

***Moving beyond 'let's have another Mass': post-secular approaches to exploring had expressing a faith-based ethos in the pluralist public square of an Irish University***  
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## **Introduction**

The title of this paper is a reference to the Fr Ted episode *Speed 3* - the one with the hairy babies and the bomb on the milk-float driven by Fr. Dougal. Following hours of exhaustive brainstorming, the only thing the other priests come up with to try to save Dougal is: 'is there anything to be said for saying another Mass?' This humorously captures the conundrum for people and spaces of faith within secular institutions – where both religious and secular institutions attempt to limit their roles and reach to public piety, either in acts of worship or in teaching only of religion/faith formation thus keeping their activities and impact within boundaries of faith and away from real interaction with the public square.

The Republic of Ireland is transforming into an actively secular society through public policy and societal pressure from parts of the community, while at the same time becoming post-secular due to its globalised, diverse population. This secularisation / post-secularisation tension in itself impacts on the perceived right of faith voices to speak into the public square and to have a voice in the educational sphere. As Sullivan (2012) points out, education is an arena subject to particular contestation with regard to faith and belief.

This paper considers how an Anglican Centre, now in its fifth year of existence in a secular university (following the incorporation of a small Anglican College of Education into a secular university in line with changed State policy in 2016), is developing and expressing its own ethos and identity. The Centre strives to speak a range of authentic Anglican voices into the public square of an Irish University and Irish educational policy, to service both its own minority community and to engage outwards with the pluralistic and secular space of the university and the world of education policy beyond.

'Ethos' is a nebulous term which McLaughlin (2005) argues refers to the culture, atmosphere, relationships and 'spirit' of an institution. The extensive international literature on Anglican educational ethos indicates two key things. First, 'ethos' tends to be understood by practitioners in educational institutions in terms of its overt religiosity – namely, association with worship, assembly or links to the parish or instruction in religious faith (Campion 2010; Jelfs 2010; Terry 2013; Wilkinson 2020) thus tending to limit 'ethos' to expressions of public piety. Second, as Edwards (2015) argues in the Australian context, efforts to engage with and respectfully include the post-secular diversity of the student body can result in such a watering down of Anglican ethos that all spiritual or faith content is lost in the effort to include, thus endangering its expression in an effort to include through rendering the faith component invisible for fear of giving offence.

This paper outlines the journey of a small, publicly-funded Anglican third level College from stand-alone institution to denominational centre embedded in a pluralist university (Lodge 2018). It explores the evolving presence of an increasing multiplicity of religious and secular voices in the public square. It considers how Christian ethos is understood, expressed and contested in education spaces including third level settings. The paper explores how, in practice, the Centre and its Director have developed a framework to scaffold and evaluate its activities and relationships. This includes a commitment to the underpinning of its Anglican authenticity and the oscillation of its gaze both inwards in continuing minority community maintenance but also outwards and invitationally to the public square of the University and beyond.

The Centre's scaffolding and evaluative frameworks draw on Warner's (2013) five characteristics of third level Anglican ethos and the five marks of mission of the Anglican Communion. The combined frameworks is intended to scaffold and critically interrogate the Centre's curriculum, pedagogy, relationships and public contributions. This evaluative framework aims to move and deepen the Centre's Anglicanism beyond a more traditional focus on religious piety (whether seen in terms of denominational worship and religious piety or academic and educational engagement solely with religious and theological material). The hope is that such a framework can assist the Centre in having an outward gaze and engagement while resisting the secularizing impulse that is an inevitable influence in a pluralist educational context.

### **From Anglican College to Anglican Centre – incorporation and beyond**

In Autumn 2016, following over four years of intensive negotiation and sometimes fraught debate within the Church of Ireland itself, the Church of Ireland College of Education was incorporated into Dublin City University in line with a significant change in State educational policy with regard both to the structure and location of initial teacher education in Ireland and indication that the State would not continue to support small, stand-alone Colleges (HEA 2012; Lodge 2020a). From the perspective of a small minority community, these proposed changes were experienced by some as deeply threatening to a separate cultural group whose boundaries were symbolised and safeguarded by the existence of identifiably separate institutions. The importance of institutional segregation as a group identity marker helps make sense of the threat to identity members of the Church of Ireland community expressed when they heard about the proposed incorporation of the Church of Ireland College of Education into a secular university.

The journey from small, stand-alone Anglican College of Education to incorporation into a much larger university required a critical reflection on the meaning and expression of the institution's Anglican ethos in order to enable that ethos to be discerned and positively encapsulated in the legal agreement for incorporation, as well as being sustained post-incorporation. An evaluation of the formal expression of Anglican ethos in the Church of

Ireland College of Education indicated that it was manifest in three particular structural ways: (a) the existence of a separate institution with the Church of Ireland in its title; (b) the requirement by the founding legislation that all those serving on its Board of Governors be members of the Church of Ireland (Lord Justices and Privy Council in Ireