-sites of ready made materials abound, so it is difficult to agree with the statement that collective worship is not properly resourced.

The right for parents to withdraw their children from school was built into legislation from 1870 but this same 1997 review of collective worship recommended that changes should be made to the legislation that would obviate the need for withdrawal: "..to hold assemblies in which all teachers and pupils could share in good conscience, without the need for withdrawal," (1997:18). This then would offer a totally inclusive model of assemblies.

Another comment from the report based on the 1997 review of collective worship said that there should be, "..more flexibility over grouping for assemblies while providing opportunities for educational experience going beyond that which can be experienced within the individual classroom," (1997:16). The thought for the day agenda which is usually employed by schools to fulfil the 'daily' aspect of the legislation in classrooms is recognised

here as having inherent limitations and lacking the unique experience of being part of the

much larger group.

Ofsted, SACREs and collective worship

The Bloxham Project says that, "In evaluating collective worship, inspectors are asked

to consider whether worship (often called 'assembly') encourages pupils to explore

questions about meaning and purpose, values and beliefs." Similarly, a Qualifications and

Curriculum Authority (QCA) publication 'RE and Collective Worship' in 2006 based on SACRE

reports said that:

"..it is the quality of the experience rather than its daily occurrence which is important;
the dilution of worship for the purposes of school assemblies means that faith communities
are concerned that genuine worship in a faith community is undermined;
best practice was characterised by thorough planning, the use of themes over a term or half
term, the evaluation of collective worship, the use of outside speakers able to bring insights
directly from their own faith and cultural traditions;
collective worship was seen as a vehicle, often, for the clearest expression of the school's
ethos, affirming the importance of relationships and the sharing collectively of both joy and
sadness;
where there was weakness it was frequently that insufficient time was allowed for the
children to reflect on their own thoughts, feelings and beliefs;
in the secondary schools inspectors found collective worship to be well planned orderly and
contributing to pupils' social and moral development but often failed to make a contribution
to pupils' spiritual and in some cases, cultural development, particularly so with 'tutor time
assemblies';
collective worship was found to be an important vehicle for pupils to explore and share
beliefs, consider the importance of prayer, meditation and silence, the relevance of ideas
and beliefs to their own lives, think about the needs of others and develop a sense of
community."

None of these remarks conflicts with the findings of this study, in fact, they are very much in harmony with its primary findings and its key propositions. However, the reference to 'tutor time assemblies' appears to be a naive misnomer as a tutor group is not an 'assembling' group, what they do is often described as 'thought for the day' because generally the head teacher makes a requirement for a given extract to be read for the benefit of the pupils. The tutor group is the usual grouping for the start of the day and sometimes for a second occasion in the day. What it is not is the 'exceptional' calling together of a larger than usual group for the purpose of an assembly – so this is surely a wholly inappropriate term for an official organisation to use.

Each year Ofsted produces an Annual Report based on inspection evidence, the latest report (as of May 2011) said about secondary schools in paragraph 90 that:

"Provision for pupils' personal development continues to improve and is good or better in seven of ten schools. Pupils' social development in part depends upon the extent to which schools recognise and provide opportunities for the pupils to play an active role in the life of the school. Such experiences often continue to be confined to older pupils. The majority of schools make a significant contribution to pupils' moral development. Subjects such as PSHE and religious education give pupils good opportunities to consider moral and ethical issues. Spiritual aspects of the curriculum are not covered adequately in a minority of schools, especially where RE has insufficient curriculum time to cover the agreed syllabus. The majority of schools provide a good range of opportunities for cultural development. A minority of schools, including some with multicultural populations of their own do not do enough to build an appreciation of cultural diversity."

Collective worship has the potential to contribute a great deal to pupils' personal, social, moral, religious and cultural education, overlapping with and reinforcing the messages from discrete curriculum areas.

Conclusion

Wright Mills' (1959:7) three classic questions about society have provided a useful frame of reference through which schools and in turn collective worship can be analysed. Osler and Starkey (2005:20) want to see a new set of democratic values for schools and any learning community, so that they can critically evaluate their culture. The British Humanist Society clearly expresses support for inclusive assemblies focussing on such shared values as Osler and Starkey propose but the humanists want to dismiss the notion of worship and prayers. Copley (1992:74) observes that not many writers have committed themselves to working through the educational and philosophical rationale for school worship. Cheetham (2000) similarly comments that there is surprisingly little literature on this topic.

Another contention of this study is that collective worship is the mass media of the school. Siraj-Blatchford considers how the media select material to mould audiences and similarly the content of collective worship is designed to influence the thinking and behaviour of pupils: imparting knowledge and shaping attitudes.

Quite how schools are to interpret spiritual development in their pupils is open to debate in the twenty first century. At one time this might have been measured against understanding of and identification with Christianity. In the pluralist multi-cultural society that England is today this is no longer an appropriate yardstick. Traditionally spiritual activities and rituals such as hymn singing and saying prayers have little currency with pupils today.

'A market-place of values' is the notion that this research favours as a rationale for school worship. Gill's 2004 research and Cheetham's in 2000 both evidenced that pupils even in denominational schools do not want to have religious worship imposed upon them. A philosophical and educational rationale for collective worship is imperative if teachers are to be credible in their own eyes as well as that of their pupils. In a twenty first century pluralist society the requirement for pupils to worship as part of their school week is not reconcilable with their individual freedom to live according to their own chosen philosophy of life or that of their parents.

Morality is fundamental to religions and many of the world's religions do have common moral denominators such as honesty, sexual fidelity, the valuing of human life, the environment and so on. The holy books and the key religious figures are the usual (though not exclusive) sources of such teaching which is used in the community's places of worship and so in turn in school worship – whether within Gent's mini-church model or otherwise. One of the difficulties in state schools is to know just what morality should be profiled – the legislation dictates that it should mainly or wholly be Christian, but in a secular society it is difficult to justify this to pupils, especially secondary aged young people.

The historical literature review traced how politicians had always considered citizenship an important aspect of schooling for pupils, but the report of the advisory group in 1998 brought greater emphasis to it, defining its aims and intended outcomes and leading to legislation enforcing its delivery. Assemblies, like PSHE and citizenship are part of the affective curriculum which aims to influence the thinking and behaviour of pupils. On one

level it could be argued that all learning affects people but the learning of algebra or a modern foreign language are probably not on the same plain as practising putting on a condom or understanding the difference between different political groups. Also the latter subjects tend to be those which the government wants to inculcate into pupils in the hope of changing behaviour and thereby reducing problems in the country, such as teenage pregnancies and people voting. This is in contrast to the non-confessional teaching of religious education since the 1970s, where specialists are careful not to directly influence pupils' religious beliefs or affiliations.

Indoctrination clearly has no place within education and does not fit with modern society; Cheetham (2000) in his research on collective worship found that the teachers were very sensitive to this issue and respected the freedom of the individual pupil to arrive at their own conclusions on the matter of faith.

Democratic values are fundamental to Britain functioning as a modern western society and so it is important that pupils understand these and how they impact on the British way of life. Indeed many people would support schools actually being managed in a democratic way rather than the merely theoretical teaching of this political ideology within assemblies or elsewhere within school life.

Secularisation is a process that is accepted as taking place in England, but people do differ in their understanding of it. There are a number of moves being reported in the media to try to repeal the law on collective worship which is considered to be outdated. Letters

have been written to Michael Gove by organisations such as Ekklesia and an Early Day

Motion has been launched with a growing number of MPs lending their support to it – again

calling for a change in the law relating to 'worship' in state schools.

SACREs have direct responsibilities to the schools within their local authority. These

are outlined in chapter 2's historical literature review. Annual reports are submitted to the

government by the Chair of each SACRE and the QCA draws these together in one national

summarising document. These are useful sources of information about the quality of

collective worship regionally and nationally.

CHAPTER 4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

"A clear relevant message can be delivered by anyone with sincerity,"
(Teacher respondent; 2007).

Personal motivation for the study

As a teacher it has been a part of my job for many years to take assemblies in secondary schools. If I were to complete the questionnaire devised for this study, I would rate assemblies as my favourite job within school life. This is because for me there is a powerful dynamic about it. I thrive on the bringing together of the school community, by year group, key stage or on a whole school basis. I enjoy preparing a message for the pupils and learning about their response to it.

As noted in the literature review, generally, collective worship gets little attention in generic educational literature. It is not seen as a significant phenomenon or as worthy of study as other areas of school life such as the curriculum, behaviour, relationships between pupils and staff, extra-curricular activities, community links, etc. Yet, my experience as a practitioner tells me that assemblies can have a very positive effect on the ethos of a school, pupil behaviour, the self-esteem of pupils, their understanding of citizenship and their identity with the school community. Conversely, I consider that dysfunctional assemblies will be very damaging to a school. Assemblies that are operating effectively in a twenty first century context with very honest leadership by staff will be an ethos builder and enhance the experience of school pupils. This is why a large number (15 out of 24; 63% - 24 being the

number out of 35 who actually responded to that question) of teachers in the present survey said that if the law on collective worship were to change they would continue to draw their year group together as it is an important experience and little would change about their practice.

Further, successive governments have declined to alter the legislation on collective worship in spite of calls to do so from SACREs, teaching unions and various bodies such as The Humanist Society. Perhaps there are more pressing issues for governments to concern themselves with and it may also be because it touches on the individual's deeply held commitment to a world religion or a personal ideology so it is easier to leave it alone. As the Hansard debates, discussed earlier in chapter 2 make clear, there was much heated discussion around the key legislation on collective worship during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, so it is possible that the thinking is that it's an issue best ignored for as long as possible. Clearly, the Church of England has always been influential in shaping collective worship legislation, not least through the bishops sitting in the House of Lords. Yet this is strange because as church schools are free to teach the beliefs and values peculiar to their denomination, which is their 'raison d'etre', non-denominational state schools should surely be outside of the established church's jurisdiction. Obviously some parents may well choose such a secular school for their child in spite of the fact that they hold religious convictions, but it is surely for them to bring their view to the debate and not the Church of England as such. Religious leaders in the Church of England and Roman Catholic churches usually recommend that believers' children attend a denominational school. Through this research, I would like to prompt teachers, teaching unions, politicians and the general public

to engage in honest debate about how the law might be changed on collective worship in schools, in order to give a lead to teachers on the delivery of assemblies reflecting twenty first century British society.

Woods (1991:1) comments on the gulf that many teachers perceive lies between educational research and the issues that affect their lives in school. He quotes May and Rudduck's 1983 research where a teacher uses words such as 'artificial', 'meaningless', 'irrelevant' to describe educational research. Woods (1991:1) then goes on to say that, 'If the primary aim of the research study were to be concerned with teacher practice, it would need to be cast in a different way.' That is, with less theoretical interest in disciplines such as sociology, psychology, philosophy (Adelman 1985) and more emphasis on how research relates to practice. It is my hope that this research, although requiring educational and social science theory to be taken account of, will also be rooted in the reality of current educational practice and it is this desire that has dictated the methods chosen. What is happening on the ground as well as why it is happening that way and its relationship to educational legislation is at the heart of this study. It is therefore hoped that this research could not be condemned for being divorced from key questions with which teachers are grappling in their daily lives at schools.

Research Questions

This study is practitioner led research into collective worship in English secondary, non-denominational, mixed, state schools. It focuses upon a number of key issues: what are

the perceptions of the functions of collective worship in the twenty first century? What seem to have been the functions of collective worship at the end of the 19th century and the first half of the twentieth century? How is it possible to explain why successive governments have not reworked the law on collective worship in non-denominational state schools? What do respondents say is the future of collective worship?

Methodology

Methods were chosen that would best help to answer the research questions and enable the study to get to the heart of teacher realities. In this way, Woods' ideal of amalgamating the production of knowledge and the demonstration of its applicability to educational practice could happen (Woods 1991:2). Kincheloe (2003:Ch.1) advocates that teacher research is a means by which teachers can resist the current trend towards the domination of curriculum and pedagogy by 'technical standards' based on 'expert research' and imposed in a 'top-down' manner by educational administrators and policy makers. Ethnography, Woods argues, is particularly well suited to helping to close the gulf between researcher and teacher, by attempting to uncover their beliefs, values, perspectives, motivations and how these things develop or change over time or from situation to situation (Woods 1991:4). So, in Woods' terminology, this research seeks to investigate collective worship with all its various layers of social meaning and in its full richness (Woods 1991:5). Cheetham says that quantitative data would be unable to capture the complexities and nuances of teachers' views in relation to collective worship, (2000:65).

What follows should be contextualised within this overriding desire to produce both knowledge and demonstrate this study's relevance to educational practice. Hitchcock and Hughes (1995:21) suggest that logically ontological assumptions give rise to epistemological assumptions; these in turn, give rise to methodological considerations; and these to issues of instrumentation and data collection. How we view the world, what we take understanding to be and what we see as the purposes of understanding will influence the choice of research methods. Burrell and Morgan (1975:43) identified three sets of assumptions underlying different ways of viewing social reality.

First, there are the assumptions of an ontological kind about whether social reality is outside of people's consciousness or a product of individual consciousness. Philosophically this is known as the nominalist – realist debate. The former suggesting that objects of thought are merely words and that there is no independently accessible thing constituting the meaning of a word. In contrast, the realist position contends that objects have an independent existence and are not dependent for it on the knower.

Burrell and Morgan's second set of assumptions are related to epistemology. These concern the very bases of knowledge. The uncovering of knowledge about social behaviour will be profoundly influenced by the epistemological view held by the researcher. On the one hand is the view that knowledge is hard, objective and tangible which will require observation and other methods favoured by the natural sciences and some social scientists. Conversely, to see knowledge as personal, subjective and unique requires of researchers an involvement with their subjects and a rejection of the superiority of the ways of the natural

scientist. The two positions outlined are positivist (objectivist) and the latter, anti-positivist (subjectivist).

The third set of assumptions is about human nature and in particular the relationship between human beings and their environment. One view sees human beings as responding deterministically to their environment: products of it and controlled by it. The other sees humans as initiators of their own actions with free will and creativity, producing their own environment. The difference is between *determinism* and *voluntarism* respectively. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2008:15) state that the position of the subjectivists will mean their principal concern is for understanding ' ..... the way in which the individual creates, modifies and interprets the world in which he or she finds himself or herself. The approach now takes on a qualitative as well as quantitative aspect'. Kirk and Miller (1986:14) say that the emphasis is on the explanation and understanding of unique and particular individual cases rather than the general and the universal. Characterised by its emphasis on the particular and individual this approach to understanding individual behaviour is called idiographic.

Cohen et al (2008:17) cite Nesfield-Cookson's (1987) criticisms of the positivist position of defining life in measurable terms rather than inner experience, thereby excluding notions of choice, freedom, individuality and moral responsibility which indicate that the universe is a living organism rather than a machine such as the positivists describe. Habermas (1972:20) provides a corrosive critique of positivism arguing that the scientific mentality has reduced all knowledge to that of scientific knowledge. This neglects

hermeneutic, aesthetic, critical, moral, creative and other forms of knowledge. It reduces behaviour to 'technicism'. Clearly, the sphere of collective worship draws in the spiritual, ethical and personable dimensions that would be inconsistent with 'technicism' and needs the interpretation and personal insights that qualitative research permits. These dimensions lie outside of the experienced physical world and so as Yates (2004:25) says they are 'metaphysical' and therefore to a positivist, bad scientific knowledge and lacking validity.

In attempting to understand the functions of collective worship in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, this research has focussed on what people were saying about the importance of the practice and why. Parliamentary debates are recorded so there were accessible secondary documents that could be utilised at government level. However, to ascertain the functions today and 'in practice' on the ground, as opposed to politicians' views, it was obviously necessary to get information from teachers. The future of collective worship could only be expressed personally and rationally by the individual ideology of respondents and as such it was essential that a free and open means of expression was chosen as a research tool. This is how a semi-structured questionnaire with largely closed, but a few open-ended questions came into being. Yates asserts that, "those working with qualitative data believe that it provides a richer and more valid basis for social research than simply dealing with numbers and measures," (Yates 2004:139). Synthesising Yates' view of the aims of qualitative research (Yates 2004:138) with this study of collective worship it is necessary for this study to achieve an in-depth understanding and detailed description of teacher experiences of collective worship. Secondly, to explore how the teachers involved and members of the Christian Church give meaning to this educational phenomenon;

expressing their understanding of it. Thirdly, to explore the complexity, ambiguity and specific detailed processes taking place in collective worship.

The Questionnaire Surveys

Questionnaires were used to get a broad feel of the thinking of key groups of people about collective worship before the greater depth of the two case study schools. Four different questionnaire surveys were used, with three different samples. One questionnaire was sent to leaders of collective worship in schools that agreed to make returns, whilst a second different questionnaire was enclosed for the Heads of Religious Studies. Two separate questionnaires were advertised to Christians within a national protestant denominational journal, so that, if interested, they could respond. One was aimed at Christian teachers (past and present) and the other at Christians in general. Clearly the research needed to ascertain an understanding of collective worship practices in schools and the thinking of teachers involved in leading it. Also, the views of Christians were important as the current legislation speaks of this educational slot being 'broadly Christian' (Leonard 1988:23). It was important to know whether Christians wanted 'protection' from change to the legislation, which might be less favourable to Christianity and to what degree, if any, they felt that the current legislation did not reflect twenty first century society.

Pre-pilot and Pilot Studies of questionnaires

A pre-pilot study of the teacher questionnaires for the leaders of collective worship and the Head of Religious Studies was conducted, but as this took place in a private boys' school it has not been included in the results. It revealed some interesting outcomes suggesting changes that should be made to the questionnaire. As a result of the pre-pilot, twenty three questions over three pages became just ten questions arranged under discrete headings, with some additional ones about teachers' faith stance and experience in education. A separate one page survey was then devised that asked more about the organisation of assemblies within the school and this could be completed by any member of staff, just once, rather than respondents from the same organisation having to waste time repeating the same information.   I weighed this saving of time as more beneficial than my ability to check that a valid description of collective worship practice was being described. Also the question relating to what would change if the legislation were altered was added as an extension of the question on the best purposes of collective worship.

A pilot study was then conducted with these modifications in place. As this was conducted within the state system, the results of the pilot are included in the questionnaire outcomes. A pilot study of the two questionnaires for Christians was also conducted with a church congregation, from the same denomination as produced the national journal, the latter vehicle giving a national opportunity for Christians to respond to the survey. (See appendices 1 – 3, 5, 6 for copies of the questionnaires mentioned here.)

The semi-structured questionnaire used for interviews at the case study schools was also piloted at the private school, with very fruitful results so that both this and the questionnaire for the heads of RE remained unmodified.

The school survey

As already alluded to, there is little specific literature in existence that focuses solely on collective worship, though there are plenty of manuals, including web sites that provide material for teachers to use in assemblies. Therefore, there was no detailed secondary material as such that the researcher could call upon regarding teacher views on the issue. The most efficient method of getting a picture of practice and teacher inclination towards collective worship was to devise a questionnaire that could be posted out to schools willing to participate in the study, for self-completion by the participants themselves. The sample from within each school had to be those who led collective worship; for the purposes of this study only the views of these practitioners were seen as relevant.   Such key staff are typically the Year Heads, often known as Heads of Standards, the senior leadership team, which includes the Head and in one school I came across, the chaplain.   Of course, there would be many opinions held by a range of staff in schools on assemblies, but only those with a responsibility to deliver regularly were seen as a valid sample, likely to have the necessary, knowledge, skills and experience to contribute to this research. (Other teacher views would have been purely theoretical, if they had not delivered assemblies themselves.) The reality was that I obtained returns from 20 Heads of Year; 10 Assistant Head Teachers; 4 Deputy Head Teachers; 1 Head Teacher and 1 responded omitted this question. On account

of the lack of head teacher and deputy head teacher responses these staff were, therefore, specifically targeted for interview at the case study schools.

I targeted geographically diverse areas of the country. Cohen et al (2007:218) cite this access to a widely scattered population as an advantage of postal questionnaires. I was hoping for a good spread of school participation: the North West, North East, South West, South East, Birmingham in the Midlands and the London area. For each area, I looked up the league tables and contacted the school with the highest percentage of pupils achieving five A* - C GCSE results and also the lowest percentage within non-denominational, mixed, state secondary schools.

I faxed a message to the Head Teachers of each of the twelve schools, asking simply for permission to post them my questionnaires for key collective worship staff to complete. The ones I received a reply from were the ones with whom I then worked. Yates (2004:3) suggests that a researcher needs to work out which cases can be practically accessed. So my research framework of six local authorities and two schools from within each was 'practically' reduced to four willing schools from four different authorities on account of the other schools' unwillingness to give time to the questionnaires. At least by ascertaining willingness before posting out the batches of questionnaires – enough for a Head Teacher, a senior leadership team of five and five year heads, plus a singular 'open ended' questionnaire for the Heads of Religious Studies, the excessive wasting of financial resources was avoided. I saw the Head of Religious Studies as an important person in the school regarding collective worship as they deal in 'the spiritual' all the time, therefore their

understanding of what a quality act of collective worship might look like is likely to be more enhanced than most staff

Walker (1985:40) considers the questionnaire to be a formalised and stylized interview, or interview by proxy. The form is the same as it would be in a face to face (structured) interview, but in order to remove the interviewer the subject is presented with what, essentially, is a structured transcript with the responses missing. The questionnaire he suggests is like interviewing by numbers and like painting by numbers it suffers some of the problems of mass production and a lack of interpretive opportunity. Its advantages lie in its ability to offer an even stimulus, to potentially large numbers of people simultaneously, providing the researcher with a relatively easy accumulation of data.

Although postal questionnaires are often favoured because they are 'low cost' (Cohen et al, 2007: 218), in this instance it was a relatively expensive method, even when it had been scaled down, in that in order to ethically give people confidence in their anonymity of reply, I paper clipped a stamped addressed envelope to each questionnaire. Then, when the returns dried up, I sent out a set of reminders to the school, generally being able to point to where the gaps existed, for example, no deputy head has replied or only four year heads and so on; again enclosing individual stamped addressed envelopes in case the previous ones had been mislaid. I did get some further material from this reminder mail shot, but never reached 100% for any school.

Clearly if you are personally able to take someone through a questionnaire it is relatively effortless for respondents and this might be thought to be ideal. However, this would have been practically impossible for the researcher on account of having to travel to the different geographical locations, meaning in turn, time off work, which as a teacher, would, most likely, not have been granted. The travel and accommodation costs would have added to the expense, but the main obstacle was being a practitioner researcher.

To have used the interview method with all the leaders of collective worship could also have been more intrusive and potentially disruptive for the schools – at least with a postal questionnaire, staff could choose a time convenient to themselves to complete it, rather than be under pressure to conform to the researcher's timings. Cohen et al (2007:218) also point to the advantages not only of standardised wording being used on a questionnaire and so a useful degree of comparability across the responses, but as no interviewer is present, there is no risk of interviewer bias.

Face to face interviews mean that clarification can be given and misunderstandings recognised. One respondent in the fourth school obviously misread a question and so the response was invalid, in face to face interviewing this would not have happened. On the other hand, completing a questionnaire at your own convenience means that you can privately reflect on what is being asked and take time to consider how you think about an issue, whereas when put on the spot by an interviewer, there is perhaps a pressure to come up with an answer – and maybe in the case of teachers, one that sounds intelligent! Cohen et al concur with this advantage of postal surveys (2007: 218). Bailey (1994:149) suggests

that the very issues that make postal questionnaires attractive might also render them less

appealing,

"..for example:

- the standardisation of wording

- the inability to catch anything other than a verbal response

- the lack of control over the environment in which the survey questionnaire is

  completed

- the lack of control over the order in which the questions are read and answered

- the risk that some questions will not be answered (this did happen)

- the inability to record spontaneous answers (additional comments were sought)

- the difficulty in separating non-response from bad response (the former being where

  intended respondents receive the survey but do not reply to it, and the latter being

  where intended recipients do not receive the survey, e.g. because they have moved

  house)

- the need for simplicity in format as there is no interviewer present to guide the

  respondent through a more complex format," (Bailey 1994:149).

Woods (1991:9) acknowledges that there are 'rituals' (of which collective worship is

clearly one) – external forces,

'Operating on schools and the people within them; but within the press of these forces,
individuals possess an element of volition, and this permits us to take both an optimistic and
a realistic stance. It (interactionism) recognises the difficulties confronting teachers, but

holds out the prospect of the self negotiating passages through them, though they may be tortuous. Thus it recognises that teachers have their own self interests and ways of achieving them.'

The survey reveals something of this in this study; ways in which individual teachers negotiate their way through the imposed legality of collective worship.

The survey to Christians

In order to ascertain a Christian perspective on the issue of collective worship, two questionnaires were sent out with a national journal from a mainstream protestant denomination. One was for interested parties to complete if they were teachers and the other was for non-teachers. A total of twenty nine returns were received: fourteen from Christian teachers and fifteen from Christians with no teaching connection.   A pilot study of both of the questionnaires had been conducted in a church of the same denomination as that of the national journal. It did not throw up any problems, so no modifications were needed and the results were added to the main survey findings.

The case studies

Johnson says that as the name implies, a case study focuses on the individual as a separate entity (1977:319). He suggests that a researcher might conduct several case studies, and detailed information may be developed, that could not be obtained from other methods. The researcher may feel it is preferable to learn a lot about one or two instances rather than a little about a lot. Sturman in Keeves and Lakomski (1999:103) suggests that to

understand a case, to explain why things happen as they do, and to generalize or predict

from a single example requires an in-depth investigation of the interdependence of parts

and of the patterns that emerge.

Figure 2.
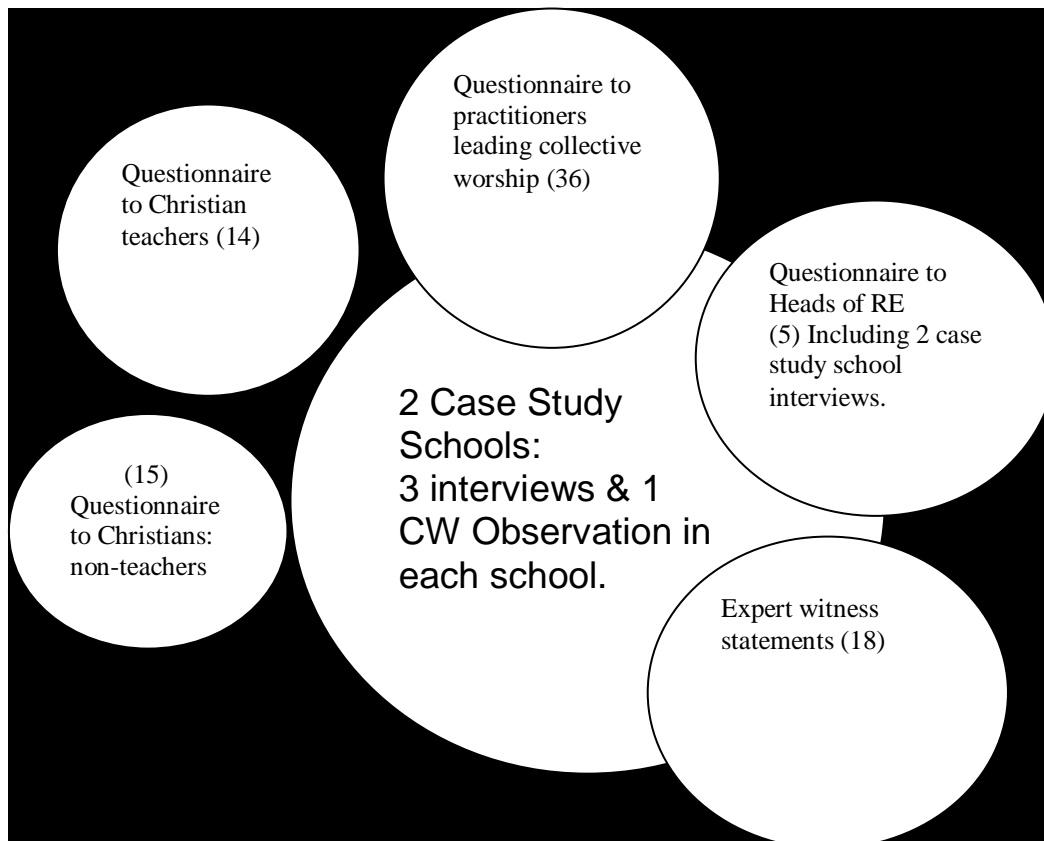
A Venn diagram to show the relationship between the case study schools and the other strands of primary research.

It was hoped that the two case study schools drawn from the North and South of

England would in Sturman's terms (Keeves and Lakomski 1999:103) help to 'explain',

'understand' and 'describe' how collective worship operates in schools and how teachers

manage this role. Miles and Hoberman (1994:27) suggest that in some circumstances the

term 'site' (as opposed to particular cases), might be preferable, '..because it reminds us that

a 'case' always occurs in a specified social and physical setting: we cannot study individual

cases devoid of their context in a way that a quantitative researcher often does'. The two site studies of this research were in different parts of the country but figure 4 in chapter 6 shows how a similar framework was used to analyse the 'context' of each school. The common ground was in the government legislation and their individual SACREs but otherwise their characteristics were peculiar to their history and environment. Saloman (1991) quoted in Keeves and Lakomski (1999:103) apparently distinguishes the analytical and systemic approaches to educational research. For the purposes of this work, the analytical approach was what was intended, where the discrete elements of complex educational phenomena could be isolated for study leaving all else unchanged and this is what was achieved, isolating collective worship for scrutiny within the complex whole of the school, leaving the latter unchanged.

The case studies were indeed an attempt to add Sturman's in-depth investigation (1999:103) to the broader overview achieved by the postal returns from the leaders of collective worship and the heads of religious education. Walker describes these as the large numbers of people simultaneously, providing the researcher with a relatively easy accumulation of data. Triangulation was also achieved through the further addition of the participant observation reflective journal, with the inherent advantages of approaching an issue, in this instance, collective worship, from several angles in the hope that the resulting picture is clearer.

Valsiner (1986:11) claims that 'the study of individual cases has always been the major (albeit often unrecognised) strategy in the advancement of knowledge about human

beings'. In a similar vein, Bromley (1986) maintains that 'the individual case study or situation analysis is the bed rock of scientific investigation' (1986:ix). But he also notes in an unattributed quotation, the common view that 'science is not concerned with the individual case' (Bromley, 1986:xi). These widely divergent claims betray what Robson calls, '..a deep-rooted uncertainty about the place and value of studying cases' (Robson, 2004:179). He also suggests that it has sometimes been seen as a soft-option method of enquiry and of dubious value by itself (Robson, 2004:179). So, crucially, this study has used a triangulation of methods. Yin (1981:1994) says that,

"Case study is a strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence."

As this research has used observation, interviews, questionnaires, propositions and an analysis of wider administrative material to compile the two case study schools they could be seen as conforming to Yin's 'multiple sources of evidence'.

Cook and Campbell (1979:33) say that case study is 'not a flawed experimental design; it is a fundamentally different research strategy with its own designs.' On account of the importance attached to the use of case studies in this present research a whole chapter (chapter 6) is dedicated to the reporting of their findings.

Cohen et al cite a number of advantages of the use of case study. They say they are 'strong in reality ', 'down to earth and attention-holding' (Cohen et al 2007:256). They consider them 'a step to action. They begin in a world of action and contribute to it' (Cohen et al 2007:256). Case studies they say, present research evaluation data in a more publicly accessible form than other kinds of research report and are capable of serving multiple audiences. They catch unique features that may otherwise be lost in larger scale data such as surveys and these unique features might hold the key to understanding the situation and on the practical side can be undertaken by a single researcher without needing a full research team (Cohen et al 2007:256).

Cohen et al (2007) also refer to possible disadvantages of case studies, suggesting that they can be selective, biased, personal and subjective, as they can't be cross-checked. They can also be open to problems of observer bias and the results may not be that which can be generalized (Cohen et al 2007:256). Walker (1985:58) regards a case study as a combination of '.. any methods of acquiring information that are available to the teacher, i.e. the research methods and equipment outlined above' - Interviews, standard assessment tests, audio-visual work, observations and questionnaires. In this case study, the only method not to be used listed by Walker is audio-visual work.

The case studies for this research were selected on account of their interesting responses at survey level. I therefore contacted the Heads of the two schools to see if they would agree to becoming case studies. The primary research took place in the autumn and spring terms of the academic year, 2009/10 in West Sussex and Tameside in Greater

Manchester. This was the preferred time for the schools involved as school life is too 'loose'

in their words in the summer term. This meant that interviews could take place with key

people in the school, not least the Head Teacher and also observational work of assemblies.

Having two case study schools, one based in the north and the other in the south

meant that two quite different settings could be explored in greater depth than the

background created by the postal survey to five different schools, including the two for case

study purposes.

The observational / self-evaluation tool *(Appendix 7.)*

This tool was used to observe collective worship in the case study schools and it is

thought that teachers could find it useful in their record keeping, helping them to balance

the nature of the topics covered over periods of time, in this way reflecting on the kinds of

experiences and educational input to which the pupils are being exposed. The difficulty with

observing collective worship is that only one takes place each day for around fifteen

minutes. Unlike inspectors who can go into a school and spend two days looking at a range

of lessons and year groups, it is practically impossible for a serving teacher to do this, except

in their own school, or in schools in close proximity. Therefore, regrettably, only one

assembly was observed in the South East of England on the one day of the visit and the same

in the North West of England.   The observational / self-evaluation tool enabled me to record

the nature of the assembly, its religious and non-religious content, citizenship content, etc. I

was interested in the style used, as broken down in question number eight of the

questionnaire regarding the use of holy books and prayers. The overt responses of the

pupils were also of interest to me. I noted whether they appeared to be engaged or

alienated by proceedings. Was there any opportunity for audience participation? Was

humour used by the leader of collective worship?

The interview aspect of the case studies

A key notion for the researcher in relation to the twenty first century and collective

worship is the idea of a 'marketplace of values'. This expression was considered to be too

open to misinterpretation for it to be included in the questionnaire. By this being a question

on a semi-structured interview it would allow for discussion and mutual understanding of

the term to be established by interviewer and interviewee before proceeding to personal

opinions about its value. Generally, not many Deputy Head teachers had made

questionnaire returns, although I had requested them to do so. This could be because of

workload or a fear of saying something politically incorrect when they are close working

colleagues of the Head Teacher. On account of their voice being missing from the study,

they were an obvious sample to pick up for interview at the two case study schools. The

interview was designed to elicit deeper responses about collective worship than were

possible from the questionnaire.

The pilot study tested a semi-structured model for interviews: five open-ended

questions that the Head Teacher and Deputies answered. One question specifically asked

for their view of collective worship as a 'market-place of values' and to what extent such a

definition was a helpful twenty first century definition.   I chose not to use a tape recorder, but instead made copious notes. In previous research I had felt that some respondents were nervous about the 'evidence' of their views being recorded and potential consequences of views critical of employers or the establishment. Bailey (1994:174) says that an advantage to interviews is that questioners can probe and explain things more fully. This method was used for the head teachers in each school, one deputy head in both schools and the heads of religious education answered the questionnaire that had been included in the postal package to the schools.

The (longitudinal) participant observation reflective journal

As a practitioner researcher I did not want to have to negate my own experiences of collective worship. My experiences would complement the survey and case studies – it has been my observations of collective worship over many years that have led to my motivation to research in this field. This is a form of reflective diary, documenting my own thinking and understanding from times when I was a teacher observer of collective worship (1982 – 1988), not required to lead it and then throughout the years (1988 – 2011) when it was a responsibility of mine. Woods argues that there are certain parallels between ethnography and teaching making them eminently suitable co-enterprises (1991:6). Both, he says, are concerned to 'tell a story', to research, prepare their ground, analyze and organise and present their work in the form of a commentary on some aspects of human life.

Woods also argues that teachers themselves have considerable experience as participant observers and as interviewers on this kind of basis:

'A little knowledge of the possibilities and limitations, the checks and balances, in other words the *science* of the enterprise, together with some spare time and a reflective disposition to achieve, on occasions, some social distance from the teacher role, would enable many teachers to engage in fruitful ethnographic work" (Woods, 1991:7).

Kincheloe sees teachers as researchers challenging the 'oppressive culture created by positivistic standards' (2003:18) and observes that teachers do not live in the same professional culture as researchers' and that the knowledge base informing educational directions and emphases is 'still...produced far away from the school by experts in a rarefied domain' (Kincheloe 2003:18). This he says must change if democratic reform of education is to take place... and a new level of educational rigour and quality is ever to be achieved. Kincheloe argues that,

> ".. joining researcher culture teachers will:
>
> - begin to understand the power implications of technical standards;
>
> - appreciate the benefits of research, particularly in relation to understanding the forces shaping education that fall outside (teachers') immediate experience and perception;
>
> - begin to understand in deeper and richer ways what they know from experience;
>
> - become more aware of how they can contribute to educational research;

- be seen as 'learners' rather than 'functionaries who follow top-down orders without question';

- be seen as knowledge workers who reflect on their professional needs and current understandings;

- become more aware of how complex the schooling process is and how it cannot be understood apart from the 'social, historical, philosophical, cultural, economic, political, and psychological contexts that shape it;

- research their own professional practice;

- explore the learning processes occurring in their classrooms (and for this research: collective worship) and attempt to interpret them;

- analyse and contemplate the power of each other's ideas;

- constitute a new critical culture of school in the manner of a 'think tank' that teaches students;

- reverse the trend towards the deskilling of teachers and stupidification of students,"

(Kincheloe 2003:18-19; see also Norris 1998; Kraft 2001; Bereiter 2002).

Such arguments can be seen as supportive of the teacher researcher drawing on their experiences of education, schools, teachers, pupils and working within the external constraints that are imposed on schools and their population. Berthoff (1997) emphasises an approach to research (what she calls research as *re-search*) in which teachers draw on their *already-existing* and rich funds of teaching experience and write these into *knowledge.* From this perspective, research as a way of knowing is about transforming classroom

experience (and that of collective worship) into knowledge by subjecting one's experience-as-data to the kinds of disciplined reflection and analysis involved in serious composition (see also Fishman and McCarthy 2000: Ch.1). Lankshear and Knobel (2004:13) say that this is writing based research that does not simply tell a story, but actually creates new knowledge by transforming what was previously something like 'unprocessed experience' into meaningful or 'sense-ful' experience. This is done, they say, by sifting, organising, rearranging, analysing and interpreting, prior experience through the practice of reflective, serious *writing* that composes knowledge by putting pieces of experience together in ways that add up to a coherent representation of what has happened. Such composition does not superficially tell a story or simply put on paper some ideas about what one has 'been through', but is likened by Lankshear and Knobel to the serious musician writing the notation on a manuscript paying careful analytic attention to conventions, genres, conceits, inter-textual materials, form, musical theory, etc. In this way it can be seen that the present researcher considers personal experience of collective worship to be valid and powerful, making a unique contribution to the overall nature of this study. These have been committed to writing in 'journal' fashion: such reflection lying at the heart of the motivation to give due research consideration to the issue of collective worship.

Unlike classic participant observers such as James Patrick, I did not penetrate a situation to which I did not belong, but considered critically the working environments into which I was professionally submerged. I similarly used this method as part of my research into the use of informal corporal punishment in comprehensive schools (Inglis:1994).

Walker (1985:86) claims the decision to adopt a participant observer role is a political one, '... for it relates to a decision to report sideways and downwards rather than upwards'. Barry MacDonald , in his typology of evaluation models (1974), terms this a 'democratic' model.

The expert witness propositions

Towards the end of this study key ideas were emerging and were then tested by the construction of eighteen propositions (appendix 8) with which people could acknowledge their agreement or disagreement. A list of these expert witnesses can be found in appendix 9, but in summary they range from the Coordinator of the Accord Coalition which includes religious groups, humanists, trade unions and human rights campaigners sharing a common view that state-funded schools should be free from discrimination on grounds of religion or belief, through to the Director of Education for the Diocese of London in the Anglican Church. On one level this tool could be seen as simplistic and one respondent intimated this, but rather like a political referendum where a much debated issue is reduced to a yes / no response in order to indicate a way forward for the nation, so this true / false choice aimed not to allow for shades of grey. All the respondents were individuals who had expertise of one kind or another educationally or spiritually and I felt it added value to this research to have a contribution from these people some of whom have written in the past about collective worship: the respondents were people who had been embraced in some way by this study. A number of people did not respond to the request to participate but 18 chose to do so and thereby added a useful dimension to this work on collective worship.

The limitations of this study

This study is specifically related to non-denominational mixed state secondary schools. The private sector, denominational schools, single sex schools special schools and primary schools were not within the scope of this research and each would make interesting studies in their own right. There would no doubt be some contrasts and some similarities, but this study has not sought to offer comparisons. The scale of this research is numerically and geographically limited and has aimed for qualitative rather than quantitative outcomes. Another aspect that has not been integrated into this work is a pupil perspective. Further investigation into the impact of collective worship on pupils, as they understand it themselves, would be extremely valuable.

Practical and ethical issues

A practical issue was gaining the consent of the Head Teacher to initiate survey research in the school. Once this had been achieved and members of staff were given the lead by their Head, then teachers were fairly conscientious about sending their replies. I attached a stamped, self-addressed envelope, to each questionnaire so that the minimum of effort was required by the staff and their anonymity of reply was guaranteed. I had faxed 12 schools throughout the country and the five that comprise the survey were the ones where the Head gave permission for the research to go ahead. As I have no knowledge of the staff, there were few ethical issues, although one respondent from the North West identified himself by his name and e mail address and invited further dialogue on collective worship

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and his declared atheistic position. As yet, I have not followed this through, but clearly a

willing interviewee was uncovered in this school.

I did consider it an ethical issue to send the results of the research to each

respondent who indicated that they wished to receive them. Alongside the results for each

particular school, I put the outcomes for all 36 respondents from the five schools so that the

findings of individual schools could be seen in a wider context. I also sent hard copies

duplicated for each respondent who had had indicated that they wanted one, in the post so

that no extra work was created for administrators in downloading an e mail, duplicating it

and then distributing it to the relevant staff. I did not want to put more pressure on schools

that had been generous enough to help me.

The Reliability and Validity of the research findings

Robson quotes Guba and Lincoln (1989) as being users of qualitative flexible design

research and as examples of those who deny the relevance of canons of scientific enquiry,

citing Wolcott (1994) as going even further, rejecting the notion of any evaluative criteria

such as reliability and validity. Robson says that from the extreme relativist stance, it is

maintained that using such a position privileges some approaches inappropriately (Robson

2004:168).   Robson says that Altheide and Johnson (1994) argue that criteria such as

elegance, coherence and consistency, used in the humanities such as literature and history,

provide more appropriate standards for qualitative studies (Robson 2004:168).

Morse (1999) in a journal editorial entitled 'Myth #93: reliability and validity are not relevant to qualitative enquiry', says forcefully that:

" To state that reliability and validity are not pertinent to qualitative inquiry places qualitative research in the realm of being not reliable and not valid. Science is concerned with rigour, and by definition good rigorous research must be reliable and valid. If qualitative research is unreliable and invalid then it must not be science. If it is not science, then why should it be funded, published, implemented, or taken seriously?" (Morse, 1999:717).

This view denies any value to non-scientific research, but Robson sees the problem as the way in which the terms reliability and validity have been operationally rigid in fixed design quantitative research. Therefore, Robson's answer is to find alternative ways of operationalising these key terms for the conditions and circumstances of flexible qualitative enquiry.

Kirk and Miller (1986) argue that qualitative research can be performed as social science and can be evaluated in terms of objectivity. In their view the problem of validity is handled by field research and the problem of reliability by documented ethnographic decision making (1986:73). They reduce the phases of qualitative research in the field to 'finding', 'working', 'reading' and 'leaving' the field (Kirk and Miller 1986:62). Earlier these phases are described as invention, discovery, interpretation and explanation (1986:60) and used to indicate that qualitative research like other science is a four-phased affair.

So this study claims validity by its evidence of 'field' work; that is the use of case studies, central to this study. Then, regarding reliability the current research reveals the

various stages of ethnographic decision making. As Maanen, the series editor and his

associate editors, Manning and Miller, make clear in their introduction to the Qualitative

Research Methods Series of books, qualitative research is '... where meanings rather than

frequencies assume paramount significance' (Kirk and Miller 1986:5).

I would suggest that this study is qualitatively valid because I have actually

researched what I set out to do, by cross-checking, using a triangulation of different

methods. It is reliable in a qualitative manner because I have described the methods and

research contexts in some detail, so that others can judge for themselves whether this study

has meaning and makes sense to them.

CHAPTER 5. THE PRIMARY DATA 1: SURVEYS AND THE PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION REFLECTIVE DIARY

"To be quiet and still, somewhere, each day, as a discipline, purges the mind. Call it prayer or meditation if you wish. Beauty in all its forms, great music, fine buildings, these all uplift the soul, and can't be bad" (Charles Handy 1997:85).

Introduction:

The primary research chapters begin with the longitudinal 'reflective' analysis, particularly important as it was so instrumental in my motivation to give time to researching this aspect of secondary school life in the state sector. This study is the culmination of many years of watching, listening to and doing collective worship.

Four different surveys were used in this research, with four different samples. One questionnaire was sent to leaders of collective worship in schools that agreed to make returns, five schools in all – one in the South East of England (8 returns), three in the North West of England (21 returns) and one in the North East (7 returns) giving a total of 36 returns.   A second different questionnaire was enclosed for the Heads of Religious Education at these five schools. In the two case study schools these questions were also used as the basis for interviews with these professionals.

Two different questionnaires were advertised to Christians within a national protestant denominational journal, so that, if interested, they could respond. One was

aimed at Christian teachers past and present (14 responses) and the other at Christians in general (15 responses).

Finally, a series of propositions, (in preference to a questionnaire as such) reflecting some key ideas relating to this research on collective worship, were presented to people considered to be of 'expert witness' standing, in order to ascertain if there were any consensus on these matters. A list of these expert witnesses can be found in appendix 9.

The analysis of the two case study schools comprises a separate chapter of the study but this current chapter acts as a backdrop or broader picture for the case study schools. The Venn diagram (figure 3) illustrates the points at which these areas of primary investigation overlap with the case studies and when they function entirely independently. After the reflective analysis, the information from the 36 practitioners who lead collective worship is presented followed by the critiques from the five Heads of Religious Education; a 'Christian' angle on collective worship is conveyed through the media of the two questionnaires sent out to teachers and non-teachers to complete and then finally, the consensus, or otherwise, from the 'expert witnesses' regarding a series of propositions on collective worship.

THE LONGITUDINAL PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION REFLECTIVE DIARY

Richard Cheetham (2001) in his grounded theory approach to the study of collective worship notes that he observed fifty nine acts of worship. During the course of my teaching

career, my times in secondary schools have led me to be a teacher observer in around 2808 assemblies and a leader of over approximately 170 of these. Cheetham's experiences of collective worship were overt observations where his presence may well have changed dynamics. In contrast I was an 'insider' observing the spontaneity and un-self-conscious behaviour of colleagues. I currently lead an assembly twice a half term. It would surely be naive to ignore my experiences and negate this cumulative wisdom - I want to capitalise on what I have learned from these experiences and bring them by way of a reflective diary to form part of this qualitative research.

Although my study focuses on non-denominational mixed secondary state schools, in this instance, I have included examples from collective worship in the private and special educational sectors. This 'Participant Observation' has taken place over thirty years in four schools described here as schools A,B,C, and D. School A is a mixed comprehensive of 850 pupils in a North West town, a largely white population of predominantly working class pupils, 33% of pupils achieve 5 A* - C GCSE grades and I taught there between 1981 and 1995; school B is a boys' private school in a North West mill town highly populated by ethnic minority groups – the school had an intake of 33% Hindu and Muslim pupils of the 500 on roll 99% of pupils achieve 5 A* - C GCSE grades and I taught there between 2003 and 2007; school C is one in the inner city in the North West, there are 1500 pupils on roll its pupils achieve higher than the national average of five A* - C GCSE grades, the catchment area is mixed with a large number of white middle class pupils and a minority of white 'gangland' males I taught there between 1998 and 1999; school D (formerly designated a pupil referral unit) has no more than 30 male and female pupils at any one time with no more than 6 in a

teaching group. All pupils have a medical difficulty of some kind ranging from depression to being on the autistic spectrum and some will only be short stay on account of short term injuries or difficulties that will heal – all pupils are entered for examinations in Year 11 and I taught there between 2009 and 2011.

1.1.   Collective Worship Dysfunctions

As a young and inexperienced teacher it was not my remit to deliver collective worship, but I was aware in school A that some year heads conducting them were delivering messages that I couldn't see as beneficial to the pupils. One year head, for example, spoke of waiting for a taxi after an evening out and being part of a large queue. When the taxi arrived it turned out to be someone he used to teach and so he was invited by the driver to queue jump, which he did. The moral of his tale which he overtly stated was: "It's not what you know it's who you know that matters." I did not consider that the tale was worth telling or its point morally valid. As no member of the senior staff was ever present at the assemblies and form tutors could decide for themselves, as directed by the year head, whether or not they attended, there was no real check on what was being said and it was assumed that pupils would gain inherent benefit from this time. As a teacher interested in the messages that were being communicated to the pupils, I made a point of attending assemblies and supported my form in taking a year assembly as a group. Listening to trivia could well be alienating for pupils, if not staff.

On another occasion at this time, in school A, a year head did an assembly on the new extension to her house that she and her husband were planning. Tradesmen had come to give her quotes for the proposed work; one was clean and professional looking and the other dirty with particularly filthy fingernails. She asked the pupils the rhetorical question of who they thought got the job. Her point was that the one who was turned out well and made a good impression was the one who got the work. I remember thinking at the time that I would have liked to have done an oppositional assembly about impressions and how they do not always tell the correct story. To me, anecdotes such as this one the teacher told were quite simply time-fillers and nothing more; indeed they could actually be counter productive passing off unsound messages as being valid. The old adage of not judging a book by its cover sprang to mind regarding this particular assembly.

Stephens (1998:79) points out that,

"Historians of the left have tended to regard compulsory education in state-controlled schools as an intensification of the use of schooling as a tool of social control. .... it sought to entice children away from the working class private schools."

Similarly, I have been aware of collective worship being used as a tool of social control. It was around 1985 when I saw, in school A, one of the worst uses ever of an assembly – that of a timetable filler. It was a whole-school Christmas assembly, but instead of happening first thing in the day, as was the routine practice then, it was scheduled to take place last thing, so that pupils went home early for Christmas from that assembly. This was an overt and well discussed strategy to take the potential discipline problems out of over-excited classrooms and distract pupils with something 'seasonal'. Various musical items had been

planned, with readings and so on. However, a number of the male pupils started the Christmas spirit prematurely and began to stamp their feet and whistle as females sang and played instruments. The Head Teacher and management team were alarmed as they realised they were in danger of losing control of this event. It was resolved that never again would the whole school be brought together like that and never again at the end of a term – especially not, the celebratory Christmas one. I had thought from the start that this assembly was being used as an 'occupying' time rather than being given a slot that it deserved in its own right. From then on, the decision was taken that only years 7, 9 and 11 would be combined for assembly purposes and 8 and 10. There was to be no repetition of this near anarchy and the public disempowerment of staff by pupils.

My own experience of leading assemblies tells me that this rationale for school assembly is unsound. As the mass media of the school it can be the power-house of emotional literacy. It is where the members of the collective of the school can laugh and cry together, applaud, be inspired and a whole lot more. None of which should be feared by staff – these are simply human emotions and in this environment, shared, so adding to the life and ethos of the school. Spontaneous behaviour on the part of pupils, such as applauding, allows a freedom of expression that should surely be an acknowledged part of the democratic environment of the school. Handy and Aitken (1984:24) speak of how squeezing choice from roles (presumably even that of a pupil) squeezes out individuality and the room for growth and learning. I consider that inappropriateness should be dealt with there and then with an accompanying explanation as to why it is so. Handy (2002:183) calls this negative capability - learning from having got it wrong.

An example of the latter occurred during an awards ceremony at school B. Some Year 7 boys had organised their own event, asking teachers to nominate pupils for certificates and prizes in Years 7 and 8. Happening at lunchtime it was not heavy on staff presence, but the Year Head was there supporting the pupils. When some boys began to 'boo', as less popular boys were called to receive an award, a colleague (and significantly not the Year Head) immediately stood up and said that this was not fair behaviour and only clapping in support of pupils was permissible not 'boo-ing'. This was an enormous help to the atmosphere of the event for this small group of boys who had staged the ceremony entirely themselves. Pupils are likely to enjoy being given the respect of acknowledging with them that which is acceptable and unacceptable and why - the positives, negatives and logistics of the workings of this microcosm of society, their school. As Handy and Aitken would say (1994:17) pupils are 'adults with L plates' and so they need to learn what is considered acceptable and otherwise in given situations – not just because they are told it is so, but because they are offered a rationale. This concurs with Bernstein's socio-linguistic work which pointed to the contrast of universalistic and particularistic understandings, where universalistic understandings giving explanations of cause and consequence open up the world to children as opposed to keeping it ignorantly closed (Bernstein, 1958:162).

In 2005, the situation of teacher insecurity over loss of control was repeated again in school B in which I was teaching. In this context, years 7-11 met every morning of the week (with years 12 and 13 included on just a Monday) for a very formal assembly with hymn singing, readings and prayers, usually Christian based, although there was a one third ethnic minority intake of largely Muslim boys. Senior managers felt though that there had been a

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number of incidents where older pupils were behaving inappropriately by not listening

attentively and introducing a spontaneous 'rapport' of clapping with the collective worship

leader that was in danger of the 'anarchy' so feared in the state sector as described in school

A earlier. From then on assemblies were organised to be just two different year group

combinations twice a week and one 'whole school' assembly weekly. So again the

community aspects of the whole school experience were sacrificed in order to ensure the

maintenance of order and the staff's control of pupils.

One of the few exceptions to school A's ruling on the ban on 'whole school'

assemblies was when the school in pre-national lottery days decided to launch its own

lottery in a bid to improve its finances and facilities. It amused me that this was seen as

important enough to risk the social disorder of the past, giving a God-like status to the

launch of this money spinning idea. The values of the hidden curriculum that day were

materialistic: Easter, Christmas or the start of the summer holidays were not worth risking

disorder for but the creation of wealth was.

School C I had worked in, used to have one year assembly each day and one year

head in particular had such poor behaviour from the pupils at the start of the day, during

this experience, that a more negative start to the day could not have been planned for

pupils. It was not therapeutic, thoughtful, stimulating or provocative because pupils were

not listening, but rather muttering amongst themselves.

School D had a situation that I had never encountered before, because neither the Head Teacher nor the Deputy Head took assemblies. The Head is a Christian, so it was not that there was an issue of opting out and although I have no idea about the faith position of the deputy this was not the reason for her declining to lead collective worship either. This is a most unusual situation because these leaders and managers know that they can communicate important values to both staff and pupils during this time and when a Head struggles to find time to teach today, it is probably their most important point of contact with pupils and a way of developing their profile. This position was not respected by the staff, who found their lack of leadership in this sphere inexplicable.

School D also posed a problem I had not come across before, in that a Christian Minister whom I had invited in to take assembly referred to someone saying to him that, "He (the visitor that is,) had all the answers to life." I felt uncomfortable with this remark and so although no member of staff or pupil commented on it, I redressed the balance by raising this comment in my next assembly which I hinged on why assemblies were different from lessons and how they were an opportunity for whoever led the assembly to throw out ideas for them to think about - some of which they might find credible and others, less so. I specifically explained why I was unhappy with that remark, but that there was never an intention for pupils to take as literally true anything that is said during this time: it was merely stimulus to their thinking.

1.2 Collective Worship at its best

At school D, one member of staff, (not a senior manager, as already stated) had been singularly responsible for the one assembly held each week for the whole school for four consecutive years. She used personally designed power point presentations and, on account of the small number of pupils at the school and the flexibility of the timetable, she was able to have a high degree of audience participation during its delivery and then subsequently setting a 'response' task for the pupils, which was unusual but excellent because it enabled pupils to express an immediate response to the stimulus material, by way of art work or in writing. This was a first rate community experience profiled in a context where individual pupils and staff could reflect back personal thinking.

School A, did have some exceptions to its ruling on the ban on 'whole school' assemblies, as for example, the lottery extravaganza. On a subsequent occasion it was because a pupil had been run over by a car on the main road outside school. There was much speculation about this girl's condition in intensive care, so when she died the Head made the decision to inform pupils of the facts and address their grief in a whole school assembly. This was a brave, honest and therapeutic response to a tragic situation with an older sibling still on roll at the school.

The Head at school A was a good orator and generally delivered first class collective worship. He chose thoughtful and topical issues, expressed his ideas well and used humour intelligently. He delivered outstanding assemblies on natural disasters, the release of Nelson

Mandela and the Tiananmen Square massacre. He usually gave pupils space for reflection in the light of what he had spoken about – this worked well and was a non-religious way of handling collective worship; he would invite pupils to pray during that time if that was what they wished to do, but it was essentially moments for reflection.

As a Christian I have prayed in the past in an extempore way at the end of assemblies – owning my own personal faith stance and inviting pupils to understand the use of the term 'Amen' if what I said was something with which they could agree. I was even asked by the head teacher, at school A, to lead the closing part of a year 11 leavers' assembly because I could do it with conviction and he was / is an atheist. I had the greatest of respect for that Head. On that occasion I used the words of a famous Jewish prayer of blessing from the Old Testament, Numbers 6.26: "The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord cause his face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon you and give you his peace." I left school A in the 1990s and I now feel that society and schools have changed – perhaps in greater terms of secularisation and multi-culturalism and I would not feel it appropriate to pray in an extempore fashion these days.

The introduction of leavers' assemblies was a particularly successful format in 1990 at school A. I had observed how the fixed head of year 11 had no rite of passage for the pupils as they left school and moved on to the post-16 phase of their lives. After five years of compulsory education they disappeared from the life of the school in fractured numbers as they sat their final examinations. There was no celebration for them of any kind, social or spiritual. So when I was appointed to this Year Head position I asked the Head if I could

introduce a leavers' assembly in which both staff and pupils could participate. It was a very

successful event and to this day has remained a tradition within the school. Many pupils

participated giving out 'toilet roll' awards to named staff for particular attributes; a boy who

had been permanently excluded from another local school and had been with us for less

than a year, chose to give a little speech in which he thanked staff and pupils for his positive

experiences in the school. A group of staff on one occasion performed a song they had

made up about the pupils and called themselves a suitably satirical 'pop-world' name. It

may have been low on the strictly spiritual but it was high on community cohesion and

shared emotion – it was truly a rite of passage. The Head commented publicly to the pupils

in the initial leavers' assembly that he had never known a year 11 group leave with such

style.

When pupils and staff specifically comment to the leader of an assembly, how much

they have enjoyed that time together then clearly something is happening that is being

appreciated. This has been a most rewarding aspect of the role for me personally and

indeed some of the prompts for further reflection on what an assembly can do and should

be doing. In both schools A, B and C, this has been my experience and the occasions too

numerous to record individually, but it made me realise how meaningful this educational

time can potentially be. From pupils with poor reputations and from very difficult

backgrounds through to some of the most intelligent pupils in the school, discussion with

other staff and pupils has been prompted and fed back to me.   One pupil thanked me for an

assembly I had led on 'the ugly and the beautiful' at school A in 1992 which had commented

on a range of beautiful things in life as well as what it meant to have beauty as a person, she

was a very clever girl and she said my analysis of inner beauty as opposed to the

superficiality of looks was a welcome and encouraging message for her. Another pupil at

school C also thanked me for a citizenship message I had delivered, in a visual way in 1999 –

she was an ethnic minority pupil; bright, bi-lingual, sociable and well-behaved in an

environment where there was a great deal of anti-social behaviour and taboo language that

many staff seemed to consider was beyond their control. She articulated that she had

enjoyed the challenge being presented to the anti-social sub-culture within the school and

she felt able to identify positively with what was being said. On each occasion I was able to

have meaningful dialogue with the pupils concerned regarding the assembly and the

helpfulness of the message they had received.

1.3 Collective Worship Ambivalence

A number of staff were outstanding at taking assemblies but didn't always

understand that they were. One male deputy head at school A was extremely good at

delivering an appropriate message, but would finally ruin what he had done by saying the

Lord's Prayer apace with an expectation that the pupils would join him in this. In reality the

pupils didn't utter a word and he gabbled through the words as if reading the Yellow Pages

telephone directory. Ironically, it was common knowledge amongst both pupils and staff

that this deputy head, a married man, was having an affair with another married teacher, so

the prayer always seemed particularly inappropriate, but the rest of his message was

worthwhile for pupils and staff and a good start to the day. It seems that he thought the

assembly he had just given moved into the realm of worship on account of the prayer he

added at the end. The adulterous relationship he was engaged in would have had no bearing on any of the predictably excellent assemblies he delivered, until he tried to move into the territory of 'saying prayers'.

School B, a private school, had very traditional collective worship, a sound example of Gent's mini-church model. It was full of ritual and ceremony. For example, on Armistice Day, the Head Boy would place a poppy wreath in front of the plaque commemorating old boys who had given their lives in the service of their country. Always the teachers leading the assemblies would wear their university gowns and once everybody had assembled, one senior manager would ask everyone to stand and the lead teacher would file in followed by the Head Boy and his deputy; the latter would then sit on the stage whilst the assembly was delivered and play their part if and when required.

When a new Head (actually on account of a restructuring of staff – a 'principal') arrived at this school, on account of the significant ethnic minority proportion of pupils, the hymn book was abandoned and a selection of hymns that referred to 'Lord' only, not mentioning the name of Jesus, were lifted to form a mini-booklet of more acceptable and appropriate singing. This was an interesting update. Hymn practice would take place periodically at this school to ensure the quality of the musical experience.

The Head teacher of school A was running a school in-service training (INSET) day on one occasion in 1993 and by way of introduction, he referred to a conference that he and one of his deputies had attended the previous day. He said how the speaker had ridiculed

schools fulfilling the impossible assembly task each day of having received pupils into school

and having got them ordered, disrupting them by getting them to walk to another location in

their hundreds for a member of staff to speak to them for fifteen minutes and then do the

same again in reverse before getting them on the move yet again for their first lesson. It had

clearly been presented to him as nonsensical and he repeated it in a similarly comical and

satirical way at which all the staff laughed and consented. The other side to this description

of activity, which was not alluded to, was that the effort was worth it if the collective

worship was of high quality and a valid community experience. The observation grid I have

devised for this research shows just how much importance can be attached to collective

worship and the wide range of types of learning that can be brought about by that one

educational slot. With reference to this grid (table 5) at least six different types of learning

and thinking are taking place during any one assembly and this would be in contrast to an

individual lesson, which would be much narrower and curriculum driven. 'Important' is an

appropriate description because within fifteen minutes, the shortest educational session of

the school day, a cross-section of the spiritual, cultural, emotional and intellectual aims of

education are all being realised.

The overall implication of the Head's repetition of the conference speaker's tale was

one of derision and stupidity and that a school would only ever do this if obliged to disrupt

the population in this way by law. The high value of a good assembly is the converse

argument for such immense practical disruption.

My experiences have led me to realise the potential power of the collective worship

tool in relation to ethos building and citizenship enrichment, yet in the 'wrong' hands it can

also be a conveyor of damaging hidden curriculum messages that render the experience

dysfunctional. I am aware of the lack of recognition of this by many head teachers and so

there is little monitoring of this educational time. It is just assumed that people who gain a

promoted role that requires the leading of collective worship within it will somehow

(without any coaching) intuitively know (philosophically, educationally and spiritually) how

to conduct themselves during this time. Clearly, it will be the kind of collective worship that

they have witnessed themselves that will show them what they should or should not do - so

good or bad practice tends to replicate itself.

I have recognised both the misconceptions of staff about what sound collective

worship looks like and experienced the sense of community and depth of meaning when real

situations and emotions have been addressed in relevant ways. Pupils have continued to

talk about these times later in the day or have gone into the first lesson still discussing the

issues and angles – clearly showing the effect this time has had on them.

I have witnessed collective worship being used as social control and as the mass

media of the school, that is, the most effective way of getting a key message across to pupils,

whether that be information giving or dealing with pupil emotions. In the private sector

there was overtly more tradition, ritual, prayer, Bible reading and music, than in the state

sector and this was in spite of it being the school I worked in with the highest proportion of

ethnic minority pupils.

The sections that now follow are those that explore what teachers have thought about their practice in leading collective worship and in the case of the heads of religious education how they rate the work of their colleagues in this sphere. Christians, teachers and non-teachers, talk about the extent to which they understand school practice and the extent to which it is helpful to their faith community. Finally 'expert witnesses' educationally, or in the realms of the spiritual, state their support or opposition for a range of statements regarding collective worship content and rationale. The findings are not reported sequentially in order of the questions asked but are grouped under headings that emerged from the comments.

Outcomes from the questionnaire to teachers who lead collective worship

2.1 The religious dimension of collective worship

Table 1.

Audio-visual material	29
Recorded music	26
Live music	22
The celebration of non-Christian festivals	18
Prayers	17
Bible readings / references	15
References / readings from the holy books of non-Christian religions	14
Readings from holy books	9

Prayers pupils are encouraged to recite along with the collective worship leader	1
Hymns	0

35* respondents' usage of particular aids when delivering collective worship, in order of popularity.
(35 respondents and not 36 as one did not complete this section.)

Table 1 illustrates teacher responses to a list of possible aids that they might use to assist them in their delivery of collective worship. It demonstrates, perhaps unsurprisingly, how the direct use of religious tools such as hymns, prayers and Bible readings are far less popular in twenty first century collective worship than more modern means of communicating a message to young people. Hymns are not used at all by any of the 36 respondents; recited prayers were used by only 1 respondent; prayers (read or reflected upon) were used by just over 50% of the sample. More popular than the use of such prayers and of Bible readings or references, is the celebration of non-Christian festivals, highlighting the desire of schools to be inclusive and to celebrate the special occasions of religious minorities in Britain. One respondent, commenting on a question asking whether the faith position or not of the leader of collective worship mattered said that, "It is surely the job of the leader to cater to all faiths and belief systems", indicating again the idea that Britain's multi-cultural society should be recognised in acts of collective worship. Another respondent commented that the best purpose of collective worship was, "To encourage understanding of and empathy with different religions, national & ethnic groups" and one said simply, "Our school is a multi-faith, multi-cultural school" making the obvious statement that a single faith approach would not be adequate and this was echoed by the person who

said that all opinions and stances should be considered. One respondent said that collective worship was at its best, 'spiritual guidance'.

One individual commented, in response to the question about the best purposes of collective worship, that it was an opportunity, "to put over the Christian message" - and someone else in the section on any change of practice if there were to no longer be a legal obligation to deliver collective worship said, "Very little, (change) I would still include Christian material". Yet believers were in a minority amongst the teachers surveyed; twenty eight out of the thirty five who responded to this question said that they were atheists or agnostics. One of the respondents described their identification as a believer by qualifying it as loosely as, "In that there is something out there". A faith position for the leader of collective worship was not seen as essential – 75% saw it as irrelevant what their faith stance was. One respondent said:

"In a school where most children don't have a religious upbringing, collective worship has less of a personal impact on pupils it's not being used to make pupils believe – so a simple act of reflection is suitable and can be led by people without strong faith."

Another echoed this neutrality of position: "A clear relevant message can be delivered by anyone with sincerity". However, one respondent commented that all they needed to do was follow the school plan, "...not really up to us to deliver any 'worship' ", which seemed a somewhat ritualistic understanding of their role as leader of collective worship.

2.2 A sense of 'the spiritual'

Four respondents commented on the question about 'the best value of collective worship' as being 'reflection'. Thinking time as opposed to prayer appears to be popular with teachers. "Exploring and finding responses to awe, wonder and the natural world" was mentioned twice by teachers; "To set aside time out of the normal school day, to appreciate other things of worth and value, holistic, world view"; "It's about encouraging a notion of other"; "To sow a seed for further reflective thinking"; "To reflect as a community on spiritual issues", were all similar types of response.

All of these remarks point to pupils having an opportunity to have thinking time in response to stimulus of a loosely spiritual nature rather than the materialism of much of modern life. The notion of 'other' does imply a meta-physical 'higher' being and is sufficiently inclusive to embrace all world religions, so overlapping with the religious dimension of collective worship.

2.3 The role of morality in collective worship

Moral values were given the second highest rating in answer to a question about the best purposes of collective worship – mentioned five times. Then in another section two respondents said that, "..You can still develop 'Christian' ideals and morals without being overtly religious" – focussing on the ethical aspects of religions.   There was not actually a direct question relating to moral values on the questionnaire. One respondent said that,

"It's about personal development as opposed to religion" and as it would not be educationally credible to imagine this could refer to immoral development, by implication such a statement must relate to the personal moral development of young people. Also, when challenged to imagine there was no longer a legal obligation to deliver collective worship and what there practice would be in the light of this, one respondent stated that, "morality would remain a core feature". Another comment was:

"In this more secular age, schools with a 'less religious intake' probably end up doing more of the moral, social type of assemblies mixed in with religious teaching of all religions which teach the same things regarding values, behaviour, etc. We highlight social and moral issues and make pupils think and reflect."

Then, in relation to the stance of the leader of collective worship, one respondent said: "From the perspective of historical significance in the development of morals", hinting at the importance of the historical position of Christianity and the morality couched within its framework and another teacher said that, ".... most of what is said is just acceptable values". Such data points to the importance of a common denominator of morality upon which the world's religions agree and that most democratic societies take for granted.

2.4 The secularising of assemblies

In response to the invitation to make any additional comment, three respondents commented that schools should be secular. Comments relating to secularisation were amongst the most passionately phrased of all the responses:

"I object to religious worship being seen as educational";

"I am opposed to the legal obligation for collective worship because I still help pupils to share, appreciate values, be they secular or religious";

"No-one should impose on another";

"As an atheist I'm happy to discuss the role of religion but not communicate belief";

"It is surely repugnant to demand that anybody should take part in a ceremony in which they do not believe":

"I do not worship. My assemblies are 'secular'. Morality may well be discussed in my assemblies but we do not worship! NEVER, although I often take assemblies and will give reflection time or thought for the day".

".....religion should not have any special place in school";

Then others were less passionate in their responses, but nonetheless overt about their secular stance: responding to the question about the negation of the law on collective worship one individual said that, "The need for 'thought for the day' would disappear, otherwise little (change) as my assemblies are secular." The messages are clear from these contributions that many teachers feel strongly that collective worship should not be happening. Given that the greater proportion (twenty eight out of thirty five) of respondents claimed to hold secular views, it is perhaps surprising that there are only nine such remarks within the open ended answers referring to secularism within schools.

2.5 Collective worship as a citizenship builder

According to the question about the best purposes of collective worship the most popular response, cited six times, was that it was about a group or community feeling and creating a sense of identity. This resonates with the fact that the physical gathering of the school is considered very important by the majority (56%) of respondents – 20; important by 15(42%) and just one respondent considered it a merely 'relevant' aspect of school life. One respondent said of the question on whether the faith position of the leader of collective worship mattered or not that, "It is the collective gathering that matters". One respondent, when answering the question about any possible change in the legislation, said that the value of collective worship as an ethos builder would protect it from obsolescence: "The idea of 'assembly' is so entrenched I can't see it disappearing. Its use as an agenda setter is too important." Also, with regard to the question of any change in the law, two respondents said that they would still '.... gather the year group together' even if not required to do so, showing the value that these teachers place on the drawing together of the community.

The use of visitors brought in to lead collective worship could be seen as a measure of the school's openness to the contribution that can be made by local people and community involvement in the life of the school. The questionnaires revealed that this was an avenue of practice that schools rarely pursued: 17 (47%) said that they involved visitors 'occasionally' and an equal number said, 'never'. Some charities and projects will approach schools for assembly time so that they can get pupils involved in fund raising. This is

different again from schools canvassing the input of local people for the benefit of their pupils.

Similarly, pupil involvement in the delivery of collective worship is not well exploited: 13 (36%) out of the sample saying that they 'never' involved pupils and 22 (61%), 'occasionally'. This was an aspect that Rutter et al (1979) commented upon as being good practice in their findings in schools, within their two paragraphs devoted to collective worship. This teacher-driven domination of style would indicate that sharing a platform with pupils is either too time-consuming in terms of preparation, pupils are resisting being associated with collective worship and so reject invitations to be involved or teachers do not prepare material that lends itself to young people being involved in its delivery.

As an assembly is an opportunity for 'pupil voice' (Osler, 2010) it is a pity that time is not given to sharing ideas with young people and other practical obstacles overcome so that their participation is encouraged and enjoyed. Primary schools do first class work in this sphere; but once pupils are in secondary school staff are aware that their willingness to perform in assemblies dwindles and the whole thing becomes staff driven. Copley (1989) speaking of good practice suggests that schools should have a committee of staff and pupils who arrange the themes for the year and co-ordinate visiting speakers as well as the in-house staff who will lead assemblies – no school had such a forum in place.

2.6 The potential for change in collective worship legislation

Sixteen respondents said that if there were no longer a legal obligation to deliver

collective worship that there would be no change in their practice. This would seem to

indicate that teachers have moulded their practice to what they want from the experience –

for their pupils and for what they are comfortable with in delivery terms.   This is borne out

by the favoured use of audio-visual material: one of the case study schools I observed used a

power point presentation in order to illustrate the case for tolerance that the teacher

leading the assembly wanted to make. Recorded and live music were the next most popular

tools – relevant ways of engaging the interest of twenty first secondary pupils.

Table 2.

The pastoral care of pupils	27 supported this as a '1' rating	5 supported this as a '2' rating	2 supported this as a '5' rating
Classroom teaching	16 supported this as a '1' rating	10 supported this as a '2' rating	6 supported this as a '3' rating
Academic curriculum responsibilities	15 supported this a '1' rating	7 supported this as a '2' rating	7 supported this as a '3' rating
The leadership of other staff	8 supported this as a '1' rating	2 & 3 ratings were supported by 7 respondents	5 supported this as a '5' rating
Parental liaison	11 supported this as a '2' rating	5 supported this as a '5' rating	4 supported this as a '6' rating
Supervision of pupils at break	7 supported this as a '3' rating	2 & 5 were supported by 5 respondents	4 supported this as an '8' rating
Extra-curricular work	6 supported this as '3', '4' & '5' ratings	5 supported this as a '2 rating	4 supported this as a '10' rating
Disciplining pupils	10 supported this as a '4' rating	5 supported this as a '9' rating	3 supported this as a '5' rating
Administrative work	7 supported this as a '9' rating	5 & 10 ratings were supported by 5 respondents	4 supported this as an '8' rating

Leading collective worship	11 supported this as a '10 rating	5 supported this as an '8' rating	3 supported this as a '2' rating

2.7 The popularity nationally of the various roles teachers fulfil as part of their working

lives. (Only the three ratings with the highest support have been listed in this table).

It is significant that amongst ten roles that teachers fulfil within their professional

lives, leading collective worship was evidently the least popular with eleven teachers

considering it a '10' rating – the least favoured duty and with 5 staff supporting it as an '8'

rating it brings the total responses to 16; only administrative work came anywhere near this

with seven teachers supporting this as a nine rating. All other roles with the highest support

were positive ratings of four categories with a one rating and the other four being between

two and five. Clearly the role of leading collective worship is a difficult one, but as the

question of change in the law suggests, teachers are doing their best to cope with the role in

the most satisfactory and educationally valid ways that they can.

In contrast the questionnaire responses showed that the most popular role that

teachers fulfil is that of pastoral care with 75% (27 out of 36 staff) giving this a '1' rating –

and as five supported it as a '2' this would make 32 out of the 36. The next most popular

role was classroom teaching with less than half the sample (16 out of the 36) giving this a '1',

but with 10 staff giving this a '2' rating this brings the total to 26. The academic curriculum

responsibilities slot was close behind with 15 teachers giving this a '1' and it building to a

total of 22 when the '2' rating is included.

When asked about the faith or atheistic stance of the leader of collective worship two respondents commented that "You can still develop 'Christian' ideals and morals without being overtly religious".   In the open comment section, one respondent said: "The role of religion good and bad should be taught via ethics, morality, citizenship, not as a discreet subject ......".

2.8 Conclusion

The results of this questionnaire were revealing for me as a fellow practitioner. They showed how teachers recognise the secular nature of the society in which they teach and therefore of the schools in which they work and so adapt their practice accordingly 'moving with the times'.

Power point presentations are the most favoured means of communication and this is logical given the highly technological world of young people in the twenty first century – as one respondent commented: "The internet is a great source of ready made collective worship."

The dominant position 45% (16 out of 36) is that even though it is their least favoured role in school, if collective worship as such were abandoned legally, then teachers would still draw together year groups and other combinations of pupils in order to derive the 'bonding' benefits of assemblies and to convey the corporate messages of the school and wider society. They comment also that what they deliver during this time would not

alter. This indicates non-compliance with current legislation, which Ekklesia (the beliefs and values thinktank) sees as damaging to democracy, using this as one of their arguments for the collective 'worship' requirement in schools to be legally abandoned.

RESULTS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE SENT TO HEADS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

3.1 Introduction

The Heads of Religious Education were surveyed at the same time as the teachers who lead collective worship in the five schools that agreed to complete questionnaires for this study. These specialists were targeted because they deal with universal matters of 'the spiritual' every day of their working lives. They are therefore more likely to be able to perceptively critique assemblies within their school than most other teachers. On account of not getting 100% response rate from the five schools, I sought to rectify this by interviewing the Heads of Religious Education with the same questions in both of the case study schools (one of whom had replied postally) and their responses are interwoven into the case study findings. What follows here are comments from the three Heads of Religious Education who responded to the postal questionnaire.

3.2 Key findings

Only one out of the three respondents had any responsibility relating to collective worship and this was to devise a programme of themes, incorporating a daily 'thought for

the day', which is linked to R.E., Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) as well as

Citizenship in the school; (including the two case study school heads of religious education,

this means that two out of the five respondents had a responsibility to draw up themes for

the year's class and assembly worship). When asked to describe the quality of the collective

worship in their schools, one respondent said that it was not their responsibility to monitor

collective worship, but stated that Ofsted (2004) reported that, "Statutory requirements are

being met and that our approach is 'innovative'".

Another respondent said that Key Stage 5 (in other words the sixth form),

" ....doesn't happen – all pupils are asked to send a letter in withdrawing them from R.E. / assemblies. We will be putting sixth form conferences in place in future instead of this more routine work. 'Spirituality' is encouraged at Key Stages 3 & 4."

"Worship, not really, reflection, but I'm a Key Stage 5 tutor so don't really know".

The third respondent said that,

"The pupils feel like a community during assembly time, however, not related to religion. They rarely pray in this school: the issues discussed in assembly are often ethical, such as poverty, prejudice, etc."

Asked what they considered were the main issues facing collective worship today,

one teacher said that, "Worship implicates a God – the appropriateness of this in a non-

denominational (secular) school creates issues for staff and students." Secondly, this

respondent considered that there was a problem with the logistics of a daily act of worship;

this was overcome in their school by having two full school assemblies per annum, weekly

year group assemblies and daily 'thoughts for the day' during registration time. This

respondent questioned the validity of the legal 'right of withdrawal' from what should be a communal educational experience, clearly indicating that to be inclusive, a school community ideally needed to have no legal 'get-out' clauses for any individual or group if the legislation were ever to be changed.

The second respondent said that staff are not religious and so don't want to be involved in collective worship. Also pupils are not 'churched' and so collective worship is an alien activity – neither did pupils want to sing. The size of school was another issue; "it's a problem getting everyone into the same place". The final difficulty was the multicultural nature of the school population. The third respondent pointed to 'secularisation' as a key issue today, explaining that in school, religious belief should be optional: worship is a private feature not related to school life.

Asked how they would respond to the notion of collective worship being 'a market place of values' the first respondent said that students and staff will bring their own values to an act of collective worship and that for some, these values will make them resistant to participating. Also, that a way to make collective worship more inclusive is to focus on the values, "we share within the school community".

The second respondent said that they 'probably' agreed with the notion of 'a marketplace of values' but commented that collective worship isn't the only way that values are imposed on pupils. In a school there are different staff and different religions represented with various views. However, it was made clear that within the religious

education department values and religion are not imposed rather there is an encouragement for pupils to question and search for understandings. Finally this respondent said that collective worship makes many assumptions and has a captive audience – they felt that today's society is more sceptical.

3.3 Conclusion

These specialist teachers are sometimes given the role of drawing up the 'thought for the day' rota that tutor groups are directed to use on the days that they are not involved in a formal act of collective worship. Other than that, not one RE teacher had a responsibility to lead assemblies themselves.

The lack of inclusivity in legally allowing withdrawal from collective worship was seen as problematic and not conducive to a positive ethos in the school, as was the incongruity of making assumptions about the religious in a secular society / school – this being potentially alienating for pupils. Disquiet over the captive audience of the assembly hall and the innate scepticism of modern pupils means that most teachers are recognised as not wanting to touch the realms of 'worship' in any formalised spiritual sense.

THE QUESTIONNAIRES FOR CHRISTIANS

This sample grew out of the need to have some kind of specifically 'Christian' understanding of the value of collective worship to this particular faith group. As the

legislation is favourable towards Christianity it was of interest to understand if collective worship was seen as a national asset or perhaps counter-productive on account of its artificiality with the insistence that Christianity in schools is 'non-denominational'. It was important to include questions that gauged the levels of understanding, ignorance or stereotyping on the part of ordinary Christians about acts of collective worship in schools.

The separate questionnaire for the Christian teachers asked for responses regarding their experiences of it in the schools within which they had worked as well as asking whether or not it was helpful to Christianity. The nature of the questions on the two questionnaires (see appendices 5 & 6) only converged on the issue of legislation and whether it should be changed and if so how and why. Both questionnaires allowed space for open comment at the end. The sense of collective worship being an 'outdated' concept and practice also appeared in both questionnaires, but in slightly different guises: the teachers were asked specifically if the legislation was outdated (prior knowledge was assumed here of this group but three respondents did own their ignorance of the law) whereas the non-teachers' question was about the practice itself being potentially outdated.

Permission was sought from a national protestant organisation to help in the dispatch of the questionnaires to prospective respondents. This national body decided to send out the questionnaire alongside its journal with a covering letter from me about my research. The respondents were, and so the sample was therefore, self-selected.

With regard to understanding of the legislation, twelve out of the fifteen (80%) non-teacher respondents were able to identify one or more aspects of the law – of the three respondents ignorant of the law, two were inaccurate in their understanding of present legislation and the third admitted not knowing anything about it. One misunderstanding was: "There is no law regarding the compulsory use of collective worship," another commented: "A morning assembly to start every school day, I was brought up with these and think the government is wrong stopping them!"

Overwhelmingly, the Christian element of the current legislation on collective worship was appreciated. For a range of reasons relating to culture and history as well as purely religious ones, respondents did not want to see the Christian strand disappearing. 19 respondents of the total of 29 (67%) said that the collective worship legislation in its present form was not outdated. 13 out of the 29 (45%) respondents wanted the Christian element of the legislation preserved if any changes were made to the law. 6 respondents said quite simply that the current legislation should be 'enforced'. More loosely 12 out of the 15 (80%) non-teacher respondents felt that collective worship as such (i.e. not tied to the legislation) was not outdated and so there was no need for change.

In asking for a justification of why the law should be changed or not, the following pattern of answers emerged from the non-teacher questionnaires: 8 respondents (53%) pointed to the need for the retention of the Christian faith and culture and one of these said that the Christian element needed to be enforced; 2 respondents (13%) said that the current law worked well for them; again 2 out of the 15 respondents (13%) said that there was no

value in compelling non-Christians to worship (or be involved in worship); whilst one said that: "Collective worship in the sense of the traditional regular religious assembly is only really appropriate to faith schools – of whatever religion they may be"; 2 omitted the question. 12 out of the 15 (80%) non-teacher respondents said that other world religions should not be included in collective worship as it would be a surrendering of our Christian culture and faith.

3 teachers of the sample of 15 (21%) admitted to not knowing much about the law when asked in what ways people might like to see the current law changed. Another said: "...it's not worship at all really"; 5 did not respond to this question; 1 respondent commented: "I'm not sure about this, but probably to give more flexibility. I don't think 'worship' is the best word – how can a predominantly non-Christian group 'worship'?" A similar remark was made by another Christian teacher: "I think that any specific religious element should be dropped but that religious values – love, thankfulness, forgiveness, should be maintained."

One respondent commenting on the non-compliance of schools said: "This time should be a corporate time that is upheld as important and adhered to." 4 respondents commented that no change was necessary, for example: "None. I think that changing any law relating to Christianity is a bad idea at the moment and will make life more difficult for Christians."

Christian teachers' experiences of collective worship have been mixed with only 5 out of 14 (36%) feeling that the schools in which they had worked had been law-abiding. Many expressed the personal joy of children and young people grasping Christian truths. They also felt that local clergy should be involved in collective worship as well as Christian teachers volunteering for this role. 12 of the 14 teacher respondents (86%) felt that collective worship was helpful to Christianity, but 9 of these 14 (64%) qualified their response with remarks about the quality of the leader of the experience and this was unanimously related to whether or not they were actually a Christian. Asked to comment on the quality of the collective worship in the schools they had taught in, the word 'good' was mentioned seven times (50%); 'poor' featured four times (29%); 'mixed' occurred twice (14%) and 'great', 'excellent', successful and 'encouraging' were all used once but each implying some sense of good practice; more negative terms used just once were: 'O.K.', 'no worship' and 'awful'. Respondents answered in some detail to this question and within one answer there were sometimes examples of a range from the excellent to the awful, depending on who was leading the assembly.

Two Christian teachers (14%) actually commented that future legislation should drop the 'worship' wording and the comment from the generic Christian respondent regarding the state having unrealistic expectations of schools and their teachers, supports this view:

"Expecting the state to 'teach' a faith faithfully is unhelpful unless those faithful to that faith are used to teach it, how much more so regarding worship which assumes personal devotion to that faith."

As this respondent said, worship and personal devotion go together and so there is necessarily difficulty in reconciling a multi-cultural pupil population and wider society with a Christian act of collective worship in inter-faith schools. The practical suggestion inherent in this statement is that people who are devotees of a faith should be used to teach children about their faith and lead them in worship. Combining this with the consensus of remarks about teachers resisting leading collective worship, evidenced in table 2 it can be seen that the gap between the expectations of the state built into current legislation and the reality on the ground in schools is rather different. One Christian teacher respondent said: "I suspect what the school offered bore no relation to what the drafters of the law intended". It is also therefore not surprising that little of what takes place could be classed as 'collective worship'. (3 out of the 14 Christian teachers (21%) said this and one generic Christian respondent said that much of what they see is 'very sad'.) Note that the questionnaire did not ask a specific question of the non-teachers concerning their work roles but some identified themselves with compliments slips and contact details – this respondent is a retired Christian Minister based in the South of England who, from his comment, is invited into schools with some regularity.

One Christian minister spoke of it being a privilege to conduct assemblies in schools but also clearly manifest his understanding of what was educational and what was preaching and evangelism appropriate only for a church. Another respondent who explained that he had been a primary school head teacher for nineteen years before becoming a Christian Minister recognised that he used to take Christian assemblies but that as time passed this

became less acceptable. It would be interesting to know how formal or informal that pressure to change was – how explicit or implicit.

The Christian teachers rated the assemblies they had witnessed in schools as more positive than negative, but two saw as a 'complication' the multi-cultural pupil population they were addressing – presumably an awareness of the inappropriateness of Christian teaching and worship to some of these pupils. A more hard line was detected from the respondent who said that the fact that an assembly had to be 'ecumenical' meant that it was offensive to 'true Christians'. A respondent with roots in Northern Ireland recognised how much less religious pupils in England are than in Northern Ireland and so by implication less receptive to a Christian message. Another was pleased when the Bible was properly taught in assembly time. Fear of being thought of as 'politically incorrect' during the taking of an assembly was also alluded to by several respondents.

The rationale for two different questionnaires, one for teachers and one for any other Christian was so that this research could draw on the teachers' personal experiences of collective worship. It would be rare for non-teachers to have experience of this field and also the understanding of the lay person would most likely be limited regarding the legislation. So the mechanism of the two was a way of getting an 'inside' and 'outside' school perspective from Christians and gauging any stereotypes or misconceptions that existed. It would be easy to imagine that the Christian Church, in general, must be keen to hang on to the last vestiges of Christianity within the education system and there was some evidence of this.   19 of the 29 respondents (66%) did not feel that collective worship was

outdated and needed any alteration. The explicit remarks that accompanied these views were largely based around Britain's Christian heritage and culture and the desire not to see this eroded in yet another way.

Christian teachers were largely positive in their critique of the assemblies they had witnessed during their careers, but only 5 out of 14 (36%) felt that their schools had been law abiding- dismissing the three who stated that they were unfamiliar with the law and so couldn't have commented on this, that brings the figure to nearly half the sample. 75% of the non-teacher sample saw world religions, other than Christianity, as not having a place in collective worship, whereas the 'disrespectful students from other faiths' was mentioned once and one teacher acknowledged:

 "I live and teach in a town where Christianity is 'the' religion. No other faiths in our school or community. Perhaps if I taught in a multi-faith school I would answer differently."

Although the teacher respondents showed greater understanding of the legislation and sensitivity to the reconciling of collective worship with assemblies that work with pupils their responses were also on occasions very religiously conservative:

"It (collective worship) is unhelpful as it is performed by people who are in the majority of cases not Christian from a Biblical perspective. It is not 'in spirit and in truth' i.e. those people taking part are not indwelt by the Spirit of God and it is not always conducted on the lines of Biblical truth. Many of the ideas conveyed are against Biblical Christianity."

EXPERT WITNESS EVIDENCE

4.1 Collective worship's citizenship opportunities

Eighteen statements were put together that reflect the main themes of this research for experts in education or spirituality to comment upon (see appendix 8). These experts (listed in appendix 9) were drawn from diverse backgrounds such as university academics in education and religious education; leaders of religious and ideological organisations and more grass roots figures like the pupil referral unit teacher who had delivered one assembly a week for five consecutive years and head teachers of schools within the two case study authorities. They were all individuals or organisations that had figured in the research along the way, but there were others who were approached who chose not to respond. Regarding the nature of this research tool the parallel that I would draw is to that of a political referendum which reduces the complexities of an issue to a yes / no response from the population in order to obtain a decision carrying implications for future practice. Similarly, the elaborate arguments surrounding collective worship have been reduced to eighteen key statements, for which a true or false notation was sought so that weight of feeling could be gauged, carrying indications for future practice.

4.2 Building a community through collective worship

Unanimously the expert witnesses agreed that the dynamic of assemblies should be taken more seriously by senior leadership teams in schools because they are 'ethos' builders

and so they should take care about the content of the messages. Such evidence points to

the notion of collective worship being valued by educational and spiritual experts, for its

ability to foster a community element in a school and this surely has implications for issues

of citizenship – people wanting to play their part in the societies to which they belong. 67%

of the expert witnesses said that the powerful educational tool was in the 'collective' not the

'worship', expressing support for the value of bringing the school community together

physically, as against being able to produce a sense of worship as the most important aspect

of the experience. 100% agreement was expressed about assemblies being an ethos builder

for a school, although two respondents did comment that this depended upon the assembly,

so, by implication, pointing to dysfunctional assemblies as being undesirable. 100% of

respondents again said that regular assemblies foster a sense of belonging in pupils. The

notion of it not being good practice for an assembly to hinge upon a negative discipline issue

brought about 78% support, though of course this may be the managers of a community

attempting to diffuse a difficulty within the school and through an assembly making a point

in some detail, with time to add illustration and explanation – in this way a kind of balance to

being a community. 56% of respondents felt that music and readings from holy books can all

have their place within a school assembly that merely declares the understandings of the

assembly leader – this is can be a community binder when ethnic minority pupils witness

their religion being profiled positively to the school community.

"People who lead assemblies should be free within 'the marketplace of values' to

express genuinely who they are and how they understand the world, be that atheistic, Hindu

or Christian," this proposition received 78% support as being true clearly indicating support

for people owning their own personal position when leading collective worship. In a non-denominational school a wide range of beliefs or none will reflect the positions of the pupils and so it is honest and inclusive to have the leaders of collective worship profiling their human conclusions about life and faith when conducting an assembly.

The proposition about assemblies being the 'mass media' of the school received 56% support from respondents, yet it is surprising that this is not higher because there is nowhere else in the business of school life that corporate messages are being expounded. Classroom teachers from their various subject perspectives may well be taking quite different positions even on something as seemingly 'clear-cut' as school rules. So where is the fulcrum in a school if not in assemblies? Newsletters, bulletins and notice boards are means of communicating with people 'en masse', but these are only successful if they are given attention. Someone speaking in an assembly, with staff in attendance to support them, is more dominating, efficient and effective than a physically limited notice or a bulletin that may or may not be read by the intended audience. It is also unlikely that bulletins, newsletter or notices will deal with ethics or a variety of value positions. Some respondents expressed confusion about how assemblies could be viewed in this way four declining to comment whilst three disagreed with the proposition.

"Moral messages and these could be couched within admiration for a key figure, religious or otherwise, have a positive contribution to make to the development of all of us as human beings, not least young people in assemblies." This statement was given 95% support by the expert witness respondents, clearly indicating their belief that morality is

vital, whether hinging on religion or not – just one respondent said that they, for whatever reason, did not know enough to comment.

4.3 Citizenship and collective worship

"An assembly is an opportunity to open up the world beyond the school to pupils, through current affairs and different world views", was a statement that 100% of expert witness respondents supported. "Citizenship, human rights and democratic themes are powerful messages for any community", was another statement with almost 100% support – the respondent that disagreed said that one should, "Just think of infants!" so the only reservation was that such themes are in-appropriate for key stage 1 pupils, but clearly appropriate for the other age groups to this person's way of thinking. (I would disagree with this view because even infants can experience an assembly where these themes are very simply and relevantly expressed.)

"People who lead assemblies should be free within 'the marketplace of values' to express genuinely who they are and how they understand the world, be that atheistic, Hindu or Christian," this proposition gained 78% support which was surprisingly high given that the response to this phrase when proposed as a better rationale for assemblies than collective worship was only 45%. The latter is about a deviation from 'broadly Christian' collective worship as a better overall basis for the content of assemblies and implies a change in the law to remove the current requirement for 'worship' rather than just the freedom of the

individual leader to express their views on faith which is maybe why this gained 23% more support.

4.4 The potential for change in collective worship legislation

50% of the expert witness respondents held the view that the term 'worship' should be removed from the legislation. "Assembly is a better description than collective worship of the school community gathering together", this expert witness statement was supported by 83% of respondents with one person adding the remark that it is a better description of what is actually happening in the schools and another 'but only if no worship is intended'. What is happening on the ground in schools is very definitely assemblies and is it reasonable to expect that worship could or should be taking place in any intended way? Factor in the 89% respondent support for the statement that by definition no-one can compel another to worship and there would appear to be little support for 'worship' as such. However, despite this only 50% of the expert witness respondents would have the term 'worship' removed from the legislation.

56% of the expert witness respondents agreed that the position of believers in world religions is not helped by collective worship legislation as it stands today and 61% also wanted to see the legislation on collective worship changed as soon as possible. 78% of the expert witnesses said that the collective worship that takes place in schools bears little resemblance to the legislation on collective worship, yet, as stated above, only 50% held the view that the term 'worship' should be removed from the legislation.

"A 'marketplace of values' is a much better proposition for assemblies in non-denominational schools than a 'broadly Christian act of worship'," was one of the proposition that only 45% of respondents supported, indicating ambivalence and two equally weighted distinct schools of thought with a view on the one hand that the legislation should remain the same, with a significant commitment to the Christian religion, and on the other a change in law that would remove Christian Worship and instead profile a range of values.

The series of propositions submitted to those considered to have educational, spiritual expertise or both has rendered some interesting results. A number of respondents chose to add thoughtful statements as to why they had answered as they had. Broadly, these experts favour legislative change yet do not want the word 'worship' removed from the statute book. They see collective worship as a sound builder of ethos within a community and rich in citizenship opportunities as well as morality. The notion of the 'market place of values' as a basis for assemblies was not a popular alternative to the 'broadly Christian' framework that is currently the basis of practice. However, it was clear that legislative reform is supported and that there is a recognition that what is happening in the schools does not compare favourably with the intentions behind the wording of the 1988 Act and Circular 1/94.

CHAPTER 6. THE PRIMARY DATA 2: THE CASE STUDIES

"The received literature (on collective worship, that is,) addresses itself in the main to the contortions required to equate educating, worship and compulsion"
Terence Copley (1992:74).

Introduction

From questionnaires sent out to schools whose Head Teachers were willing to participate in the study and after some discussion with the local authority advisers, two schools from this cohort emerged as worth approaching to become case study schools. In order to give as detailed a picture as possible of the case study schools, I have, as indicated by figure 4 below, attempted to infiltrate the layers of meaning from an observed assembly being delivered to pupils at the heart of the process, through to information on the local SACRE.

Figure 4.
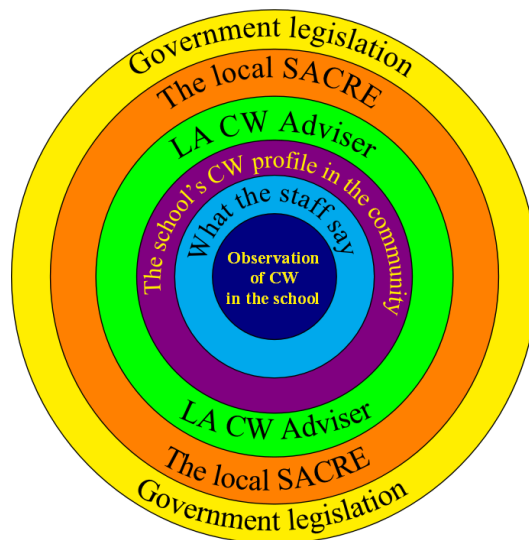
A diagram illustrating the layers of understanding about the practice of collective worship in state non-denominational schools.

At the core of this study are the teachers and the collective worship they deliver, as well as their understanding of the legislation that governs their practice and what they consider to be educationally valid. Clearly, as the literature review evidences, it is the historic practice of collective worship as an integral part of a school day, prevailing for over one hundred and forty years, that means the outer circle still indicates what should be happening at the centre.

A school's profile in the community is achieved formally by the prospectus information and also their website. (Obviously, parents, neighbours of the school, local residents as well as the business community, local authority workers and the media will all develop informal views about the school through word of mouth and particular incidents of which they have been a part.) A discrete section or paragraph of a school's website deals with the practice of collective worship as the Education Act 1993 so directed and case study school 1 has a specific policy that can be viewed there. This research includes a survey targeted specifically at Christians: believers, who as parents and sometimes local ministers invited into schools for a range of reasons, develop a view of schools – about their ethos as well as other aspects of their functioning.

Teachers are key people in the practice of collective worship – they have to make it work on the ground in their particular context. The head teacher sets the agenda and the priority as demonstrated by the new head teacher at case study school 2, where he is specifically prioritising it and changing the historic practice of the school: whole school assemblies being introduced as well as thought for the day in classrooms on the days when

collective worship is not taking place. This now means that virtually all teachers have to co-operate with these changes (form tutors lead thoughts for the day) and those who lead collective worship take their cues for practice from him, for example, in a senior leader being present at this time, which formerly was not the case and in learning from the style of the whole school assemblies that he personally leads.

The Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education (SACREs) were first introduced in 1944, but only on a voluntary basis. The Education Reform Act of 1988 made them compulsory for every local authority and prescribed their remit. These bodies are the purveyors and monitors (along with Ofsted inspectors) of the government legislation on collective worship. Local authority advisers have had their roles and powers dismantled since the 1988 Act when schools were given the freedom to opt out of local authority control: they often continue to chair the SACRE meetings and in authorities I have come across in the course of this research, where there is no adviser with responsibility for religious education and collective worship, professional consultants are bought in for designated hours to fulfil this role with the SACRE. The reality is that budget cuts in 2011 are further impacting on advisory work and it will be interesting to see how councils will manage their obligations towards SACREs in the future.

The case studies include an interview with the Head, a Deputy Head and the Head of Religious Education. The results of the generic teacher questionnaires from the original postal survey were also isolated from the thirty six returns collated for chapter 5, to add to the profiles of the two schools. The local authority adviser's views are given, based on an

'expert witness' pro-forma, as well as information about the local SACRE and the view that the community can have of the school's collective worship practice as indicated on the two websites. The findings have been grouped under headings which I have used for both case studies for ease of assessing similarities and differences between the two institutions. So the data is dealt with thematically rather than in a linear fashion according to each respondent. One of the case study schools was in the North West of England and the other in the South East. For the purposes of anonymity I have deliberately not said which is which; they are quite simply numbered one and two: each is described in turn and then the implications of the findings are analysed.

CASE STUDY SCHOOL 1.

The Religious Dimension of Collective Worship

The Head Teacher would love to have a chapel at the school: a multi-faith prayer space, but on account of finance he appreciates that it would be out of the question. Later, it became clear in the interview that the Head would want this to be used by pupils voluntarily wanting to worship in their own way – such a space as is available at an airport or hospital. This would seem to provide an educational facility for spiritual development without the drawback of the captive audience from which collective worship suffers. During the course of this current research, the case study school became a 'trust school' (April 2009). The buildings and site are owned by a trust and the Head decided who were the parties he wanted as trustees: the Head Teacher of a Community School from an

another authority, a representative of a nearby university, a representative of 'Research Machines' and the Abbot of a Benedictine Monastery which runs an independent Catholic School formerly for boys, but now mixed. The Head considers that this Benedictine School does have collective worship, the chapel and what takes place there is dignified and profound for both the monks and the boys. As a number of the Benedictine school pupils are protestants (around one third), the Head Teacher of the case study school, who is a non-stipendiary Anglican priest, gives communion at a service once a fortnight to the protestant pupils, alongside the monks giving communion to the Catholic boys. In this way, the Head Teacher functions as a kind of unofficial chaplain to the school.

The Head would like to exploit the capacity of young people to lead services of a non-Eucharistic nature at the start of the day. He feels there may be many pupils who would like to begin the day with prayer, meditation and reflection and this would, of course, be ideally situated in a chapel, if that were ever to come to pass.

As a non-stipendiary priest at a parish in a different authority from the case study school, the Head is one of a team of five ministering to the congregation and the community. In this role the Head Teacher has had what he considers the privilege of conducting the marriages and funerals of former pupils and their family members. He felt that there is a very meaningful overlap of his dual roles, representing the school and the Church; he expresses it as putting flesh on Christian concern to have a role in the wider community. Funerals mean people have to grapple with situations they never imagined could happen to them – he conducted the funeral of a former pupil who committed suicide

in a terrible way; his wife had also attended the school and both were only in their late

twenties.

The Deputy Head felt that in the past collective worship was about hymn singing and

listening to morals – its function was to keep pupils in line according to moral values. It is

similar today, he acknowledged, but:

" .... there is such a wide diversity of pupils now. Then it was about a school service, like
this school service book for teachers to use shows, published in 1949. Each section is
actually called a 'school service', with hymns and prayers. When I was at school if we didn't
sing well enough we were brought back at a time inconvenient to pupils in order to improve
our performance and the whole thing became stressful."

The Deputy Head described how space was offered for Muslims to pray in the school

and The Lighthouse Group (an organisation of Christian young people from local evangelical

churches who work in schools taking clubs and such like) take an assembly once a term and

their work within the school is well received and creates 'a buzz' amongst the pupils. Also,

the Gideons (a Christian organisation that aims to distribute bibles in key organisations)

come in to Year 7 and present the pupils with New Testaments – they are also well received

no matter what the faith stance of the pupil.

The idea of having a school chaplain grew out of the fact that the Head in this case

study school took seriously the spiritual dimension of education – it is a school with a high

level of academic attainment as measured traditionally, but he believes that a school is more

than an exam factory. Education should be 'holistic' and from this thinking he developed the notion of a chaplain for the school. Schools in Britain being steeped in Christianity, historically, a Christian chaplain was the obvious development. The governors were puzzled with his suggestion, considering that this was the work of 'church' schools. However, the Head's proposal related to the way in which in a largely secular society, prisons, hospitals and airports all have chaplains, which is a reflection of the needs of a diverse society. He felt his school was also one such diverse community. However, finding the right person for the job was problematic. The individual needed to have a unique blend of qualities, such as to be profound, have plenty of nervous energy and to be reflective. There were two rounds of interviews and finally a Baptist Minister, who was formerly an accountant, from a nearby town, was approached to see if she would take on the role. Her appointment was flexible, in that she was given the freedom to carve out a niche within the school for this new role of Chaplain. She had an office in the middle of the school and she requested a small teaching timetable so that she could relate to pupils in a natural way as well as being their chaplain. She had formerly taught Business Studies in the further education sector and so taught this subject in the case study school.

The chaplain took assemblies and helped pupils out in relation to personal issues, but this then overlapped with the work of the School Counsellor (who had a well established role of seven years). So, the Chaplain took to referring on the pupils who needed 'counselling'. She worked with heads of year and went to their weekly meetings. She did have a job description but there had not been enough thought put into the precise nature of the work she would do. After eighteen months she resigned and since then budget issues have

necessitated cutbacks which have meant she was not replaced. There is however, a second counsellor 'in situe' now.

A sense of the' Spiritual'

The school is a member of the Bloxham Project (see chapter 2) which is devoted to developing spirituality in schools. The chaplains of the independent schools are involved in this work and within this there has been an initiative on multi-faith encounters in schools – members of the project have written books on it. The Head Teacher said that in the past there had been a national conference of Bloxham Schools with excellent multi-faith speakers.

The Head of Religious Education at the case study school has developed a peace garden, which she works in every Tuesday lunch time – pupils appear and offer to help with weeding, digging, planting out and whatever else needs doing. It is an area where pupils can sit and be quiet; it has a couple of trees in it which have ribbons hanging on them, with commitments from pupils about the changes they want to make happen in their lives. There are a lot of pansies in the garden, which as with the Nazi invasion of France before liberation, represent lives that have been lost – there is no need for words, just the reminder of the pansies. A number of years ago a pupil called Lucy had died from a brain tumour, so a willow hedge was planted and a group of design technology pupils made the wooden seat in the garden. There is a little plaque in the area that explains about Lucy's death.

The Head of R.E. said that spirituality is encouraged at KS3 and 4 – worship doesn't really take place, more a 'reflection'.

The role of Morality in Collective Worship

The Head Teacher spoke of a moral philosophy theme he had developed in his last assembly about what 'truth' is – he drew on an historical illustration and then threw it out to the pupils to consider in a twenty first century context.

The Deputy Head of the case study school was not sure about the concept of 'a marketplace of values' - a proposition from the interview, because that would be about pushing and selling and he felt a school is not about buying, selling and bartering. Instead teachers seek to 'grow' values and so therefore it would be a 'garden' of values. He considered collective worship to be an oasis of decency, about relationships, etc. If pupils think they are having something pushed on them or sold to them then a cross-section would be alienated. It could also potentially divide the school. The message in any assembly has to be relevant to all pupils – all faiths and those of no faith.

The Deputy Head said that one assembly he had done was on the differences in people. It was a power point presentation that he compiled because he saw some divisions on the ground in school and he wanted the pupils to think about tolerating individual differences; at the time there had been clashes between rival football fans and there were British National Party and Muslim extremist media stories. It gave a timely reminder to the

pupils of the wide range of differences within the school and how to be non-confrontational about differences.   This respondent felt that an assembly is a context where the aims and purpose of the school and its activities can be analysed.

The Head of Religious Education said that she resisted assemblies that tried to persuade pupils that one religion was better than another. She saw it as useful to have a marketplace where pupils can understand values to aspire to if they don't get it at home. The Head Teacher in the case study school was seen to be someone who reflects on these things and is clear about the values he wants to put across in the school. This respondent felt that these days children aren't used to going to a place of worship and so an assembly is an alien experience to them. Fifty years ago most pupils might have known what it was like to go to a place of worship, not so today.

Collective worship as an ethos builder

The Head felt that the physical gathering of pupils in an assembly was 'very important', transmitting the ethos and expectations of the school, reinforcing identity with it:

"The assembly is an opportunity to reinforce identity – it is key to get one fifth of the school community together, a very important part of school life. In a society of nearly two thousand people, parents are fearful that their child will be lost, but that unit coming together supports identity, we don't bring them together because of the law. We do not tread on the ground of the religions, we have pupils who go the mosque and others to the Sikh Temple, we are a 'collective' of people and it is not the 'worship' that is important but the 'collective'."

This commentary clearly points to a Christian Head Teacher emphasising the importance of pupils' sense of identity with the school and their religious position being subordinate to this. The postal questionnaire returns from this school also showed great support for the ethos building of collective worship as seven out of the eight respondents considered it to be 'very important' and just one said it was 'important'.

The Head of Religious Education felt that there were teachers in the school resistant to the values that the Head was engendering but then she felt it unlikely that they would stay long in the school. She felt that the senior leadership team guides the ethos of a school and they needed to do this. It's not just about how pupils feel but also it is necessary for staff to feel that they are valued too.

The Secularising of Assemblies

With regard to the main issues facing collective worship in secondary schools today the Head of Religious Education said that with so many different faiths, (23-24% ethnic minority pupils in this case study school,) it was hard to find material that they could all relate to and yet get a depth of feeling from it. She described how there was:

" ...... quite a resistance to anything 'religious', the way that religious education is changing , this lack of openness and resistance to full on religious teaching typifies schools today. One or two assemblies are 'full on' in a religious sense though."

The Head of R.E. said that collective worship: " .... makes many assumptions and has a captive audience – today's society is sceptical I think!" She also said that staff are not religious and don't want to be involved; pupils are not churched, it is an alien activity – they don't want to sing.

When asked if there were any other comment she would like to make the Head of Religious Education said that spirituality is a hard message to get across in today's society and even churches are having to change the way they present information to the congregation. She thought that pupils' understanding of themselves as 'spiritual' beings was limited; pupils tend to go along with the Richard Dawkins' view that they are skin, bones and electrical impulses. They don't express this, but that's all they see. Many pupils are from backgrounds that don't have any spirituality but she thought that maybe they were more open to it sitting there with their peers in assembly.

Collective Worship as a Citizenship Builder

The Head Teacher felt that the faith or atheistic stance of the leader of collective worship matters as in his opinion assemblies are best when the leader has imparted something of themselves to the pupils. (This was in contrast to his staff who in the postal survey, unanimously felt that it didn't matter.) An example of this giving of self in leading collective worship was when a city based charity for the homeless had been in and pupils chose to raise money for the work in response to what they had heard.

The local homeless charity 'House' had also been in to the school to take an assembly and the Deputy Head said that this was amongst the best assemblies he had ever seen. A man talked about his experiences of being homeless. Save the Children and Oxfam had also come in over the last four to five years and in response to the homeless man's talk the pupils had run a gig called 'Oxjam', where three hundred pupils had paid to listen to different bands performing. Around £1,000 was raised and given to the charity – the gig was helped by the fact that they had a sixth-former who was superb at organising such events and her sister had been similarly gifted before her.

Over the last four to five years pupils have gone on trips to Aushwitz, Saxon House, Berlin, the Notre Dame cemetery, some of the visits are for 'A' level English. Henry Allingham, the oldest man in Britain visited the school and spent most of the day with the children. He talked to the pupils and some of the younger ones just literally wanted to 'touch' him. He was invited to a one-off Armistice Day service at the school. These examples of citizenship learning would, to many, be examples of 'spirituality' in the broadest sense.

The Head of Religious Education said of assemblies in the school generally that the Head of Year gives information and encourages 'well-being' – the development of the whole person was encouraged, the latter obviously including the spiritual – ideas of being the best they can be and looking out for each other, she said that these were typical themes.

The Potential for Change in Collective Worship Legislation

The Head Teacher felt that if there were no longer a legal obligation to deliver collective worship there would be no change to their school practice at all. He commented that the government seemed to be 'hung up' on the 'worship' factor in assemblies. He also said that they take a pragmatic response to the legislation. They use tutorial time, within which the 'thought for the week' happens and they give this as realistic coverage as possible. Together with the assemblies, the latter messages reinforce the distinctive school ethos. The Head, (in spite of being a non-stipendiary priest) interjected during the Deputy Head's interview that to call an assembly, 'worship' is misleading. School is not the appropriate place for worship.

Practice in the school

Two pupils (one a Jehovah's Witness and the other from the Exclusive Brethren) out of fifteen hundred are withdrawn by their parents from collective worship; tutors operate a 'thought for the day' system on the days when pupils are not engaged in assemblies – each year group having three assemblies in ten days; the term 'collective worship' is never used in the school. No member of staff withdraws from assemblies and no religious leader withdraws pupils for any alternative act of worship. The school has a collective worship policy (so named) on the school website. A senior manager is always present in an assembly and during the examination period, assemblies stop. The Head of Religious Education has no responsibility for the delivery or organisation of collective worship: it is the Head Teacher

who draws up the programme of themes for the year's reflections. Regarding the practice of inviting visitors in to lead collective worship, five teachers responding to the postal questionnaire at this school said that they did this occasionally; two said that they would never do so and one teacher said that they regularly did this. Then on the practice of pupils being involved in the leading of collective worship seven teachers said that they did this occasionally, whereas one member of staff said that they never involved pupils in this way. Six out of the eight respondents to the postal questionnaires in this school identified themselves as believers: just two people said that they were agnostics. Drawn from the postal questionnaire returns this table shows what aids to collective worship the 8 teacher respondents at the case study school employ.

Table 3.

Audio-visual material	7
Recorded music	5
Prayers	4
Live music	4
Bible readings or Bible references	4
References / readings from the holy books of non-Christian religions	4
The celebration of non-Christian festivals	4
Readings from holy books	3
Prayers that pupils are encouraged to recite along with the collective worship leader	1
Hymns	0

Aids used in the delivery of collective worship

Table 3 ties in with the observed assembly which made use of *a* power-point p*resentation* as did the assembly that the Deputy Head Teacher spoke of recently presenting.

Table 4.

The postal questionnaire asked respondents to rate their preferences for different aspects of their work as a teacher, on a scale of 1-10. It was important that this research should try to set the leading of collective worship against the backdrop of other responsibilities in order to understand how positively, negatively or neutrally, staff viewed this role. Below are the results for the case study school.

One respondent from this school did not complete this section; so table 4 is based upon seven respondents.

1 = most favoured role   10 = least favoured role

The pastoral care of pupils	6 supported this as a '1' rating	2 supported this as a '2' rating
Academic curriculum responsibilities	4 supported this as a '1' rating	2 supported this as a '3' rating
Classroom teaching	4 supported this as a '1' rating	2 each supported this as a '2' rating & a '3' rating
Administrative work	3 supported this as a '1' rating	2 each supported this as a '5' rating & a '4' rating
The leadership of other staff	3 supported this as a '2' rating	2 supported this as a '4' rating
Parental liaison	3 supported this as a '2' rating	2 supported this as a '1' rating
Supervision of pupils at breaks	2 supported this as a '4' rating	2 supported this as a '5' rating
Extra-curricular work	3 supported this as a '5' rating	2 supported this as a '7' rating
Disciplining pupils	3 supported this as a '9' rating	2 supported this as a '5 rating
Leading collective worship	2 supported this as a '10' rating	2 each supported this as an '8' rating & a '4' rating

Teacher Role Ratings.

Table 4 demonstrates teachers' views of their varied responsibilities and leading collective worship is significantly the least favoured. No other role received a '10' rating from the teachers. Clearly even amongst these professionals who have knowingly taken on a position of responsibility that embraces the delivery of collective worship, they have misgivings about this area of their work. This is consistent with the national picture of five schools *illustrated in Table 2 where 11 out of 36 respondents gave leading collective worship a '10' rating no other role is anywhere close to this in unpopularity.*

RESPONSES TO THE OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE BY THE CASE STUDY SCHOOL TEACHERS.

Asked what the best purposes of collective worship are the teachers said:

"To sow a seed for further reflective thinking and discussion";

"Moral guidance";

"Sense of community";

"To put over the Christian message";

Asked why the faith (atheistic / agnostic) position of the leader of collective worship

mattered or not, the following comments were made:

"A clear relevant message can be delivered by anyone with sincerity";

"It's about encouraging a notion of 'other'";

"It is the collective gathering that matters perhaps";

"Moral values and how they are communicated are the most important points";

"It's delivery like anything else";

"The message is most important";

Asked if there were no longer a legal obligation to deliver collective worship how teachers' practices would change they said:

"Probably not";

"Very little";

"Won't change";

"Retain the need for collective gathering to reflect as a community on spiritual issues";

"Not sure that it would necessarily";

"Morality would remain a core feature";

"No";

"Very little, I would still include Christian material";

In the open space for comment at the end of the questionnaire respondents made the following remarks:

"Our school is a multi-faith and multi-cultural school.

"In addition the headmaster delivers a 'thought for the week' which usually covers a religious or ethical subject".

All eight teacher respondents asked for a copy of the survey results.

The Observed Assembly – Case Study School 1.

The assembly observed in the case study school was a year eleven group. The theme was diversity and identity illustrated by a power point presentation – the screen saver was the school's logo, which was visible as the pupils and staff waited for everyone to arrive and the assembly to begin. The leader of the assembly was a senior teacher who taught in the sixth form. The Year Head asked the pupils to stand when the teacher came in to speak to the pupils. Until then pupils had been chatting quietly and informally.

I was familiar with the content of the assembly which focused on the number out of every one hundred people who would be Asian, European, American and African, etc. The analyses include those who are homosexual and heterosexual; literate and illiterate; have access to a computer, education and university, food and so on. The teacher asked the pupils to reflect on their privileges as they sat there in the hall and thought about how many people did not have what they took for granted as the norm; she then read two texts written by former sixth form pupils. One said how they had loved school and had now met other people with positive ideals and they looked back with fondness at their school days. The second pupil had been too busy 'being cool' to get much studying done and as a consequence did not get the grades of which they were capable.

This was followed by the teacher reading a poem by a Ghanaian pupil who had come to the school on an exchange visit and she mentioned how it was hoped that some of the sixth-formers from the school would go to Ghana next year. This young person said how no-

one would dream of truanting from school in Ghana as education is a privilege. It is about

your future identity, such as the chance to be a teacher, lawyer, doctor. Education is the

difference between illiteracy and literacy. The young person says how 'success' comes

before 'work' in the dictionary. Working hard has to precede success in reality and the

poem ends with, 'Please appreciate what you have got'.

The teacher explained that identity is at the heart of our society and implored pupils

not to live their lives through celebrities like Jordan and television programmes such as 'Big

Brother'. She asked pupils to look at the world by way of finding something or someone

they could be passionate about. (Of course, the reality is that some young people may well

feel most passionate about these characters, from the perspective of their lives.) There was

a round of applause from the pupils at the end of the assembly and the Head of Year came

forward to remind pupils of their mock exams coming up this term, advising them to work

hard so that they could open up doors for themselves. She spoke of careers interviews that

would shortly be taking place and encouraged pupils to think about their future life

milestones of leaving home, supporting themselves and to do this they needed to work hard

in lessons. (See the assembly grid for the cross referencing of the content outlined above

against some given educational themes.)

This assembly tied in with the findings of the postal questionnaire results from this

school: audio-visual aids were the most popular means of communicating with pupils

receiving unanimous support - seven nominations from the eight respondents, one of whom

did not complete this section and this power point presentation was an excellent example of

such media. The assembly that the Deputy Head spoke of in his interview was also a power point presentation devised from school holiday photographs and media clips. The observed assembly was enhanced by the way the teacher related it to the reflections of pupils and of an African student who had visited their school. She then moved on to relating the content to modern ideas about identity quoting figures popular in the media with which young people engage. There was nothing religious about the assembly – no attempt was made to stimulate worship, nor was there a prayer or time for reflection. The leader of collective worship did not identify any personal faith stance during the delivery of this assembly.

The themes related to citizenship and community cohesion, both of which are congruent with the results of the teacher questionnaire where the consensus around the best purposes of collective worship was that there should be a group / community feeling and the creating of a sense of identity. This also correlates to the fact that the case study school has an overtly Christian Head Teacher who is recognised as engendering high moral standards within the school, but clearly believes that worship is an inappropriate aim for a school. It is also noteworthy that six out of the eight respondents to the postal questionnaires in this school identified themselves as believers; just two people said that they were agnostics.

The chaplaincy perhaps dissipated because there was no real distinction between the work of a counsellor and that of a chaplain. Given the multi-cultural nature of the school space is given for Muslim pupils to worship according to the practice of their faith and the Head clearly stated within his interview that he is quite prepared to facilitate pupils

organising their own time of worship and reflection before the school day begins. This

emphasises the voluntary nature of worship and its reality in pupils' lives being given time

and space within the school seen as something quite different from a teacher leading a

captive audience in an act of worship.

The Head of the case study school said that they take a pragmatic response to the

legislation. They use tutorial time, within which the 'thought for the week' happens and

they give this as realistic coverage as possible. Together with the assemblies, the latter

messages reinforce the distinctive school ethos but as cited earlier he did not support school

as an appropriate place for worship.

Table 5

Citizenship and social development: Identity	x	
Belonging - being a valued member of school / society / the world	x	
Community		
Me, as a citizen	x	
Public / literary figures as citizens, e.g. tax avoidance, etc. (Case studies)		
Political literacy: Democracy & other ideologies.		
Rationale for the school curriculum		
Rationale for the school organisationally		
Politics of school, local, national & international	x	
Emotional literacy: Personal – forgiveness, patience, etc.	x	
The school community experiencing laughing together, crying together, etc. (The inanimate school 'feeling' together.)		
Values: Humanitarian, religious, atheistic, agnostic.	x	
Respect for people & things	x	
Personal development	x	
Self-esteem		
Who am I?		
Culture: Aesthetics		
Aspirational: Who do I want to be?	x	
Role models - historical / contemporary	x	
Philosophical		
What is my life about?		
How do I make sense of the world out there? And here, in school? (Perspectives)	x	

Assembly Content Grid - Case Study School 1. – The Observed Assembly Year 11

Table 5 is a tool devised in order to analyse the nature of the stimulus and learning that can take place during an assembly. They appear within the two case studies to show how it was used to note the features of the observed assemblies. Schools and individual staff within them could use this format to plot recurrent themes and to challenge as well as plan for greater diversity.

The views of the Local Authority Adviser for Case Study School 1.

A series of statements *(appendix 8 – the 'expert witness' propositions)* were e mailed to this adviser to agree or disagree with and space was given for him to add any further comment he might wish to make. These are his comments – the first list is those statements with which he agreed; then those with which he disagreed comprise a paragraph of ideas:

1. The powerful educational tool is in the 'collective' not the 'worship'.

2. The position of believers in world religions is not helped by collective worship legislation as it stands today.

3. By definition nobody can be compelled to worship.

4. Assembly is a better description than collective worship of the school community gathering together.

5. Regular, that is, at least 'weekly' assemblies are very important to foster a sense of belonging to a community in children and young people.

6. The collective worship / assemblies that take place in secondary schools bears little resemblance to the legislation on collective worship.

7. Moral messages; and these could be couched within admiration for a key figure, religious or otherwise, have a positive contribution to make to the development of all of us as human beings, not least young people in assemblies.

8. Citizenship, human rights and democratic themes are powerful messages for any community.

9. Collective worship / assemblies are good 'ethos' builders in any school.

10. The dynamic of assemblies should be taken more seriously by senior leadership teams because they are 'ethos' builders. They should, therefore, take care about the content of the messages.

11. Collective worship / an assembly is an opportunity to open up the world beyond the school to pupils, through current affairs and different world views.

12. An assembly should never hinge solely upon a negative discipline issue that has arisen within school life.

This adviser did not agree with the ideas of: 'worship' being removed from the legislation; of a 'marketplace of values' being a much better proposition for assemblies

in non-denominational schools than a 'broadly Christian act of worship'; people who lead collective worship being free within 'the marketplace of values' to express genuinely who they are and how they understand the world, be that atheistic, Hindu or Christian, etc; that assemblies are the 'mass media' of the school; that music and readings from holy books can all have their place within a school assembly that merely declares the understandings of the assembly leader; that the legislation on collective worship / assemblies should be changed as soon as possible.

In the open comment space the local authority adviser said that he was: ".. cautious about calling for a change in law as we might end up with something more difficult than we have at the moment."

The Local Authority SACRE of the Case Study School

On the 8th March 2010 the meeting of the SACRE was held at the case study school: the head teacher is one of the two teacher representatives on the SACRE. The minutes of that meeting available on the local authority website show that a humanist has just been invited to join the group and there had been much media reporting on this. Collective worship was not mentioned during this meeting, however, members were informed that OfSTED inspections previously gave a lot of information on religious education and collective worship, and now, " ..... the information is about how schools promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development", so it is commented upon more generally.

It was noted that one school in the local authority had been rated as inadequate and it was agreed to let the SACRE group know which school this was. It was felt to be important to have an indication of when a school was likely to go down in the OfSTED ratings, in order to put in place a prevention plan and work together with the school to improve the rating, rather than simply dictating what needs to be done. This was considered to be a pro-active approach to offering support to schools.

CASE STUDY SCHOOL 2.

The Religious Dimension of Collective Worship

The Head of this case study school uses readings from holy books in his assemblies, but feels that prayers are not appropriate in a non-denominational school rather he feels a 'reflection' should be used – by changing some of the words of prayers then an appropriate reflection can be developed. He uses both live and recorded music; audio-visual material and Bible readings and references. The Head says that he doesn't use the holy books of non-Christian religions enough, but intends to do so as 10% of the pupils at his school are Bangladeshi, so the celebration of non-Christian festivals needs to be developed.

The Head Teacher feels that the faith or atheistic stance of the leader of collective worship does matter, relating to it personally, he said that his faith as a Roman Catholic makes him feel comfortable delivering a message; "I feel it helps me". This is in keeping with the four teachers of the six from his school who responded to the questionnaire saying that they felt

the faith position or not of the leader of collective worship mattered. Two staff disagreed

with this view.

The Head said in response to the idea of, 'A market place of values' that perhaps in

an educational sense it's about one group understanding something and then passing on

their understanding to another group:

"Perhaps it's about the values that suit you best, but the big thing is about not necessarily
promoting them but giving opportunity for pupils to reflect on these values. It's possible to
think about Roman Catholicism as a series of concentric circles and in the centre is what
everyone must agree upon, then as you work outwards there are issues that are more
peripheral that people may hold more diverse views upon. What happens is that some
people get hung up on the Christian worship part of collective worship."

This latter remark I took to mean that with regard to the current legislation teachers in non-

denominational schools focus too intently on the Christian worship element of collective

worship instead of liberating themselves to think about it in more generally educational

terms. The law is always a daunting prospect for teachers who know that they are regularly

scrutinised by inspectors, so they have to compel themselves to feature the problematic

Christian worship somehow in their collective gathering or just live with the fact that they

can't achieve it and so conduct 'assemblies' with no attempt at worship.

The Head explained how a friend of his family who was the Head Teacher of a local

Catholic secondary school for many years, always used to say that assemblies were:

"..about a hymn, a prayer and a 'bollocking'". Assemblies, he reflected though, have moved away from collective worship, but at no time did he define his understanding of the difference between the two terms.

The Deputy Head Teacher said that at Christmas the Head had used a prayer as a focus for the whole school assembly – this would be unusual for the school as the previous Head Teacher had been in post for nineteen years and had been an agnostic, so such material would never have featured in his collective worship, the theme of his was usually 'mountains' and his experiences of having climbed them. The Deputy Head described how awards played a big part in the new style, termly whole school collective worship experiences.

The Deputy Head in the case study school thinks that the original intentions of collective worship were to cement the religious values of society, building on the notion of Britain being a Christian country and the education system having been founded upon Christian values.

A sense of the' Spiritual'

The Head Teacher of the case study school considers that the best purposes of collective worship are to get students to think;

" .. to have a sense of awe and wonder; for students to be self-reflective within a certain time frame of collective worship or tutor period – it's not a taught element it's a time for them to think for themselves."

The Head of Religious Education felt that the senior leadership team don't take collective worship seriously enough, that they don't seem to value the spiritual dimensions of the curriculum, religious education and assemblies:

"English and maths are the priorities in the curriculum. Time is also an issue – by the time you get the pupils in and out, there's so little time for the collective worship experience".

The role of Morality in Collective Worship

The Head of the Case Study school said that right and wrong are central to modern assemblies – to get students to reflect, self-reflect. It's the job of religious education to enable students to know about different religions.

The Deputy Head Teacher felt that collective worship as the legislation suggests doesn't happen or not in the religious sense of the term. He said that what the staff try to do is the moral message on a weekly basis he said that he prefers to see moral education around collective worship, however, the thought for the day could be religious in interpretation.

The Head of Religious Education in the case study school said she thought the collective worship could be better. She felt the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) don't take collective worship seriously and that: "... there needed to be a balance between giving a moral message and not going overboard to the point of pupils switching off. It would be

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good to get pupils to be more reflective and philosophical". She commented, however, that to her mind, the Deputy Head had done a good assembly the other week.

Collective worship as an ethos builder

The new Head Teacher at this school has deliberately upgraded the importance attached to collective worship. He has potentially risked alienating staff by bringing the whole school together at the end of each term, even his first term at the school. He is hoping to inspire pupils: this is a school in difficulty having been given 'notice to improve' prior to the new Head's arrival and at the time of writing is now categorised as being 'in special measures' by the most recent 2010 OfSTED team. At the start of the new academic year, the Head also introduced a theme for the week which involved tutor time reflections on a daily basis apart from the assembly day for their year group and assemblies are to conform to this theme too.

The secularising of assemblies

In relation to the Deputy Head Teacher I explained to him what the idea of 'A market place of values' was in relation to collective worship: that 'all' values could be positions for potential exploration in assemblies. The respondent then replied that this made a lot of sense. He cited as his justification the fact that Britain is a multi-cultural society and that this in itself, presents difficulties in school if an act of worship is supposed to be taking place:

"For many pupils they cannot connect with worship and have no experience of it in their lives outside of school, it is quite simply an alien concept. I prefer to see moral education around collective worship. However, the thought for the day could be religious in interpretation. Collective worship needs to be more in keeping with twenty first century life and thereby more sensitive to all our pupils' backgrounds, including those of an atheistic and agnostic stance. For me I don't mind if it's a market place of values – or Christian for that matter. There needs to be something of a balance, religious contributions as part of the input, but giving children a range of different views. It can be off putting if it's too Christian. Pupils need to know the range of views being expressed in society."

Collective worship as a citizenship builder

The Head in the case study school feels that the physical gathering of the school is very important. Since his appointment in April 2009, he has chosen to bring the whole school together at least three times a year, but the mechanics of it are very demanding, which is why it doesn't happen more frequently. It is also his intention not to lose assembly momentum by cancelling them during exam time, but to make use of the sports hall in the sports centre for ongoing assemblies during this time – it is only a little farther for pupils and staff to walk.

The function of collective worship in twenty first century society according to the Head of Religious Education should be: ".. to promote community cohesion; encourage tolerance and understanding, as well as knowledge of other cultures as opposed to other religions. Worship is a strange word to use educationally, as the formal view of it is of hands joined together and eyes closed".

The Potential for Change in Collective Worship Legislation

If there were no longer a legal requirement to deliver collective worship then the Head in this case study school doesn't think his practice would change because he doesn't put a 'holy' spin on what he does, but rather emphasises reflection. He said that he'd been in Roman Catholic schools in the past but it's been the non-denominational schools that have focussed on the values – right and wrong – it doesn't have to be Christian based. The Head's view is that the law says there should be an act of 'daily' worship, so with the exception of the faith schools, the law is not being obeyed. He knows that in most schools daily collective worship just doesn't happen, although thought for the day or week does play its part in giving a 'daily' experience. "As a country we're paying lip service to the law" said this Head Teacher; he also feels that some people get hung up on the Christian worship part of the collective worship legislation, so perhaps by implication, he would like to see this wording removed from the statute books.

Practice in the school

The Head Teacher said that he is the only person in the school to use the term 'collective worship'. Increasingly what takes place is closer to an assembly than to collective worship. No pupils are withdrawn from assemblies by their parents and no teachers avoid assemblies on grounds of conscience. No world religion leaders lead worship with their followers within the school. Since September 2009, this Head's first academic year start in the school, there has been a list of themes throughout the year, one for each week.

Collective worship (one year meeting a week) and tutor time on the other four days are based upon these themes. The themes, drawn up by the "Learning for Life" co-ordinator, are displayed at the bottom of the stairs by the staff room for pupils to see. The Head says that the tutor based work is varied in quality - as good as the tutor, in that some object to it believing it not to be part of their job description. Pastoral Learning Walks mean that senior leaders are able to check the extent to which tutors are adhering to these reflections. Learning Walks are a recent innovation in schools; they can be academic or pastoral and mean that senior leaders check up on what is happening by walking around the school and dropping in on classrooms to see what is going on.

There is no management group or committee relating to collective worship in the school. There is no written policy as such, although there is one paragraph that refers to collective worship on the school's website. The Head is a Roman Catholic believer who has been teaching for over sixteen years. He takes collective worship fortnightly. The Head very rarely invites visitors in to lead collective worship, although he likes to invite pupils to participate in its delivery. As a deputy head teacher he had regularly involved pupils – if he's giving a message, a reflective message then he feels it's helpful if he has a pupil standing with him at the front.

The new head teacher had changed the timings of the school day for his first full academic year. A longer morning and shorter afternoon with a slot for collective worship and tutor time in the afternoon. The first lesson's register is taken as the morning's

attendance, however, the Head feels that this timing has not proved satisfactory in so far as equipment for the day can't be checked by tutors and other practicalities like that. "Obviously attendance at assemblies is now really good because pupils are in by the afternoon and not arriving late. Next year the intention is to change the registration and assembly slot back to the morning," he stated.

The Head of Religious Education in this case study school has also served on the local authority's SACRE for nine years. As in the annual report of this SACRE it was evident that a proposed survey on collective worship had been abandoned, the RE teacher was asked about this. She said that the SACRE did not have the time to pursue this, as it would have involved visiting schools and observing practice. The respondent highlighted how a number of the SACRE members had little idea of what a school was like; they were a committee of people, not many of whom had ever worked in a school and so not necessarily having understanding of the important issues. She personally felt that the SACRE members should be going into schools and asking to see the religious education being taught in the schools and the same with the collective worship. She felt it was not helpful that OfSTED no longer needs to report on religious education as such. Also the new themed curriculum waters down religious education.

The information below, drawn from the postal questionnaires to leaders of collective worship in this school, shows what aids to collective worship the 6 teacher respondents employ:

Table 6.

The celebration of non-Christian festivals	3
References / readings from the holy books of non-Christian religions	2
Audio-visual material	2
Live music	2
Prayers	1
Recorded music	1
Bible readings / references	1
Readings from holy books	1
Prayers that pupils are encouraged to recite along with the collective worship leader	0
Hymns	0

Aids employed in the delivery of collective worship at case study school 2.

One of the six respondents said that they did not use any of the above aids in their assemblies. The observed assembly bore this out; there was no use of audio-visuals and this was in contrast to the national sample where this was the preferred method of delivery as shown in table 1.

With regard to teachers inviting visitors in to lead collective worship in this school the questionnaire revealed that five teachers said they never did this and one said on special occasions. Also the practice of pupil involvement in the delivery of collective worship was said to 'never' happen by four teachers and 'occasionally' was quoted by two staff.

Table 7

The pastoral care of pupils	5 supported this as a '1' rating	1 respondent supported this as a '2' rating
Classroom teaching	3 supported this as a '1' rating	2 supported this as a '3' rating
Disciplining pupils	2 supported 1 & 7 ratings	4 & 6 were each supported by one respondent.
Academic curriculum responsibilities	2 & 3 supported 2 & 3 ratings each	1 & 10 ratings were supported by one respondent.
Parental liaison	3 supported this as a '5' rating	1,2, & 3 were each supported by one respondent
The leadership of other staff	2 supported this as a '6' rating	1,3,5,8 were all supported by one respondent
Administrative work	2 supported this as 7 & 8 ratings	9 & 10 were supported by one respondent
Leading collective worship	1 respondent supported 1,2,3,4,5,10 ratings	N/A
Extra-curricular work	1 respondent supported 2,4,5,6,10 *	N/A
Supervision of pupils at breaks	2,4,6,7,8,9, were all supported by 1 respondent	N/A

Teacher Role Ratings.

*One respondent omitted the last category – conceivably they do not run any extra-curricular activities.

One respondent put just a dash beside collective worship, declining to give it a rating. This school had the most ambivalent findings of all five sets of returns. Nonetheless, one teacher in this case study school still gave a '10' rating to collective worship as did another for extra-curricular work. These were the only two '10' ratings that figured within any of the roles for this school.

RESPONSES TO THE OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS BY THE CASE STUDY SCHOOL TEACHERS.

Asked what they thought were the best purposes of collective worship, teachers said:

"To enlighten regarding cultures / beliefs and to develop perspective for pupils";

"To give pupils and staff time to reflect on higher things";

"Togetherness / cohesion";

"To show the identity of the year group as a whole, and a chance for me to see all pupils together";

"Raise moral standards";

response omitted;

Asked why the faith position of the leader of collective worship mattered or not respondents said:

"It matters but there needs to be a 'whole school' ethos / approach";

"Conviction and it enables the possibility of worship, rather than merely moral statement";

"Because even if you don't believe in something you can still hold a worthwhile collective worship";

"Surely the delivery of the service would be affected";

"Morals are morals!";

Asked how their practice might change if there were no longer a legal obligation to deliver collective worship, respondents said:

"It would not. Reflection and participation are essential";

"I would still deliver a collective worship to my year group as I feel it's very important";

"It would not".

Additional open comments at the end of the questionnaire were as follows:

"Even though I don't really cover the points in question 8 – (only 'the celebration of non-Christian festivals' was itemised) – I cover other events that I think are important, e.g. fair-trade, slavery, refugee weeks, and also often choose a 'moral' to speak about depending on what is going on in the year group at that time";

"When I do an assembly I always try to have a theme that refers to life / morals;"

 Four out of the six respondents did **not** want to receive a copy of the survey results.

The observed Assembly – Case Study School 2.

This was a Year 9 assembly during the last week of the Easter term, so the last assembly before the two week holiday. In spite of there being extensive theatre props in the hall, due to the first night of a theatre production being staged that same day, the assembly went ahead, demonstrating a commitment to the gathering of the year group. The Year Head is a Muslim young man who has been teaching for five years. He told me that it was a

'rewards' assembly. In fact, the fourth assembly he'd done in a row, as other people on the rota had had to back out for a range of reasons. A member of the senior leadership team was present as she was also giving some awards to pupils. The pupils came into the hall from the school yard where it was raining, as the assemblies in this school begin at 1.45 p.m. and finish at 2.05 p.m. there was a rush to get out of the rain. Pupils sit on the floor for assembly whereas for the last twenty years it had been traditional for pupils to sit on chairs – pupils taking it in turns by form to take responsibility for setting the chairs out.

The children sat chatting amongst their friends as they came in and waited for proceedings to begin. The first person to speak was the Head of English who said that pupils in Year 9 had something to celebrate because they had impressed her so much since she had arrived at the school that she was now setting them a new challenge of starting their GCSE English exam early. They would be starting the media coursework after Easter. Another English teacher then spoke out saying that Year 9 pupils had been so well behaved on their visit to a museum that a member of the public had congratulated the teacher and had told her that she should be very proud of them.

Next the Head of Year (Standards) spoke, the leader of this act of collective worship, saying that there had been a good result for England in the football the previous night. He then fictitiously shouted that England had won the World Cup – wasn't that fantastic; they'd won the 'bloody' world cup. He continued and asked the pupils to imagine that this had really happened: how patriotic they would all feel, how proud of their country and of being British. He then pointed out that there was an inter-form six a side competition that pupils

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could enter and again could rightly feel proud of in their winning matches. He explained that

such competitions take a lot of organisation and hard work; the pupils have to work as a

team; use communication skills and all of these aspects are skills that pupils will use in life

generally in the future. He described how he played for a local team of teachers and they'd

won matches which made him feel proud; he plays 'midfield' –when they win, it's a reward

for their hard work.

Today's assembly is about rewarding hard work, he explained. Pupils in the school

who have gone above and beyond what others in the year group had done. Form tutors had

nominated two pupils from their form and each received an Easter egg. Then there were

points reward envelopes for a number of pupils. The points system means that there are

prizes available online and pupils can access them with their relevant scores. The senior

leader also gave points prizes of a greater value. While the pupils went up for their rewards,

most of the year group were chatting and not really supporting their peers. Later on when a

particular girl's name was called out pupils started to cheer and whistle. When the senior

leader announced her winning pupils, pupils again cheered and one boy at the back, near to

me, started banging on something to make a drumming sound, to show his support. The

Year Head said that he wanted Year 9 to be among the top 100 highest 'point' scoring pupils;

at present Year 7 and Year 11 had more pupils in the top one hundred. He said that the

people who had received rewards were role models to other pupils – their effort,

attendance and so on were exemplary. The bell for afternoon lessons went and the last few

rewards were still being given out. The pupils were just talking amongst themselves now.

The Head of Standards rounded things off by saying that this assembly had been about

celebrating success and successful people. "You've had Easter eggs and other rewards, let's

hope England wins the World Cup!" he commented.

Table 8.

Citizenship and social development: Identity		
Belonging - being a valued member of school / society / the world	x	
Community		
Me, as a citizen	x	
Public / literary figures as citizens, e.g. tax avoidance, etc. (Case studies)	x	
Political literacy: Democracy & other ideologies.		
Rationale for the school curriculum		
Rationale for the school organisationally		
Politics of school, local, national & international		
Emotional literacy: Personal – forgiveness, patience, etc.		
The school community experiencing laughing together, crying together, etc. (The inanimate school 'feeling' together.)	x	
Values: Humanitarian, religious, atheistic, agnostic.		
Respect for people & things		
Personal development	x	
Self-esteem		
Who am I?		
Culture: Aesthetics		
Aspirational: Who do I want to be?	x	
Role models - historical / contemporary	x	
Philosophical		
What is my life about?		
How do I make sense of the world out there? And here, in school? (Perspectives)	x	

Assembly Content Grid – Case Study 2 – The Observed Assembly – Year 9.

The Views of the Local Authority Adviser for Case Study 2.

A series of statements (appendix 8, the expert witness propositions) were suggested to this adviser to agree or disagree with on an interview basis and space was given for him to add any further comment he might wish. These are his observations:

1. The powerful educational tool is in the 'collective' not the 'worship'.

2. The term 'worship' should be removed from the legislation.

3. A 'marketplace of values' is a much better proposition for assemblies in non-denominational schools than a 'broadly Christian act of worship'.

4. The position of believers in world religions is not helped by collective worship legislation as it stands today.

5. By definition nobody can be compelled to worship.

6. Assembly is a better description of the current reality than collective worship of the school community gathering together.

7. Regular, that is at least 'weekly' assemblies, are very important to foster a sense of belonging to a community in children and young people. (Extra-curricular activities also contribute to a pupil's sense of belonging.)

8. People who lead assemblies should be free within the 'marketplace of values' to express genuinely who they are and how they understand the world, be that atheistic, Hindu or Christian. (That is, within the context of an understanding of the themes of the school's collective worship policy. People are not 100% free they need

to work within the context of the school policy and how it happens there. Nobody's entirely free within that school policy – it has to be age appropriate for example.)

9. Assemblies are the mass media of the school. (Part of the mass media – effective school councils also play their part.)

10. Music and readings from holy books can all have their place within a school assembly that merely declares the understandings of the assembly leader. (As long as people are engaged by them and are used by them to convey a message – that they are also acting as a facilitator / presenter in an 'educational' context.)

11. The legislation on collective worship should be changed as soon as possible. (HMI in 2004 said that the SACRE should be responsible for the collective worship this indicates an imbalance because they are not able to rouse head teachers and teachers to investigate this issue. Also, collective worship has been shelved nationally and the issues around it.)

12. The collective worship that takes place in schools bears little resemblance to the legislation on collective worship.

13. Moral messages; and these could be couched within admiration for a key figure, religious or otherwise, have a positive contribution to make to the development of all of us as human beings, not least young people in assemblies.

14. Citizenship, human rights and democratic themes are powerful messages for any community.

15. Collective worship / assemblies are good 'ethos' builders in any school.

16. The dynamic of assemblies should be taken more seriously by senior leadership teams because they are 'ethos' builders. They should, therefore, take care about the content of the messages.

17. Collective worship / an assembly is an opportunity to open up the world beyond the school to pupils, through current affairs and different world views.

18. An assembly should never hinge solely upon a negative discipline issue that has arisen within school life.

The adviser also added: "The DCSF has just given guidance on religious education but the last guidance on collective worship was circular 1:94 – an administrative memorandum. David Bell was the HMI Chief Inspector and said that it was absolute nonsense to tell secondary schools to do nothing to tackle the issue – the government failed to address the issue of collective worship. In primary schools the content of assemblies is often blended with Social and Emotional Active Learning (SEAL) materials. However, this necessarily means that SEAL is unhooking the act of collective worship from the legislative framework and this is opposite to the review of circular 1:94".

The local SACRE and its work.

The Annual Report of the SACRE 2008-9 in the case study locality stated that collective worship had been listed as an item and priority in the development plan.

However, in the summer term of 2009, the SACRE members considered the progress

they had made with addressing these priorities. They said:

"SACRE members were concerned that they had made no progress in Collective Worship
and were disappointed that the opportunity had not been taken by the DCSF in the
rewrite of Administrative Memorandum 1/94 (available for consultation in the summer
term 2009) to offer LAs and schools guidance on collective worship. In the absence of
interest or demand from schools or a clear lead from the DCSF, the SACRE decided not to
make Collective Worship a priority for the school year 2009-10."

Paragraph 2.1 of this document says that on the 8[th] June 2009, it was recorded that:

"The SACRE has statutory responsibilities for the support and development of Collective
Worship..........The SACRE had planned to produce guidance for schools to support them
in ensuring that collective worship contributes positively to school life. The guidance was
not produced and this was in part because there appeared to be little interest in the
schools and also neither DCSF nor OfSTED were prompting new work. The SACRE was
also restricted in what it could reasonably take on by the pressure of other business."

These extracts support the adviser's remarks that there is no direction coming from

government on the issue of collective worship.

THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS OF THE TWO CASE STUDY SCHOOLS

In the first case study school the staff spoke of the Head's moral values and how he

wanted high moral standards embedded in the school. The Head did not feel any

apprehension about declaring his overtly Christian position – that of an Anglican non-

stipendiary priest. Similarly, the second case study school had a Christian Head – a man of

Roman Catholic persuasion. However, despite their personal positions neither felt

comfortable with 'worship' in the context of a school.

The first was willing to give every encouragement to pupils to have time and space to worship in their religions' styles, but did not want to lead 'worship' within a school assembly. The second case study Head placed great emphasis on time for reflection and during his first year in the school has made constructive moves to conform more closely to the legislation on collective worship: there is now a theme for each week of the school year and this is displayed for pupils to see on the corridor, in this way they have tutor time reflection on the days they do not have an assembly. This Head has shocked staff by drawing together the whole school three times a year, at the end of each term. (In another section of this study 'the reflective diary', there is an exploration of the sense of fear that many staff feel in schools bringing the whole school population together in one place.) A big focus within these whole school assemblies is rewards but nonetheless, the Head is inputting community by bringing everyone together in order to review the previous term and look forward to the next.

Reinforcing the importance attached to collective worship in this school is the fact that the Year 9 assembly to be observed went ahead in spite of the fact that the room was full of props for the first night of the school's drama production that day. The observed assemblies were quite different by way of media usage – the first case study school teacher used a power-point presentation that was very easy for pupils to access being visual. It was also personalised by the teacher using testimony from former pupils. The glaringly obvious aspect of the second assembly was the use of the word 'bloody' in such a formal situation with knowledge of an observer taking notes, plus the sense in which the teacher was modelling the very behaviour that many pupils will be reprimanded for displaying in school.

There was, therefore, the negative aspect of hypocrisy occurring; pupils know that this

teacher is a Muslim and that he draws Muslim pupils together on occasions, for example,

during Ramadan therefore they would assume that his behaviour would be exemplary by

anyone's standards. This school's postal questionnaires had revealed far less usage of audio-

visual material with just three supporters of this medium, their most favoured practice being

the celebration of non-Christian festivals and readings from holy books.

Both leaders of collective worship during the observations emphasised to the pupils

the importance of their identity with the school and its aims. The second case study school

wanted pupils to realise the importance of team work and taking pride in the team of which

they are a part. Again, this was personalised by the teacher saying how he, too, played for a

football team and experienced pride when they won a match. Support for assembly as a

citizenship experience for pupils was evident in both schools as was a stress on working hard

to achieve. Neither assembly included a prayer or reflection time. Both schools had a

'thought for the day' system in place for tutors to use with their classes when they are not in

collective worship, the first school gathering pupils together in their year group three times

more often than the second one. In contrast the first case study school never draws pupils

together beyond the year group cluster. Kohn (1993:29) would consider that the second case

study school was misguided by putting such an intense focus on rewards. His view is that

they are counter-productive and actually kill pupils' intrinsic motivation (1993:271).

The first school had taken the unusual step, in a non-denominational context, of employing a

chaplain and it seems as though this failed because quite what her job should be was not

clear to any of the parties concerned. Neither of the case study schools commonly uses the term 'collective worship'.

Both Heads said that their practice would not alter if there were no longer a legal requirement to deliver collective worship and this would appear to be because their practice is what is rational and realistic in educational and spiritual terms in non-denominational state education, an indicator of which is the non-use of the term 'collective worship'. In spite of what the law requires these Heads have steered their schools into recognition of the importance of the school gathering as a community, of raising pupil awareness of their citizenship challenges and the aims of education, as well as stimulating the spiritual dimension of life in a multi-cultural setting. In both case study schools a member of the senior leadership team was present, indicating the schools' recognition of the importance of this time.

The local SACRE for the second case study school chose not to prioritise collective worship in their work as they felt there was a distinct lack of interest from all levels in education. The government, OfSTED and the local secondary schools were content with the status quo and did not appear to welcome change. The Head of Religious Education at case study school 2 was a teacher representative on the SACRE as was the Head Teacher of the first case study school which also hosted the meeting at its site during school hours in March 2010. The SACRE for the first case study school had just welcomed a humanist onto their board, indicating some forward thinking, as the makeup of such a group is prescriptive in the 1988 ERA – see the literature review, chapter 2. Their discussion also reveals how motivated

they are to prevent any of the schools in their locality being deemed by OfSTED as inadequate in any way regarding the teaching of Religious Education and the quality of the collective worship they deliver. The changed emphasis of OfSTED's brief in this field was also made clear.

The views of the local authority advisers, as ascertained by the 'expert witness' statements, are relevant to this research on more than one level. Firstly, the adviser is potentially a key person in the progress of a school. They are experienced professionals who have an overview of authority wide educational practice (and often a sound national picture); they are able to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the schools in their localities and so if religious education and collective worship practice were of dubious standing in a school, the local authority adviser would be one of the first people to be called upon for help and advice. It is also likely that, as the first case study school makes clear the adviser would be pro-active in trying to get into a school that was suspected of being weak in these fields, to improve their performance. However, not all Heads or individual teachers welcome what could be seen as interference or scrutiny by an adviser.

So, as figure 4 shows, the local authority adviser has a role designated by the government in convening the SACRE meetings, with all the administrative arrangements that these will entail as well as ensuring the balance of the membership. The SACRE is a conduit for government policy, which is why government inaction regarding collective worship, resulted in a positive decision by one of the two SACREs not to pursue their original plan of drawing up guidelines for collective worship. The SACRE and the local authority adviser as its

Chairperson stand between the legislation and the schools – they also represent the community having an input into the schools' practice and with minutes of their meetings accessible on their website to inform interested parties, locally and nationally, of the discussions and activities of this key group of people.

Secondly, the local authority advisers are important sources of expertise in the fields of religious education and collective worship and so their views are seen as valuable because of their knowledge and experience. During the course of this research I came across two local authorities, one in London and one in the North West that bought in consultants to run the SACRE and advise schools on these matters. This has occurred because of the move away from subject specialist advisers to generic 'school improvement' officers geared to supporting schools in getting through inspections and improving performance in league tables of GCSE results. Some authorities have been able to retain their religious education subject specialist for this purpose but where they have been lost then some form of replacement has been found, proving the point that distinctive expertise is required for these matters and not least the chairing of the local SACRE group. In this way, above all other advisers, these key people are the experts that this research wanted to draw upon. The personal views of the advisers of the case study schools will not necessarily directly influence the schools with which they work and I'm certain this would typify the national picture. Their role is to interpret the government legislation for the schools and to encourage adherence to it. However, what the expert witness statements of this research were designed to do was to find out to what degree the advisers would like to see a change

in the government's stance on collective worship and what practice they consider currently

reflects their schools and could or would benefit them.

CHAPTER 7. KEY THEMES EMERGING FROM THE RESEARCH

"By definition nobody can be compelled to worship - true, but you can be forced to repeat words that become more meaningless with every repetition, until they become a focus for dislike or even hate." Lisa Hart-Collins, Tameside teacher and experienced leader of collective worship, expert witness respondent.

Introduction

This chapter draws together the strands of primary research and then cross references these findings with the secondary sources cited in the two literature review chapters. The outcomes are grouped together under relevant headings that have been identified from the material that emerged. In this way, the postal questionnaires to teachers who lead collective worship and heads of religious education, along with questionnaires to Christians, teachers and non-teachers, the two case study schools, the participant observation reflective diary and the expert witness propositions are drawn together to highlight similarities and differences. The ideas that have overlapped and reinforced one another from each of the research methods used are here drawn together to form a picture of collective worship in England in the twenty first century. Suggestions about its future as an integral part of non-denominational state education – what historically has frequently been called 'secular' education are a consequence of the findings.

The key themes emerged from considering the responses to the range of questions that was used to gain information from teachers and other related professionals, as well as the two observed assemblies. Each strand of this research seemed to evolve its own headings for reporting, but in this final drawing together of all the outcomes, the sub-headings are

those which most obviously allow a focus on the multiple layered key findings across the board. To a great extent the original key questions for this research emerged from my experiences as a teacher and the issues that I had reflected on over many years of observing and leading collective worship and then the extent to which, as a Christian believer myself, I could view the experience as spiritually beneficial to pupils.

Clearly the physical gathering of the school for an assembly has community and citizenship connotations. Morality is another important theme that has been an integral part of assemblies since their institution, whether couched within religious belief or a secular context such as that of twenty first century England. Secularisation is a process that is accepted as taking place today, for example, In The British Social Attitudes Survey 2011, 43% of respondents said they had no faith, as opposed to 31% in 1983 - so the juxtaposition of collective worship in schools needs to be reconciled with this and the legislation governing collective worship seems incongruous - the current pressure for it to be changed is ever increasing. Probably the most educationally unpalatable aspects of the legislation are that of 'worship' taking place in non-denominational schools and that this worship is instructed to be broadly 'Christian'. In a plural society, which necessarily implies multi-cultural schools, worship distinctive of any one religious group is not going to be easy to justify and especially not in a democratic society.

In contrast to the 'broadly Christian' wording of the legislation, this research has encouraged interviewees at the case study schools, the heads of religious education and the expert witness respondents to consider 'a market-place of values' as a possible rationale for

collective worship in the twenty first century, so this area of understanding needed

discussion and exploration. However, it was also important to track what role Christianity

and Christians play in collective worship today and what their view was of this activity in the

future.

On account of collective worship drawing the school community together physically, it is

this dimension of school life more than anything else that is seen as the ethos builder and

the 'mass media' conduit for the practical, moral, social and political messages that are

transmitted in an assembly. It is within an assembly that a pupil is likely to experience

feelings of belonging to the school – pride in its achievements; identity with its destiny and

fate, as well as that of the individuals within it. This points to notions of the pupils as citizens

of the school and the content of many assembly themes will point to their citizenship in

wider social contexts beyond the school. Finally it was interesting to ascertain from

respondents what they personally considered to be the main issues relating to collective

worship today and its future, both regarding possible legislative changes and their own

practice and institutional lives.

Secularisation

Believers were in a minority amongst the teachers surveyed; twenty eight out of the

thirty five (80%) who responded to this question said that they were atheists or agnostics.

Even amongst the believers one respondent described their identification as a believer by

qualifying it as loosely as, "In that there is something out there". Also a faith position for the

leader of collective worship was not seen as essential – 75% saw it as irrelevant what their

faith stance was. This is in stark contrast to the results of the Christian survey where

respondents were keen for people with faith and particularly Christians, to take assemblies

whether they were teachers or local clergy.

The 1888 Cross Report took the view that:

"....... it is of the highest importance that the teachers who are charged with moral training
of the scholars should continue to take part in the religious instruction. We should regard
any separation of the teacher from the religious teaching of the school as injurious to the
morals of and secular training of the scholars" (Cross Report part IV, Chapter 1, pp. 122-7).

Then in the early twentieth century parliamentarians continued to express disquiet at the

thought of atheists or agnostics leading a school. The Duke of Devonshire on the 5[th]

December 1902, firstly spoke of it being 'monstrous' that in schools, wholly supported by the

state it would be impossible for a non-conformist (Christian) to be a head teacher. Equally

monstrous he said was that it would be possible for a 'secularist' to become a head teacher

(Hansard 110:540). Later, regarding the ERA of 1988, Sir Rhodes Boyson similarly stated

that: "..I will not say that a school led by agnostics, with agnostic staff could not be a good

school, but in most cases a school will be better if it has religious unity and feeling" (Hansard

volume 123:843).

In twenty first century multi-cultural Britain where Christianity has low support by

way of church attendance, (just 15% of a 7,000 sample going to church at least every month

according to the 2009 Tear Fund survey – www.tearfund.org) the collective worship

legislation makes demands that schools struggle to deliver in many areas: Christian worship, as respondents commented, is alien to pupils these days and equally as difficult for teachers to lead with integrity.

Similarly, table 1 reinforces the lack of religious aids that are used today in delivering collective worship. Power point presentations are the most popular medium and this reflects modern society in general as well as the highly electronic social world of teenagers which renders them particularly receptive to this medium. The observed assembly at case study school 1 was a power point presentation and the deputy head at the same school reflected back on a similar presentation that he had made just a few weeks earlier where he had cloned pictures of his school pupils engaged in various activities, in order to illustrate the points he wanted to get across during the assembly.

I refer also to a colleague at a school where I taught, spoken of in the participant observation reflective diary who always chose the medium of power point as the mechanism through which to deliver collective worship as did the ICT teacher when leading assemblies at the same school – these particular staff did not have an alternative style. One teacher respondent also said that they found the internet a tremendous source of ready made material for assemblies, though no clarification was offered as to whether the reference was to assembly sites or material in general that could be adapted to fit the delivery of the message.

Seventy years ago assembly books were published and used by schools that gave readings, prayers and recommended hymns for the liturgical calendar as experienced in schools, i.e. Christmas, Easter, the new academic year and so on. Gradually what Gent (1984) calls the 'mini-church' models of school worship have become unworkable in state schools and so have been abandoned in favour of material that pupils find accessible and leaders of school worship know to be more relevant to the pupils in front of them and so more educationally justifiable. For example, moral values was mentioned 5 times by teachers in relation to the 'best purpose' of collective worship – an indication of the more liberal view of what assemblies should be aiming to achieve; this was second only to teachers commenting 6 times that the best purpose of collective worship was to create a positive ethos and a feeling of belonging to the school community. "I object to religious worship being seen as educational" was stated twice by teacher respondents to the questionnaire, when answering the question about why the faith stance (or not) of the leader of collective worship matters.

Both head teachers of the case study schools happened personally to be practising Christians yet neither felt that worship was appropriate in state schools. The Head of case study school one, in an ideal world would want to have a multi-faith chapel but this was about the freedom of the individual young person to choose to worship at a time convenient to them or to arrange their own group worship: this was not to be a facility for teachers to impose worship on pupils rather for pupils to direct and explore their own spirituality, the Head wanted pupils to know that they were more than exam fodder.

"The message in any assembly has to be relevant to all pupils – all faiths and those of no faith," said the Deputy Head at case study school one, this view is absolutely in harmony with that of the ideological movements who want at least three elements removed from the legislation 'worship', the singularity of status given to Christianity and the implication of a 'given' higher being overtly stated in the wording of circular 1/94. 16 of the 36 (45%) staff surveyed through the postal questionnaire said that there would be no change in their practice should there no longer be a legal obligation to deliver collective worship – given that 7 respondents did not give a response to this question this could be considered to be 55% of respondents and this is precisely what the head teacher of case study school 1 said too. This resonates with Richard Cheetham who concludes from his research on collective worship that, "... the teachers had to rationalise a position with which they were comfortable in order to live with themselves as 'bona fide' leaders of collective worship (Cheetham 2001:4).

Similarly, teacher dissatisfaction with their role of leading collective worship, identifying it consistently as the least favoured aspect of their work is a strong indicator of their ambivalence over exactly what leading collective worship is all about and how it should be done 'legally'. As in my own experience, as well as in the course of this research, I have not come across any training being offered by senior staff for this role (indicating the lack of importance attached to the role by the head teacher and perhaps an acknowledgement that individual staff must be true to their own identity, religious or otherwise) it would seem that teachers merely emulate what they have observed as being culturally acceptable to the particular school in which they find themselves. This is a role that makes teachers publicly

vulnerable to both their colleagues and pupils – so perhaps a role to be feared or avoided

and there are certainly teachers who would never apply for a post that involved leading

collective worship in the job description.

Richard Cheetham, the Bishop of Kingston, who researched collective worship for his

doctorate in feels that the arguments pertaining to collective worship are:

" ...... rooted in profound questions, concerning the nature of religious belief and its truth, the philosophy of education and how matters of faith are to be handled in public contexts (especially state schools) in a plural, liberal society which has still not entirely lost the influence of its Christian heritage." (2001:4)

However, it seems to me that Cheetham's wording: "..a society which has still not

entirely lost the influence of its Christian heritage" could be changed to a society where in

some Christian sections it is, "*fearful* of losing the influence of its Christian heritage".

Consider the Church of England's Director of Education for the London diocese, commenting

in 2010 as an expert witness for this study:

"England is historically Christian and as such needs to refer to a Christian heritage in its school legislation" and later "I hope they do not opt for a secularising (non-faith) stance as this will not reflect England or parental demand."

A range of comments obtained from the survey to Christians in this study evidenced

even greater fears about the loss of Christian heritage influence. These were not used in the

chapter reporting on the primary data because they were such individualised remarks, but

brought together here they add weight to a final argument about Christians fearing loss of

ground in society:

"Young people must surely benefit from a reminder of the God to whom they are accountable and of the Christian heritage of their nation, not least in the face of the catastrophic erosion of moral standards in society";

"This is a so-called Christian country we are being overrun by other faiths";

"We should stop surrendering our culture and Christian witness to others. These things have made Britain great, but they are being rapidly eroded by the current atheistic and humanistic attitudes of many in positions of power. This is not to despise other religions and cultures in any way";

"These days most changes seem to lower standards and weaken authority – in this case, of

God's word";

"As a nominally 'Christian country' schools should uphold this tradition of teaching the one

and only way anyone can be saved";

"Many in the UK schools have greater understanding of minority religions and little grasp of

Christianity – or a 'confused' mixture of all religions";

"I am fed up being told that we must do as other faiths want. Perhaps the government may

one day listen to those who were born in the country";

"Because our whole culture as a nation has been founded on the Christian faith and because

the Christian faith is true";

"In state schools the law should uphold Christian values and principles. In faith schools of other religions than Christianity, they should be free, within reason, to worship according to their religion";

"As a Christian who believes in the one true living God, I think allowing other faith worship

encourages their false ideas and puts Christian families in a wrong position";

"This is a supposedly Christian country and other countries would not allow this in their

countries".

Such remarks from Christians all point to a fear of loss of cultural identity as well as

the churches' apparent loss of (evangelistic) voice in twenty first century England –

Christianity just appears to them to be one of many religious voices and not the singular one

it once was. The reference to '..other countries would not allow this in their countries'

alludes to issues of democracy and citizenship in a way of thinking with which today's

teachers would generally not want their young people to align themselves. In other words,

those in government in society shape what is allowed to happen through legislation and that

democracies like Britain should take cues on policies from non-democratic dictatorships and

autocracies.

Copley (1992:77f) in his exploration of the use of silence in collective worship

concludes that,

"The use of silence as a medium for part of collective worship seems to owe more to its
perceived educational value than to any religious education. This use of silence might be
said to possess a political value as a lowest common denominator that avoids the use of
contentious or divisive words which might offend specific faith groups or secular or atheistic
groups and lead to more withdrawals or applications to SACRE for dispensations".

So here, just as was referred to with the school worship books of old that are no longer

workable, silence has become more popular as a 'neutral' practice that has taken over from

prayers and 'sung prayers' i.e. hymns. Copley makes very clear in his research that the use

of silence in collective worship appears to have little to do with the denominational use of silence by the Quakers or Society of Friends or eastern meditation and so it is not to be interpreted as a religious act but as one of political astuteness on the part of teachers. The head of religious education at case study school 1 had developed a peace garden at the school which was also intended as a quiet space, as well as a memorial to a pupil who had died. This again is an 'inclusive' way of stimulating spiritual development in pupils. Their contribution to the physical work involved in this garden gives them 'ownership' and another way of contributing to the spirituality of the school.

Both case study schools had staff who commented at interview on the alien nature of worship to today's young people. The deputy head at case study school two reinforced this point, succinctly, by saying:

"Collective worship needs to be more in keeping with twenty first century life and thereby more sensitive to all our pupils' backgrounds, including those of an atheistic and agnostic stance."

One of the heads of religious education said that, "Worship implicates a God – the appropriateness of this in a non-denominational (secular) school creates issues for staff and students." Yet Circular 1/94 is quite clear in its exposition of the word 'worship' as being "... concerned with reverence or veneration paid to a divine being or power" (paragraph 57, page 21). In its statement of aims, paragraph 50 says that:

"Collective worship in schools should aim to provide the opportunity for pupils to worship God .... to encourage participation and response, whether through active involvement in the presentation of worship or through listening to and joining in the worship offered..."

Whereas originally the nineteenth and early twentieth century legislation linked religious education and collective worship, in 1988 the two were separated much to the consternation of Michael Alison speaking on behalf of the church authorities and this is how it has remained ever since. In this research the heads of religious education bore this out in that none of them had a responsibility to deliver collective worship linked to their role.

Christianity and collective worship

Overwhelmingly, the survey to Christians conducted for this research revealed that the Christian element of the current legislation on collective worship was appreciated by them. For a range of reasons relating to culture and history as well as purely religious ones, Christian respondents did not want to see the Christian strand disappearing. The 14 Christian teachers unanimously said that collective worship was helpful to Christianity rather than unhelpful and 17 respondents of the total of 29 (59%) said that collective worship in its present form was not outdated. Rather differently in the 1940s, Mr. Lindsay was suggesting in parliament that there was a strong and very widely held feeling that by enforcing a thing (that is, worship) in school, you are not doing a good service to the Church itself.

The primary data has shown, however, that Christians in schools tend to have much more realistic understandings of collective worship, than those involved in other walks of life. The limited number of Christian teachers in schools means that there are few who can lead a Christian act of collective worship even if they considered it to be beneficial to pupils.

The politician, Mr. Gallacher, prior to the 1944 Education Act suspected that the act of

collective worship being made compulsory was all about the Church of England tightening its

grip on the country (Hansard 397 H.C. DEB. 5 s / 2406). He states that, "..a mere act of

worship means nothing" (Hansard 397 H.C. DEB 5 s / 2407) and "It is obvious that religion

has had to force itself on the state, or force the state to come in, to give it some hope of

survival" (Hansard 397 H.C. DEB. 5 s / 2405).

Other politicians of the day likened the non-denominational religious worship of the

schools to a new nationalised religion comparable to Hitler's Nazi German form of

Christianity, saying it was 'a blasphemous fable and a dangerous deceit'. Similarly, at the

start of the twenty first century many teachers, some SACREs, secular and humanistic

organisations as well as some Christians are calling for Christian worship to be restricted to

denominational schools and secular schools to have inclusive assemblies that reflect today's

world and its twenty first century values.

One politician, Mr. Thomas, complained in 1944 that religious teaching and worship

in the schools was not producing adherents to churches once they left school. He blamed

the real distance that lay between what pupils experienced in schools and genuine church

worship for this, implying that school worship was not motivating young people to find a

church to continue Christian worship when they were cut loose from the imposition of

compulsory education (chapter 2). A minority of respondents to the Christian surveys in this

study similarly commented that the false context of worship in school was alienating for

pupils rather than it being an endearing experience helpful to Christianity. This has

commonly been expressed to me, by Christians, as that of just enough of a touch of Christianity to disenchant pupils for life. Consider in this vein, how even in 1942 Lieutenant Commander Gurney Braithwaite (chapter 2) was commenting on the ridicule with which boys at the Quaker school held their worship times. Similarly, the quote at the start of this chapter from a Tameside teacher shows how the compulsion and assumption of compliance can lead to loathing and this was also overtly mentioned by another expert witness.

The major world religions (other than Christianity) and collective worship

Christianity, on account of its prominence within the legislation, has been given the above section of its own. Here, there is a sense of how the other major world religions, as opposed to denominational strands of Christianity, are faring according to the evidence of this study.

In terms of most favoured methods used by the surveyed leaders of collective worship, world religion elements fared much better than traditional Christian hymns and corporately recited prayers. Interestingly, the literature review of chapter 3 includes reference to some old style texts teachers bought to assist them in their delivery of collective worship. Lloyd (1974) and it should be noted that this was reprinted twice, in 1975 and 1981, always quotes The Lord's Prayer as a ritual for following the written prayer that he recommends as a set accompaniment to his story, biblical reading and hymn. It is not made clear whether this would be recited by pupils as well – I suspect that was the intended practice. The celebration of non-Christian festivals was supported by 50% of the

sample and after the popularity of audio-visual and musical media it was the fourth out of

ten possible vehicles of expression of a message for assemblies. Biblical readings and those

from non-Christian religions were virtually identical in usage (Table 1).

The survey to Christians revealed an intolerance of other faiths and an overt desire to

defend what was seen as British national religious heritage. The Head of case study school

one, though, would like worship to be voluntary and casual, with the possibilities of pupils

organising their own services if desired through the use of a multi-faith chapel space. This

would be in addition to the inclusive assemblies that had no intention of bringing about

worship for pupils, but did unite pupils in their common humanity and the high ideals and

morals attached to human rights, democracy and citizenship across the world.

The Bloxham Project states on its website that, " .... all pupils need to understand and

respect other faith traditions. In multi-faith contexts, where the school community

incorporates pupils from several traditions, each should be encouraged to share its own

perspective on worship, and collective acts of worship should seek the greatest degree of

commonality." So presumably Terence Copley's use of silence ties in with this in that the use

of silence to reflect on messages in assemblies enabling all pupils to participate from

whichever faith stance they are from (1992:77).

Blishen's findings in 1969 are quoted in Meighan and Harber (2007:23) where pupils'

assemblies "....were interpreted as a form of indoctrination that represented a failure to

look at a wide range of religions, philosophies and moralities." So clearly the Christian thrust

of the legislation was overtly filtering down into the assembly content affecting the

experiences of pupils who were critical of such narrowness.

Cheetham found that his teacher respondents were fearful of dealing with religions

other than Christianity for fear of causing offence or getting something wrong (2000:78). An

easy method of rectifying this would be for teachers who lack the knowledge and confidence

to deal with the major world religions within assemblies to find pupils, teachers, parents and

local clerics who could – most local SACREs will provide lists of potential speakers from a

wide religious base.

Collective worship and moral values

The Cross (majority) Report in 1888 found that witnesses were practically unanimous

in believing that religious training was desired by parents (as still does the Church of

England's Director of Education, expert witness, for the diocese of London in 2010). It

supported biblical instruction and rejected the separation of religion and secular instruction

in the nineteenth century. "H.M.I.s' first duty should be to inquire into and report on the

moral training and condition of the schools" (Maclure 1978:129). Interestingly, the minority

report produced by eight members of the Royal Commission, accepted the importance of

character formation, but doubted whether 'moral training can satisfactorily be tested by

inspection' (Maclure 1978:130).   So in the nineteenth century religious training, biblical

instruction and moral training figured highly in the thinking of educational legislators. One

hundred and ten years later teachers in state secular schools still highly value moral

guidance but offered within a framework of a modern secular society and the school community as a reflection of that society, where morality provides a bond between diverse religious and non-religious groups. It appears that we now need new forms of solidarity in a multi-faith, multi-cultural secular society/school – perhaps the common denominator could be found in the values and behaviours of democratic citizenship.

So, as the Deputy Head in the second case study school rightly points out and supported by the literature review of this research, the original intentions of collective worship were to cement the religious values of society, building on the notion of Britain being a Christian country and the education system having been founded upon Christian values. He also feels that, "..collective worship as the legislation suggests doesn't happen or not in the religious sense of the term" in his school. He said that what the staff try to do is, "…. the moral message on a weekly basis"; he said that he prefers to see moral education around collective worship, however, the thought for the day (that takes place in classrooms) *could* be religious in interpretation.

The Head of the second Case Study school said that, " ...right and wrong is central to modern assemblies – to get students to reflect, self-reflect. It's the job of religious education to enable students to *know* about different religions". So here a line is being drawn between the work of religious education specialists in highlighting the range of beliefs of the major world religions and the experience of twenty first century pupils in assemblies being stimulated to reflect on morality that makes sense to them, whatever their ideological position with an emphasis on them as individuals, not them merely acquiring knowledge.

In this way a modern function of collective worship appears to be emerging as that of teacher or 'stimulator' of 'morality' but not as tied to religion as the deputy head at the second case study school said was once true of collective worship – perhaps a common humanity moral denominator.

The function of collective worship in twenty first century society according to the Head of Religious Education in case study school 2 should be:

".. to promote community cohesion; encourage tolerance and understanding, as well as knowledge of other cultures as opposed to other religions. Worship is a strange word to use educationally, as the formal view of it is of hands joined together and eyes closed".

The Head in case study 1 school also referred to his assembly that had had a moral philosophy theme about 'truth' which he had illustrated historically but then threw out to the pupils to consider in a twenty first century context. He is reported by the Head of RE as being a man who believes in high moral standards and conveys this very clearly to both staff and pupils.

The deputy head at the first case study school resisted the notion of 'a market place of values' but instead said that he sought to 'grow values' within pupils and emphasised how in a multi-cultural school the message in any assembly had to be relevant to all.

The Ekklesia directors in their 2010 letter to Michael Gove requesting legislative reform on collective worship state that:

"Assemblies have a vital educational role – they can bring a school together in celebration of common values, and can assist pupils in exploring questions of purpose, value and meaning together. Teachers can and do deliver assemblies which are accessible, inspirational, and linked to the curriculum. These aims, however, are not best served by a law that forces schools to hold acts of 'reverence or veneration paid to a divine being or power'."

Here, the organisation is quoting the wording of Circular 1/94 paragraph 57 which is specific in its usage of the terms divine being or power. This organisation indicates its recognition that assemblies are currently doing a good job in the area of common values and exploring purpose, value and meaning.

This is in contrast to the Cross Report of 1888 which clearly indicated that in terms of the general sweep of children in society – the most efficient vehicle for passing on morality was the elementary school as opposed to that which was inherent in the religious teaching of the Sunday Schools, hence its wording:

"That it is of the highest importance that all children should receive religious and moral training .... that the evidence does not warrant the conclusion that such religious and moral training can be amply provided otherwise than through the medium of elementary schools" (Cross Report part IV, chapter 1, pp122-7).

 So an overt aim of the free elementary education system was to train children religiously and morally. Legislators were still not persuaded that morality could be well taught or demonstrated outside of the vehicle of religion. The divine being or power that circular 1/94 referred to still has legislative currency in late 2010 but was equally as important to the politicians of the late nineteenth century, perhaps indicative of a strand of cultural stagnation or resistance.

Similarly, Sir William Anson on the 24[th] March, 1902, spoke of the effect that he believed Christianity had on character: "But I do feel that religious teaching is a matter of the gravest importance to the country, not only because of its effect on character ..... " (Statute book 105:907). So again 'good' character is at this time inextricably linked in the minds of many with the religious teaching of Christianity in the regular state schools. The teacher questionnaire, (appendix 1) although having no direct question about morality in collective worship in it, yielded the second highest response of moral values in an open question about the 'best purposes of collective worship'. There were also five other remarks made that indicated the importance teachers placed on profiling morality.

Both case study schools practise 'thought for the day' in classrooms on the days when assemblies are not happening and they were described as being of moral and religious content. "Moral messages and these could be couched within admiration for a key figure, religious or otherwise, have a positive contribution to make to the development of all of us as human beings, not least young people in assemblies." This statement was given 90% support by the expert witness respondents, clearly indicating their belief that morality is vital, whether drawn from a religious or secular base and crucial to pupil development.

Building a community through collective worship

One head of religious education respondent said that,

".... the pupils feel like a community during assembly time, however, not related to religion. They rarely pray in this school: the issues discussed in assembly are often ethical, such as poverty, prejudice, etc." she commented.

One Head of R.E. respondent questioned the validity of the legal 'right of withdrawal' from what should be a communal educational experience, clearly indicating that to be inclusive, a school community ideally needed to have no legal 'get-out' clauses for any individual or group. Hence if the legislation were ever to be changed the nature of assemblies should be such that there would be nothing offensive from which any parent should want their child withdrawn. One head of R.E. said that a way to make collective worship more inclusive is to focus on the values, "we share within the school community".

A fellow doctoral student at Birmingham University who teaches religious education in a local sixth form college commented to the researcher that the staff had had a number of discussions about instituting an act of collective worship as they felt that the organisation lacked cohesion and that this would be a mechanism by which a spirit of community could be engendered.

The Head Teacher at case study school 1 made explicit the fact that pupils were not brought together in assemblies primarily to comply with the law but rather for the purposes of positive identity regardless of the individual faith stances of pupils:

"The assembly is an opportunity to reinforce identity – it is key to get one fifth of the school community together, a very important part of school life. In a society of nearly two thousand people, parents are fearful that their child will be lost, but that unit coming

together supports identity, we don't bring them together because of the law. We do not tread on the ground of the religions, we have pupils who go to the mosque and others to the Sikh Temple, we are a 'collective' of people and it is not the 'worship' that is important but the 'collective'".

This Head also said that they take a pragmatic response to the legislation. They use tutorial time, within which the 'thought for the week' happens and they give this as realistic coverage as possible. Together with the assemblies, the latter messages reinforce the distinctive school ethos.

The observed assembly of case study school 1 opened up the sense of a global community to pupils by introducing the writings of a Ghanaian pupil who had visited the school on an exchange programme. This message was reinforced by the statement that it was hoped that some pupils from the school would likewise go and stay in Ghana.

The Head in case study school 2 feels that the physical gathering of the school is very important so since his appointment in April 2009, he has chosen to bring the whole school together at least three times a year, but the logistics of it are very demanding, which is why it doesn't happen more frequently. It is also his intention not to lose assembly momentum by cancelling them during exam time, but to make use of the sports hall in the sports centre for ongoing assemblies during this time – it is only a little farther for pupils and staff to walk, but clearly to him it is worth it.

Christian teachers felt that local clergy should be involved in collective worship as supporters of the teachers' role – three respondents mentioned this and one explicitly stated:

"Expecting the state to 'teach' a faith faithfully is unhelpful unless those faithful to that faith are used to teach it, how much more so regarding worship which assumes personal devotion to that faith".

One Christian teacher respondent also said that: " ..... there were not many people confident to deliver it / or not wanting to". Table 1 shows that the teachers who have a responsibility for collective worship rarely invite visitors in to participate in this aspect of school life. So in reality, the capacity of local clergy to lead collective worship in the schools surveyed was extremely limited.

"The idea of an assembly is so entrenched I can't see it disappearing. Its use as an agenda setter is too important" was a view held by one teacher respondent, demonstrating the idea that teachers use this time to shape their school community.

Only one teacher questionnaire respondent felt that the physical gathering together of the school community at an assembly was merely 'relevant' – in contrast 55% saw it as 'very important' and 42% as 'important'.

Table 1 showed how the schools' usage of celebrating non-Christian festivals was higher than that of prayers or using the Bible or other holy books. Apart from the three most popular choices of audio-visual materials and music; recorded and live, this was the

next most important item of content for collective worship, perhaps indicating how schools want to build a community which includes overt respect for pupils of all religious persuasions. Similarly Copley's work (1992) on the use of silence in collective worship is an inclusive way of pupils having reflection time, as opposed to the more religious practice of prayer and as the postal questionnaire respondents quoted on page 171 of this study conclude, collective worship gives an opportunity for awe and wonder; appreciating things of worth and value; a holistic world view as well as the encouraging of a notion of other – all overlapping in an open-ended religiously or non-religiously inclusive way.

100% of the expert witnesses believed that, 'Regular, that is, at least "weekly" assemblies are very important to foster a sense of belonging to a community in children and young people' and they were unanimous in viewing collective worship as being good ethos builders. Similarly, 80% of this same sample believed that the powerful educational tool is in the 'collective' not the 'worship'.

Both case study schools use the 'thought for the day' in classrooms approach to conforming to the law. This is clearly a vehicle for moral and religious ideas to be thought about by pupils, but what it lacks is the community essence of the assembly and the larger groupings. Focus on this element was not a main thrust of the current study, but examination of the value of it from pupil and teacher perspectives would be very useful in any future research although Gill (2004:187) did not find this practice widespread in the schools she studied.

Collective worship as a citizenship builder

The 1902 the Balfour Act was considered to be the 'modernising' of the 1870 legislation, with the King's speech, referring to education as the, "..means to enable the intelligence of the country to be applied to the work of life to best advantage.......better able to help themselves and better able to serve their country" (Statute book 101:95). Here is an overt reference to citizenship responsibilities whether it is taken that it refers to military or civilian service.

Also in the King's speech to parliament in 1902, the education bill is referred to and the comment made that: "I hope that whatever the government do they will introduce a system on broad democratic lines, maintaining popular control......" (Statute book 101:108) The democratic theme of the education system is made explicit as is the input of parents and 'the man on the street'. The expert witness propositions of this research contained one such statement about democracy: "Citizenship, human rights and democratic themes are powerful messages for any community." 90% of the respondents considered this statement to be true, indeed 'somewhat obvious' – one said:

"These are all powerful areas for any community, including the school community, and in my experience (as an Ofsted inspector) *are* included in collective worship and within the curriculum";
and "True – but who could disagree?"

Clearly the latter respondent (a university lecturer) had not allowed for the kind of comments that emerged from my survey to Christians where themes deviating from the

word of God, the Christian message as 'the truth' and the singular way of reaching God were prevalent as interpretations of what collective worship should be about.

Prior to the 1944 Education Act Mr. Ivor Thomas MP, asked Butler, The Secretary of State for Education, in parliament whether the Board of Education had issued, or was preparing to issue, suggestions to teachers as to how they could, ".. put before their pupils at an appropriate age, the democratic ideals for which we are fighting and so prepare the children in our schools for their responsibilities as citizens?" (Hansard 385 H.C. DEB 5 s / 860). Butler responded in the affirmative saying that guidance had been given. The issue was then further explored by other politicians with Dr. Russell Thomas wanting clarity on the 'many different definitions of democratic ideals'. Then Mr. Sorensen asks if these matters would be linked to the religious and ethical instruction in schools, as he felt that democracy was intimately linked with these two principles. The following year, he again raises the matter and asks that there should be an emphasis on the ethical criterion and democratic principles in the 'translation of religious beliefs to school children' (Hansard 386 H.C. DEB. 5 s / 1418).

The proposition of this research for the 'expert witnesses' relating to citizenship, human rights and democracy being appropriate themes for twenty first century assemblies, is clearly not a new angle, but one recognised again and again in the twentieth century, but previously also linked to Christianity, see chapter 2 for a range of relevant parliamentarian remarks made between 1888 and 1988.

Osler and Starkey (2005:20) argue that we need to be provided with,

'......a framework from which a school or any other learning community can derive a set of explicit, shared democratic values. These texts *(The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child)* provide us with a set of principles against which we can critically reflect on our own culture, values, beliefs and behaviours and those of our fellow citizens' (Osler and Starkey 2005:20).

This could be a twenty first century definition of Collective Worship: the exploration of values, principles, culture, beliefs, behaviours; there is no possible topic for an assembly that could lie outside of this framework. Osler & Starkey (2005:20) also suggest that, 'Education for Cosmopolitan Citizenship, founded on human rights, will enable learners to recognise our common humanity and provide a sense of belonging to a global community'. Twenty first century collective worship should reflect Britain and the wider context of the world, so that pupils can see themselves as part of a much bigger picture than the often closed world of the immediate school community where they are gathered.

The Report of the Advisory Group on Citizenship in 1998 was the forerunner to legislation the following year that made citizenship teaching compulsory within the school curriculum, with teachers being asked to audit where it was occurring, when and in which subjects. The three main aspects of the working group's definition of citizenship in schools were that pupils should learn about social and moral responsibility; community involvement and political literacy (1998:40f). Assemblies are actually acknowledged as contributing to

the overall climate and ethos of the school that 'have a significant impact on the effectiveness of citizenship education" (1998:36).

Discussion around the notion of 'a market-place of values' being a useful twenty first century rationale for collective worship.

John Hull, expert witness, said that he did not 'care for' the term, 'a market-place of values' as he felt that market forces had nothing in common with spirituality. Similarly, the deputy head teacher at the first case study school felt that the market-place was in conflict with the values of a school, where values would more appropriately be 'grown' rather than bought or sold with the element of competition inherent in this. The Ofsted Inspector, expert witness, also said that the term 'marketplace' would suggest that, ".... values are then 'up for grabs' or 'for sale or selection' and this seems to trivialise values which are the lifeblood of those who hold them, those of religious persuasion or those of no religious persuasion. The term 'marketplace' is therefore problematic....." Yet why I have found it to be an attractive rationale for assemblies is precisely because a marketplace displays what is available and people are free to browse before deciding on any purchase - similarly an assembly amongst the many things that it does can profile to pupils the many different philosophies of life that people can adopt in the twenty first century and with which they could choose to identify.

One head of R.E. said that students and staff will bring their own values to an act of collective worship and that for some these values will make them resistant to participating.

Also, that a way to make collective worship more inclusive is to focus on the values, "we share within the school community". One head of R.E. respondent said that they probably agreed with the notion of 'a marketplace of values' but commented that: "Collective worship isn't the only way that values are imposed on pupils. In a school there are different staff and different religions represented with various views." However, it was made clear that within the religious education department values and religion are not imposed rather there is an encouragement for pupils to question and search for understandings.

Finally this respondent said that collective worship makes many assumptions and has a captive audience and felt that "today's society is more sceptical". Another Head of R.E. respondent commented that 'a market place of values' appears to be the notion that their school takes: "We value the morals religion is teaching, but present them in a humanist, secular manner. Religion is rarely overtly mentioned".

Collective worship dysfunctions

Kohn (1993:29) would consider that the second case study school was misguided by putting such an intense focus on rewards in assemblies. His view is that they are counter-productive and actually kill pupils' intrinsic motivation (1993:271). A further dysfunction, in this school, though probably less controversial, was the year head's use of nonstandard English shouting that, "England had won (fictitiously) the World Cup – isn't that fantastic; they'd won the 'bloody' world cup". In setting high standards of spoken English amongst

pupils this was not exemplary and it is questionable whether it would have occurred in an Ofsted observed assembly. Pupil use of such a word in any classroom would lead to admonition so it has to be seen as unacceptable for any teacher to use one such term and especially when that teacher is a leader and role model of six other staff and 160 pupils at that particular moment in time.

The participant observation reflective diary recorded dysfunctional assemblies with negative messages for pupils and collective worship used for social control purposes as well as a focus on rewarding pupils that Kohn and his school of thought consider damaging to pupils (1993:29).

The Crick Report on citizenship education in 1998 actually acknowledges that there is "considerable influence both positive and negative, on pupils' learning and development (The Advisory Group on Citizenship, 1998:36), through whole school practices," overtly stating assemblies as one such vehicle through which implicit and explicit messages are communicated to pupils. The warning from Crick is that:

"Schools need to consider how far their ethos, organisation and daily practices are consistent with the aim and purpose of citizenship education and affirm and extend the development of pupils into active citizens" (The Advisory Group on Citizenship, 1998:36).

The main issues facing collective worship today

Asked what they considered were the main issues facing collective worship today, one Head of R.E. said, "That worship implicates a God – the appropriateness of this in a non-denominational (secular) school creates issues for staff and students". A further head of R.E. said that,

"Staff are not religious and so don't want to be involved in collective worship. (So by implication they had been asked to be involved.) Also pupils are not 'churched' and so collective worship is an alien activity – neither do pupils want to sing."

A difficulty cited by one head of R.E. was the multicultural nature of the school population. Another R.E. respondent pointed to 'secularisation' as a key issue today, explaining that,

" .. in school, religious belief should be optional: worship is a private feature not related to school life". This echoes Cheetham's (2001:4) concern over how religion in 'public life', that is the school, is reconciled with the matters of diverse faith groups, the state and education. Copley (1999:74) similarly comments that many writers have been more concerned to provide material for teachers leading collective worship than to examine the, " ..the contortions required to equate education, worship and compulsion."

The individualism and freedom of twenty first century democratic living is exemplified by the head of case study school 1 who says that given the multi-cultural nature of the school space is given for Muslim pupils to worship according to the practice of their faith.

The Deputy Head in case study school 2 thinks that the original intentions of collective worship were to cement the religious values of society, building on the notion of Britain being a Christian country and the education system having been founded upon Christian values.

The Bloxham Project holds that the main issues for today regarding collective worship are:

"What is the cultural context in which young people are living?" (An echo of Wright Mills' three questions as discussed at the beginning of chapter 3.)
How are young people's values influenced or formed by the surrounding culture?
How can the school be a place where pupils develop a critical approach to their cultural context?
What is the core of young people's spirituality?
How can the riches of the Christian tradition be meaningfully conveyed to and shared with the young people?"

I would want to extend this latter issue to embrace the riches of other major world religions and my contention would be that this is best conveyed not in an invitation to join in any one style of worship led from the front, but in the believers themselves sharing what is important to them. This by implication is not a position far removed from The Bloxham Project's thinking and practice which is why one of their aims is to create dialogue with other faith groups.

The potential for legislative change

Tom Sutcliffe writing in The Independent Online (28/12/10) remarks that:

"This particular clause (i.e. on collective worship) in the 1944 Education Act is very widely ignored and probably unenforceable. It remains on the statute books only because politicians are disinclined to waste time on it and think that a repeal wouldn't get through the House of Lords anyway. British schoolchildren aren't daily subjected to theological brainwashing – and in any case the combination of the adjectives "mainly" and "broadly" open up a loophole large enough to drive a truck through."

Sutcliffe continues, reinforcing the point that school practices and the law share little

common ground by saying: ".....and since the legislation has virtually no practical effect it is

tempting to think that there is no practical point in wasting energy on getting it removed"

(The Independent Online, 28/12/10).

Ekklesia in its 2010 letter to Michael Gove requesting a change in the law also cites

teacher current non-compliance with the law as damaging to democracy in that it is just

being flouted. Two SACREs have also called for a national initiative on collective worship and

have contacted the Secretary of State to ask for a change to the law. Several others

comment that they would like to see a change in the statutory regulations. SACREs observe

that schools sometimes need to be reminded of the difference between assemblies and

collective worship (QCA SACRE reports 2006:15). According to the QCA 31% of SACRE

reports make little or no mention of collective worship and 'the belief is that non-compliance

with legislation in secondary schools remain high.'

Leonard (1988:24) comments on the changes that have taken place in the school

population, ethnically and religiously since 1944, as well as, 'the reduced extent of formal

Christianity'. He also recognises the developments in theological awareness so that several

hundred pupils meeting together from a variety of backgrounds, to sing incomprehensible words together,"...and to mumble what was called a prayer but for most of them did not merit the description" is odd in a way that it wasn't in 1944. Leonard suggests that 'to a thoughtful observer such a performance bears almost no resemblance to an act of worship' (Leonard 1988:24).

Marilyn Mason, Education Officer for the British Humanist Society, based author of BHA publications available on their website says that,

"Humanists endorse the educational value of school assemblies and their role in supporting shared values and the school community and ethos, but think that worship and prayers are inappropriate in situations where there is no shared religious faith. School assemblies can and should include the whole school community."

Copley (1992:74) considers that there are, "..contortions required to equate education, worship and compulsion". That is without factoring in the different culturally acceptable understandings of 'education' between the 1860s and the twenty first century, with all the decades that have lain in between.

One head of religious education said that, 'Worship implicates a god – the appropriateness of this in a non-denominational (secular) school creates issues for staff and students," yet this is what circular 1/94 indicates worship should be defined as: "... reverence or veneration paid to a divine being or power".

Another head of religious education pointed to secularisation as a key issue today saying that in school religious belief should be optional and equated worship with privacy

and not with the public shared life of a school community. Twenty first century living would

surely require a change in the law to update collective worship in the sphere of public life

which is now so secular and to recognise the multi-various forms of worship that the

minority of believers in Britain today will use that could be spoken about in collective

worship.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have attempted to draw together the empirical data and the

literature reviews so that the key outcomes might become clearer and the nature of the

reinforcement for particular views thrown into relief. I have used thematic headings to

shape the material for the reader and it is to the main points within these that I now refer in

conclusion of this chapter.

The secularisation of collective worship is the most striking element of the research

outcomes. The discussion of this extends for some five pages and outlines the ways in which

teachers indicate that the largely secular world of pupils has to be reflected in approaches

used by them for collective worship if they are to meet young people where they are

(Brickman and Lehrer, 1975). 78% of the respondents leading collective worship in the five

survey schools were agnostic or atheistic and 75% of the same respondents saw as irrelevant

what faith position a leader of school worship had. This is in contrast to the turn of the

twentieth century when parliamentarians could think of it as 'monstrous' that a head

teacher of a school could be a 'secularist' (Hansard 10: 540). Twenty first century teachers

are not comfortable with the role of being a collective worship leader as identified by their ranking of school duties exemplified in table 2 on page 177.

Very few religious aids are employed by staff these days and this is in stark contrast to the assembly books of the 1970s and 80s (Lloyd: 1974, Hasler:1986). In these popular volumes, hymns were recommended for particular times of the liturgical / school calendar and prayers written out for ease of use, Bible readings printed and just a willing reader or co-ordinator was necessary to bring to life these acts of collective worship.

Although the teacher questionnaire did not have an explicit question on morality, this was freely cited five times as 'the best purpose' of collective worship and was second only to the six mentions that the positive ethos and sense of belonging view that came through in response to this question.

Both head teachers of the case study schools were uncomfortable about worship as a feature of non-denominational state education and this was in spite of them both being practising Christians and one of them an ordained Anglican priest – so it was not an atheistic world view that had led them to these conclusions. 45% of questionnaire respondents said that they would not alter their current practice if the law were to be changed, so what they were doing was clearly educationally valid to them, whether or not the government told them 'to do' or 'not to do' and this resonated with Richard Cheetham's research on collective worship where he concluded that teachers reconciled their roles with their

personal beliefs and the legislation so that they could be a 'bona fide' leader of collective worship (Cheetham 2001:4).

The survey to Christians yielded interesting results with a distinct message of concern about the loss of Christian culture, faith and influence in the nation – perhaps a fear that England is becoming increasingly secularised. This is borne out by the teacher observations that collective worship is an alien experience within the world of most twenty first century pupils in non-denominational schools.

Morality however, seems to have been an original function of collective worship that still has currency today, but one no longer tied per se to Christianity, but to a much broader humanitarian base. The Cross Report of 1888 was overt in its intention to use schooling as a vehicle for the moral training of the young and equally morality was a popular 'best purpose' of collective worship according to the teachers in the five schools surveyed for this research.

In contrast to recognition of the positive functions of collective worship such as building a community and morality, dysfunctions are also evident: the participant observation reflective diary draws attention to the trivia of some assembly topics (as opposed to that which is of 'worth') almost wasting the educational time of pupils; the observed assembly in case study school 2 where bad language was profiled as if routine and an undue emphasis on reward would be opposed by Kohn and others of his school of thought, in Dewey's words 'sugar candying' instead of building character. Similarly, the fact that school worship could not legally reflect any one proper denomination of Christianity

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from the outset in 1870 meant it lacked vitality and so it was an artificial product, so that in the pre-1944 legislation discussions it could be described by Mr. Driberg as being akin to Hitler's perversion of Christianity for his own ends (Hansard 397 H.C. DEB. 5 s / 2412).

Citizenship and democracy were, and still are, important themes and the parliamentarian, Sorensen, links them together in his speeches before the House, prior to the 1944 Education Act, speaking of his view that religion and ethics are intimately linked with democracy and his concern that these should be dealt with effectively by schools.

The teachers in this present study were very much aware of the power of assemblies to seal the bonds of the school community and saw this as its best purpose. On account of the worship implied at present, the withdrawal clause has to operate to satisfy conscientious objector parents and this was seen as non-inclusive by respondents so to legally take away worship from the assembly experience in the future, could result in a much broader educational experience within which the whole school could participate. There was also evidence of effective citizenship taking place during the assembly time with issues such as Fair Trade and global perspectives being profiled. Quite simply the teachers saw the physical gathering of the school as predominantly 'very important' and their school's distinctive ethos is built during this time, this too was a finding of Cheetham – 'very important' said his teachers but also 'problematic' (2000:76).

Issues to be faced today regarding collective worship included the implied religiosity of the legislation in contrast to the largely secular school population of pupils in state

schools, as well as the multi-faith angles that were once not even an issue in Britain, but need to be grappled with today.

A notion brought to this study is that of 'the market-place of values': this caused disquiet amongst a number of expert witnesses as well as one deputy head-teacher. The commercial connotations of this expression were criticised and seen not to be in harmony with spirituality: the ideas of growth and development were preferred.

The questionnaires targeted at Christians showed the value that this sample placed on Christianity within collective worship and their appreciation of the legislation giving it special status. However, the teacher respondents in the schools' postal sample , some of whom identified themselves as believers did not feel an act of 'worship' could be reconciled educationally for a range of reasons and another prevalent strand of Christian thinking from 1870 has been that school worship does no favours for the Christian Church or genuine faith in any age.

Adherence to the legislation, especially in secondary schools, is deemed to be poor with QCA acknowledging this in its drawing together of the SACRE reports from across the nation. The Ekklesia letter to Michael Gove requesting a change in the law regarding collective worship cites non-compliance with the law as being bad for democracy. In other words, laws are in place for the good of the nation and it is not positive to have people tacitly breaking them – as Tom Sutcliffe puts it, "...and since the legislation has virtually no

practical effect it is tempting to think that there is not practical point in wasting energy on getting it removed" (The Independent Online, 28/12/10).

The internet profiles the Early Day Motions being signed up to by MPs today indicating a ground swell of opinion in favour of a change in the law to inclusive assemblies that would not exclude anyone but could involve religious positions as 'a' view that people hold of the world. Many Christians, such as the two case study heads, as well as atheists and agnostics consider that John Hull was right in signalling the death of school worship – the latter just not being reconcilable with education, the largely secular England of this century or our multi-cultural society.

This chapter has attempted to overlay the primary and secondary sources of this research and it feeds into the final section, which identifies the main conclusions for anyone involved in education to whom they could be useful: from the grassroots of the teachers to the politicians of today who have a responsibility to their citizens to rightly assess what educational experiences to which our children and teenagers should be exposed.

CHAPTER 8. CONCLUSION

"Alarmed by the administrative complexities, horrified by the theological subtleties, and anxious about the effect on community relations which the legislation and its interpretations entail, head teachers and governing bodies will allow it (collective worship) to die" (Hull, 1995:7).

Chapters 1 and 4 of this study profiled the research questions central to this study: "What are the perceptions of the functions of collective worship in the twenty first century? What appear to have been the functions of collective worship at the end of the 19th century and the first half of the twentieth century? How is it possible to explain why successive governments have not reworked the law on collective worship in non-denominational state schools? What do people say is the future of collective worship?" Clearly, if this work is to be seen as valid then answers to these questions need to have been achieved in some measure.

This research has deliberately not concerned itself with the faith schools in England which are free to pursue their own style of religious worship on account of the active choice that parents have made to align themselves with such an education. It is well known that parents will attend church and take on responsibilities within the Anglican churches in order to achieve greater eligibility for their offspring to attend these ostensibly academically high-achieving schools. (At the time of writing there are moves afoot to change this situation and to make these schools less selective.) However, as the literature review in this research indicates, in the non-denominational state system, (maintained schools) it was a bone of contention even prior to the 1870 legislation that such schools were not free of religious

influence. The compromise that ensued between the established Anglican Church, the Non-conformists and the atheistic / agnostic schools of thought and practice was that the religious teaching and worship of the schools was to be non-denominational and the right of parents to withdraw their child from collective worship and RE was of paramount importance. Other factors pertaining to the early legislation have been modified over the twentieth century but the non-denominational Christian worship element has not been removed, simply qualified as "wholly or broadly Christian" in 1988. Many of the non-conformists wanted a purely secular educational system, but the Anglican Church continued to seek the influence of Christianity in the maintained schools that were being established.

Some Anglicans are alarmed at the possibility of the current legislation being modified according to the requests of bodies such as Ekklesia and the politicians supporting the EDM in spite of the fact that these people want to see faith schools continuing to be free to express the teaching and worship of their religions in the faith community of their schools. In this way it is not that people want to reject Christianity per se, but that its place should be rationalised within state education where parents have not chosen for their children to be nurtured in the Christian faith: pupils receiving a general education which includes learning about and from all religious traditions and exploring what spirituality means. One teacher responding to the survey to Christians put forward this kind of view: "I think that any specific religious element should be dropped but that religious values – love, thankfulness, forgiveness, should be maintained."

The primary data in this research indicates that the majority of teachers in the state sector whether Christian or otherwise have adapted their collective worship to suit their own educational purposes as senior managers and year group leaders. See also Cheetham (2000:78) who calls it, 'a new spirituality' in schools. These teacher purposes of collective worship include ethos building, notions of citizenship, identity, belonging and fostering respect for others in an inclusive world. They recognise that twenty first century Britain is multi-faith and that the young people before them represent those faiths or perhaps are of no faith at all. How therefore, to conform to the legislation as well as do their pupils good during 'collective worship' is what they have had to rationalise. Terence Copley would applaud such a stance as opposed to an overtly hypocritical or legalistic compliance with British educational law. Copley (1992:79), reflecting on the plethora of material written to assist teachers in the delivery of collective worship as opposed to those studies that have probed into the underlying issues of the legislation, says: "One wonders whether unreflective teachers are likely to produce reflective children."

One of the expert witness respondents said that he had been forced to worship when he was at school, so he could not agree with the statement that 'no-body by definition can be compelled to worship". From a spiritual and philosophical position believers would say that what this person experienced was the necessity of compliance to ritual; what he did *not* experience was worship because by definition this must be a voluntary act of the will. As a minor in the educational world that adults had constructed for him, he did not feel in a position to question the validity of the experience or presumably to enlist the parental support that could have exempted him from collective worship in his school; but his inability

to exercise free will meant that words he recited or sang could never in any spiritual sense be classed as 'worship', it was quite simply the sterile recitation of words void of value both educationally and spiritually and so meaningless.

Figure 4 in chapter 6 seeks to illuminate the layers of understanding and meaning attached to the case study schools and that could equally be applied to any school in the country, demonstrating the significant gap between the teachers and pupils who engage together in collective worship and the peripheral yet powerful people on the outer circles who legislate for, guide and monitor it.

Handy's frog boiling itself to death (2002: back cover) is what collective worship is in danger of doing in the twenty first century. It was all but dead as Hull suggested in 1975; thirty seven years on, society has evolved even more, schools have changed as have the assemblies pupils experience in non-denominational schooling but the legislation remains stubbornly and perhaps simplistically unaltered. This study points to a phoenix to rise from the ashes to bring about legislation that legitimises the largely good practice that teachers are engaged in with their pupils during assemblies; for schools and educational theorists to appreciate the powerful tool that is assembly and its centrality for 'spiritual' education as well as that of citizenship and PSHE; perhaps then it will be seen as a greater priority in the school's life, such as the practice of the head of case study school 2.

The wording of the Acts relevant to collective worship seem remarkably incongruous with 21st century living and the rest of the educational rationale for this century. John Hull

said that school worship was dead; perhaps the end of an era is in sight: the overt avoidance of "the elephant in the room" surely cannot be maintained for too much longer. Collective Worship may not make sense in this age, but 'a market place of values' where people share their views of the world with honesty and integrity at an 'assembling' of the school, could be the way forward.

I hope that the outcomes of this research might affect how teachers deal with and think about their leading of collective worship. I would also hope that this study might add weight to the arguments of those who are currently pressurising the government to update the legislation on collective worship.

At the time of completing this research, there is a coalition government in office in Britain – a Conservative, Liberal Democratic partnership. This government has proposed that the public should have opportunities to say which laws they feel need to be changed, so guiding parliament in its decision making. An Early Day Motion has been set up and members of parliament continue to lend their support to the proposition that the requirement for collective worship in state education should be ended, in favour of assemblies that are inclusive and based upon the school community's shared values. This study supports such a view but would want to extend it so that what is going on outside the school, locally, nationally and internationally is presented to pupils in meaningful ways. 'Shared values' should not be introspective as the power bubble of a school needs to be challenged and staff as well as pupils, encouraged to see the bigger picture of their context within the world, so as long as 'shared values' are about our human values in a regional,

national and global context this is a sound way forward – in some rural settings for example, the school's shared values could be limiting.

This thesis advocates believers of all faiths (whether they be pupils, parents, teachers or local clerics,) being able to lead an assembly that expresses their beliefs, not in an evangelistic way but as a simple presentation of the facts of their views about life and how they choose to live it, in order to stimulate pupil thinking and evidence the spiritual dimension of citizens in their real world context. To ignore the 'marketplace of values' that these individuals represent is to lend credence to the nineteenth and twentieth century approaches to collective worship where what was presented in schools, was a manufactured synthetic Christianity designed to appease warring factions but not reflecting the realities or dynamic of the Christian faith in society. Evidence of living faith in people from all the world's religions will be a reflection of the multi-cultural England of which pupils are a part.

Moments of quiet for pupils to think and reflect and an invitation for them to use that time to pray if they wish within assemblies are inclusive and open ways of providing the stillness and quiet of which Handy speaks so highly (1997:85); Copley's research (1992) also supports this. The Head Teacher of the second case study school expressed a similar view as an expert witness by saying that he thought the word 'reflection' could somehow describe this educational time better than the terms 'collective worship' or 'assembly' attempt to at present.

Some Christians seem to think that collective worship is one of the last bastions of Christian Britain: the survey to Christians showed how fourteen Christian teachers were unanimous in their view that collective worship was helpful to Christianity. A school is not a church is the view that Gent (1984:8) takes and so he refers to the mini-church model, where a church-like service is replicated, with a hymn, prayer and a sermonette in the school assembly. It is difficult to know why believers would want non-Christians to be a part of this and why they would think that there were many members of staff capable of sincerely leading such an act of collective worship. It is surely questionable justifying such a 'given' act in the multi-cultural Britain of today – let alone taking into account the increased secularism of pupils and their families – such circumstances breed sympathy with the MP Lindsay who said that his colleagues in the 1940s viewed collective worship as 'organised blasphemy' (Hansard 397 H.C. DEB. 5 s / 2398).

Indoctrination is not a viable educational aim and so assemblies should avoid any aspects that could be identifiable with this position. Stimulating thinking by exploring ways of looking at the world and understanding experiences is perfectly valid. Also what the assembly does singularly offer is a time when the school community can come together physically and this in its own right can be powerful, (20 out of 36 – 56% teacher respondents saw this as very important). This inherent positive is further strengthened by the giving of a message that is relevant and meaningful for the school community and its shared values – as these can no longer be found singularly in Christianity, the commonality of noble truths across the world's diverse religions offer mutual solidarity to pupils and staff. The citizenship opportunities of celebrating human rights and the nature of democracy can also be

liberating: enabling people to realise their capacity to agree or disagree with what they see

and hear and to choose to bring change.

The Report of the Advisory Group on Citizenship (1998:40f) defined the three

principle areas of citizenship education for pupils as being social and moral responsibility,

community involvement and political literacy – certainly the first two of these are favourite

topics for assemblies, indicating the way in which collective worship is already contributing a

great deal to the citizenship education of young people – their values and dispositions,

knowledge and understanding are being stretched and challenged during this time. The

latter often appears in the guise of key world leaders who are effecting change in their

societies today or who have done so in the past: built into a description of their struggles is

some contextual information about the nature of political life in their country. Current

affairs frequently give rise to important messages about what has happened and some

intimations of why circumstances or actions are as they are.

The 'last word' in the conclusion of the Advisory Group on Citizenship's Report on

Citizenship states that:

"A healthy society is made up of people who care about the future. People who willingly
contribute to its development for the common good. People who reject the 'don't care'
culture, who are not always asking 'What's in it for me?'.....Before this can happen they need
to have a sense of belonging – of identity – with the community around them...." (1998:61)

Assemblies are an ideal tool for fulfilling such an aim as this research has pointed out more

than once. This study was born out of a desire to challenge the status quo on collective

worship and to analyse how teachers manage to reconcile their diverse views on religion and

life in the twenty first century with a legal requirement to lead their pupils into the realms of

worship of ' a ... being' (Circular 1/94). This thesis has aimed to bring some clarity to the

issue of assemblies and to verify as well as further understand the positive contribution they

can make to education, so that leaders of collective worship can retain their integrity and

the law be one that can be respected and upheld in a democracy.

If John Hull was condemning school worship to death in 1975, it is necessary to

consider what has changed over the last thirty six years – perversely from a government

perspective it has been an opting to continue to endorse the original legislative position of

1944 in the 1988 ERA and then to give greater clarification in Circular 1/94 as to how

worship should be defined - in a very traditional way.

It is hoped that this research will be seen as making a valid and unique contribution

to the current debate about the future of collective worship. As a teacher it has been an

important part of school life for me – the most dynamic aspect of my roles throughout a

career I have found enjoyable and fulfilling– 'the living centre' that Bill Gent (1984) alluded

to in the title of his book. Similarly, as a Christian and the wife of a minister, I have reflected

long and hard, listening to the remarks of members of congregations as well as in wider

Christian circles about the misconceptions relating to assemblies and also the perceived

value of them often simplistically interpreted. I am proud of my Christian faith and do not

wish to see it or any other world religion insulted or down-played by school worship;

spiritual matters need careful handling and particularly in a public, educational setting rather

than a religious one. The interface between state and religion perhaps needs re-appraising in the twenty first century. I hope that it is with integrity that I have dealt with this subject matter as a researcher, as a teacher and as a believer, though I have no doubt that my conclusions will be challenged by individuals from each of these three different realms.

One of the propositions of this research, relating to collective worship is that there should be an honesty and lack of hypocrisy about the staff who lead this part of the school day, which is why one of the statements for the expert witnesses says: "People who lead assemblies should be free within 'the marketplace of values' to express genuinely who they are and how they understand the world, be that atheistic, Hindu or Christian" – this statement received 78% support indicating an openness to these ideas as a way forward.

This research suggests that the future of collective worship lies in human nature being encouraged to flourish in humanitarianism, democracy and citizenship, all of which include respect for those who hold beliefs different from one's own. This position does not support the notion that atheists and agnostics are by definition morally void or that believers who are teachers, pupils, parents or from the local community cannot express their understandings of their personal faith to an assembly of school pupils.

If the quagmire called collective worship, of which Cheetham (2000:80) speaks is to be transformed into something fit for the 21st century education of pupils then the underlying issues of diagram 1 in chapter 1, need to be addressed in a 'joined-up' way by the government and this has to start with a change in the legislation, otherwise we are being

less than honest by having a law that all parties knowingly ignore because it is unworkable.

The 1997 review of collective worship that has been cited a number of times in this research observed that, "It is clearly undesirable for there to be a significant gap between requirement and practice as this can lead to misunderstanding and concerns which may be groundless. Teachers, parents and pupils need to know where they have to stand," (1997:16). Recognising the difficulties of the current legislation yet leaving it to ossify is not intelligent, rational or democratic governance.

Questionnaire on Collective Worship for relevant staff & Senior Managers in Secondary Schools

Personal details:

(a) Please indicate your job title:

(b) Please tick what you consider your position is regarding religious beliefs:

an atheist	_____
an agnostic	_____
a believer	_____

(c) If you have ticked 'believer' please state the faith group to which you belong:

(d) Please tick the appropriate line to indicate how long you have been teaching:

_____	0 – 05 years
_____	6 – 10 years
_____	11 – 15 years
_____	16 – 20 years
_____	21 – 25 years
_____	26 – 30 years
_____	31 – 35 years
_____	36+ years

_____

Personal Comments:

For the following questions please indicate your response by circling the appropriate answer:

1. How frequently does you role require you to conduct collective worship?

Twice a week   weekly   fortnightly   monthly

Other, please specify:

2. In relation to the following responsibilities please number them according to those you most and least favour:

    1 = most favoured and 10 = least favoured

    You may use a number more than once.

    A.the pastoral care of pupils;   number   __

    B.academic curriculum responsibilities;   number   __

    C.classroom teaching;   number   __

    D.leading collective worship;   number   __

    E.disciplining pupils;   number   __

    F.parental liaison;   number   __

    G.administrative work;   number   __

    H.the leadership of other staff;   number   __

    I.supervision of pupils at breaks, lunchtime, etc.   number   __

    J.extra-curricular work   number   __

3. What do you consider to be the best purpose(s) of CW?

---

4. Do you think that the faith or atheistic / agnostic stance of the leader of Collective Worship matters? *(Please circle)*

                              YES   NO

5. Why does this position matter or not?

6. How frequently do you, personally, invite visitors in to lead collective worship?

    Regularly   on special occasions   occasionally

7. How frequently do pupils participate in delivering collective worship?

   Regularly   on special occasions   occasionally

8. Please indicate by circling 'YES' whether the following features ever occur within the Collective Worship that you deliver:

A.Readings from holy books   YES

B.Prayers   YES

C.Prayers that the pupils are encouraged to

Recite along with the assembly leader   YES

D.Hymns   YES

E.Live music   YES

F.Recorded music   YES

G.Audio-visual material   YES

H.Bible readings or Bible references   YES

I.References from the holy books of

non-Christian religions   YES

J.The celebration of non-Christian festivals   YES

9. How important do you consider the physical gathering of the school to be?

Very important   important   relevant   irrelevant

10. If there were no longer a legal obligation to deliver collective worship, in what ways would your practice change?

<u>**Please use this space to add any other information not covered by the other questions.**</u>

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Would you like a copy of the results of this survey?

YES   NO

APPENDIX 2.

Secondary School Questionnaire on Collective Worship

1. Is the term 'collective worship' ever used in your school?   YES   NO

    Infrequently

2. In practice do you distinguish between the terms 'assemblies' & 'Collective Worship' in your school in any way at all?   YES   NO

3. If yes, how is this distinction made?

4. Do any of your pupils withdraw from Collective Worship? (Please circle any appropriate descriptions.)

    None;   Muslims;   Hindus   Jews   Sikhs   Jehovah's

    Witnesses;   Mormons;   Atheists;   Any other _____

5. Do any members of staff withdraw from Collective Worship on grounds of conscience?

    YES   NO

6. (a) Do any religious leaders withdraw pupils for a separate act of worship?

    YES   NO

    (b) If yes, how frequently?   Please circle the appropriate frequency:

    weekly   monthly   once a term   once a year   some other pattern

7. Do you adhere to a basic programme of topics throughout the year?   YES   NO

8. (a) Do you have a collective worship management group or committee? YES   NO

    (b) If yes, does this involve pupils?   YES   NO

9. Does your school have class based worship on the days that pupils are not drawn together for a formal assembly?   YES   NO

10. (a) In practice are senior managers able to check that class based worship actually takes place?   YES   NO

9. (b) If yes, how?
10. Is it school policy for a member of the SLT to be present at any assembly taking place in the school?   YES   NO
11. Does your school stop assemblies during the examination periods?   YES   NO

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

APPENDIX 3.

Questionnaire for Heads of Religious Education

1. Do you have any responsibility for Collective Worship linked to your role as a religious educator?

2. How would you describe the *quality* of the CW in your school?

3. What do you think are the main issues facing CW in secondary schools today?

4. How would you respond to the notion of CW being 'a market place of values'?

Q1. Is there a gap between the legislation on Collective Worship and what actually happens on the ground?

Q2. To what extent would you see the notion of a "marketplace of values" as a helpful notion regarding collective worship?

Q3. How would you respond the idea that collective worship or assemblies are the 'mass media' of the school?

Q4. What do you think were the traditional functions of CW?

Q5. What do you consider are the twenty first century functions of CW?

APPENDIX 5.

Questionnaire on collective worship for primary and secondary school teachers: retired, in post or 'former' teachers, now working at another job.

1. In which sector did you / do you work? Private / Primary / Secondary / State / Church school

Other: Please describe –

2. In what way(s) do you think that collective worship is helpful or unhelpful to Christianity?

3. What experience do you have of leading collective worship yourself?

4. If you have led collective worship, in what ways have you found this role enjoyable?

5. If you have led collective worship, in what ways have you found this role difficult?
6. How would you generally rate the quality of the collective worship in the schools where you have taught?
7. Do you consider that the current legislation on collective worship is outdated for the twenty first century?   YES   NO

8. In what ways, if any, would like to see the law changed?
9. In what ways did / do the school(s) in which you have taught, not adhered to the law on collective worship?

10. Please feel free to make any other comment about collective worship that has not been included by answering the other questions:

Thank you very much for answering this questionnaire it will be an invaluable addition to my research.

APPENDIX 6.

Questionnaire for Christians (who must NOT be teachers, please) relating to collective worship in secondary schools.

Please write personal responses to the following questions. Numbers 3 & 4 simply require you to CIRCLE either 'yes' or 'no' as your answer.

1. What do you think the term 'collective worship' refers to in schools?

   ....

2. Please state here (without any consultation with others or looking up reference material), your understanding of what the law says regarding collective worship in schools.

   ....

   ....

3. Do you consider collective worship to be outdated in the twenty first century?

   YES   NO

4. Do you think it is time the law relating to collective worship was changed to take account of modern British society?

   YES   NO

5. What changes do you think should be made to the law on collective worship, in order to benefit children and young people in schools today?

   ....

   ....

6. Please explain why you think the law should or should not be changed? ....

   ....

   ....

7. Do you think world religions other than Christianity have a place within collective worship?

....

....

8. Please EXPLAIN why you have answered question 7, the way that you have.   ....

....

....

....

9. Please feel free to make any other comments on collective worship in schools. ....

....

....

Thank you very much for answering this questionnaire it will be an invaluable addition to my research.

Kathy Inglis, August 2009

Citizenship and social development: Identity		
Belonging - being a valued member of school / society / the world		
Community		
Me, as a citizen		
Public / literary figures as citizens, e.g. tax avoidance, etc. (Case studies)		
Political literacy: Democracy & other ideologies.		
Rationale for the school curriculum		
Rationale for the school organisationally		
Politics of school, local, national & international		
Emotional literacy: Personal – forgiveness, patience, etc.		
The school community experiencing laughing together, crying together, etc. (The inanimate school 'feeling' together.)		
Values: Humanitarian, religious, atheistic, agnostic.		
Respect for people & things		
Personal development		
Self-esteem		
Who am I?		
Culture: Aesthetics		
Aspirational: Who do I want to be?		
Role models - historical / contemporary		
Philosophical		
What is my life about?		
How do I make sense of the world out there? And here, in school? (Perspectives)		

APPENDIX 8

Expert Witness Collective Worship Propositions

Please indicate against the following propositions which you consider to be true or false.

You may want to: comment on any issues you would like to clarify below; expand upon or qualify your true / false notations; make a further comment on the topic of collective worship.

1. The powerful educational tool is in the 'collective' not the 'worship'.   True False

2. The term 'worship' should be removed from the legislation.   True False

3. A 'marketplace of values' is a much better proposition for assemblies in non-denominational schools than a 'broadly Christian act of worship'. True   False

4. The position of believers in world religions is not helped by collective worship legislation as it stands today.   True   False

5. By definition nobody can be compelled to worship.   True False

6. Assembly is a better description than collective worship of the school community gathering together.   True False

7. People who lead assemblies should be free within 'the marketplace of values' to express genuinely who they are and how they understand the world, be that atheistic, Hindu or Christian. True   False

8. Regular, that is at least 'weekly' assemblies are very important to foster a sense of belonging to a community, in children and young people. True   False

9. Assemblies are the 'mass media' of the school.   True False

10. Music and readings from holy books can all have their place within a school assembly that merely declares the understandings of the assembly leader.   True False

11. The legislation on collective worship should be changed as soon as possible.   TrueFalse

12. The collective worship that takes place in schools bears little resemblance to the legislation on collective worship.
    True   False

13. Moral messages and these could be couched within admiration for a key figure, religious or otherwise, have a positive contribution to make to the development of all of us as human beings, not least young people in assemblies.
                    TrueFalse

14. Citizenship, human rights and democratic themes are powerful messages for any community.   True
    False

15. Collective worship / assemblies are good 'ethos' builders in any school.   True
    False

16. The dynamic of assemblies should be taken more seriously by senior leadership teams because they are 'ethos' builders and so they should take care about the content of the messages.
    True False

17. Collective worship / assembly is an opportunity to open up the world beyond the school to pupils, through current affairs and different world views.
    True   False

18. An assembly should never hinge solely upon a negative discipline issue that has arisen within school life.
    True   False

Thank you for your sharing your expertise with me.   Kathy Inglis
2010/11

APPENDIX 9

Expert Witness Respondents

Accord Coalition Co-ordinator

Bloxham Project Director.

Director of Education for the London Diocese of the Church of England (2009/10).

The 5 Head Teachers of the postal questionnaire schools – one in the North East of England, three in the North West of England (Greater Manchester and Merseyside), one on the South East of England and these responses included the 2 heads of the Case Study Schools.

Bill Gent, a respected writer on collective worship.

Lisa Hart-Collins a teacher who delivered an assembly once a week for the five years up until September 2010 in a pupil referral unit and then twice a half term in the North West of England.

John Hull, a retired Birmingham University Professor and an academic who has written extensively on collective worship.

Independent Consultant for Religious Education and an Ofsted Inspector.

A non-conformist minister who continues to take assemblies in his locality several times a month and has done so for thirty one years and was himself a part-time teacher leading assemblies in a secondary state school for a decade.

A representative of the British Humanist Society.

Local authority adviser of the North Western Case Study School.

Local authority adviser of the South Eastern Case Study School.

Raymond Holley, retired Senior lecturer in Religious Studies at the former West London Institute of Higher Education (a London teacher at one time who used to lead collective worship).

York St John University Senior Lecturer in Practical and Empirical Theology – also an Anglican clergyman.

A total of 18 respondents.

A Hierarchical Ladder of Learning

Teaching is placed next to educating as it is this vehicle that is used to achieve the highest rung of the ladder. In my own experience I have explained to pupils the difference between these two in a functional way by saying that I can teach them how to pass an examination and they might even get a high grade, however, when I have the luxury of time to discuss issues, look at audio-visual matter, consider the implications of all sorts of material interrelated to the given topics, then I can educate them. Education is the sphere where the pupils have much greater understanding, both in depth and breadth of knowledge and so are thereby intellectually empowered, this then is **education**. For all sorts of reasons I have had to teach at strategic times rather than educate.

Moving down the ladder, **socialising** is what sociologists would suggest we all experience as human beings that fits people for the societies in which they live and the circles moved in at work, socially, religiously and so on. People take on board the accepted norms and values of their necessary groups in order to be integrated and accepted. **Mentoring** is a softly influential process whereby people have access to someone considered to be a role model and the union is established between the two in the hope that the pupil chooses to copy the high standards of the mentor; it is different from the other terms to the extent that a 'body of knowledge' as such is not usually involved, **mentoring** is much more

about the conduct of the persons and the ways in which roles are fulfilled. **Nurturing** is associated with the rearing of babies and children within their families as well as having gardening connotations related to **seeding**, **cultivating** and **growing**, all of which also have useful educational parallels. Nurturing is about an environment considered to be ideal within which people or plants will flourish; it is gentle and pleasant but stimulating and strongly associated with cultivation. **Evangelising** is the presentation of material with the overt goal of influencing beliefs; there is no negation of will but a definite desire for the listener to change their mind on important issues. **Training** is a very specific kind of learning which used to be applied to courses for prospective teachers (teacher training colleges) and nurses. There appear to be strong parameters with training and it is utilitarian in that it is linked to the capacity to function within a designated role and job description – not learning that is deep, wide and non-functional such is the case with education. **Instructing** is not far removed from training but is narrower and more limited; there is a precision attached to it, for example, instruction in driving a vehicle or notes accompanying a purchase describing how something should be used, operated or constructed.

Catechising is associated with religious instruction, for example, traditionally in the Roman Catholic Church the Catechism was taught to children in school and in particular classes held at church literally called Catechism: children learn by rote to recite the questions and the given answers from the catechism book. How this is different from **indoctrination** is in the way that those learned responses may or may not become a part of the person who has been required to learn them – there is a heart and will choice on the part of the

individual concerned to internalise the doctrines and to make them live personally for them. With **indoctrination** a person's will is overridden and they are imbibed with information not of their choosing, whilst **conditioning** is the kind of learning that animals acquire through reward and punishment – the realisation and then conformity that results from pain and pleasure associated with given actions. It is important to establish some understanding of all of these degrees of learning from indoctrination to education because state schools as well as centres of religious faith need to know exactly what it is they are engaging in with their pupils. If school worship is to be educational there needs to be some analysis of what that might mean and whether or not those who contend that it is indoctrination have any grounds for such an accusation: Snook considers that the terms in the ladder belong to a family of concepts (Snook, 1972:1).

Dear SACRE Chair,

I have just learned, through informal conversation with a personal friend of mine, about an American businesswoman who is going into schools for assemblies, telling a story whilst demonstrating the use of a yo-yo and then proceeding to sell yo-yos, yo-yo belt holders, tee-shirts, and DVDs to the children.

I am absolutely horrified at this. I am just concluding a PhD thesis on collective worship in secondary education, having spent six years researching this subject and thirty five years as a teacher in a range of settings, this is absolutely not what an assembly should be about.

For the first time ever, I have learned about a situation where an assembly has been used for commercial gain, as a sales pitch and as a mass media vehicle in order to further someone's position financially. Traditionally, assemblies are used by schools and charities to profile the work of voluntary groups. These have highly beneficial citizenship outcomes for pupils, in that they are usually given an opportunity to involve themselves in sponsored tasks in order to raise money, as well as learning about the humanitarian work of an organisation – they have the satisfaction of being a 'contributor' to the well being of others or of supporting a particular issue; all useful citizenship experiences.

However, this scenario is altogether different because it is a businesswoman exploiting the assembly as a free advertising slot with a captive audience and an army of relatives behind each child willing to satisfy their consumer wishes. This would be immoral and an anathema educationally at any time in the school day, however, the affront of it is made worse by the use of the assembly slot for the profiling to the children of this toy. Such a practice is the absolute opposite of what collective worship should be legally, which is to focus on that which is worthwhile and of a spiritual dimension: things more awesome and wonderful than the everyday materialism of this world and their ordinary situations.

I am writing to you as the body entrusted with the safeguarding of religious education and collective worship in the Tameside area to express my indignation at such a perversion of collective worship – were a religious group to go in and abuse this time in such a way there would rightly be an outcry, so for the same to be done virtually as a commercial advertisement that has nothing to do with 'education' at all and everything to do with monetary gain and the exploitation of children's naive consumerism is outrageous. I am glad that I have never come across this before but think that this could set a dangerous precedent for future practice. I do hope that you will investigate this situation and build

something into your advice to schools that would prevent such a recurrence again. I look forward to hearing from you with regard to this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Kathy Inglis B.Ed., M.A.

Re: COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

I am writing to you in my role as the chair of the.... SACRE, to acknowledge your letter dated 5 July, about some information that you had been given about collective worship in local schools.

The SACRE agrees with your views about the appropriate use of assembly time: the law is quite clear that this should be a daily act of 'broadly Christian' nature. As a SACRE we issue guidelines to help schools with this. Indeed, this year, collective worship is one of our priorities, and we are intending to both refresh the guidance and produce some materials for schools which we hope will be useful to them when planning their assemblies.

You will, however, be aware from your own experience that the SACRE has no powers to enforce this. There have been occasions when OFSTED has made comments about collective worship in schools during the course of inspections, though even this seems to have become less of a priority under more recent frameworks. Our own powers are limited to the powers of persuasion and facilitation, and we hope that by providing a strong RE Co-ordinators' network and producing materials which will ease teachers' burden, more of them will feel confident in providing the sort of assemblies that the law demands.

Thank you for your interest and comments.

Yours sincerely,

Chair,The... SACRE

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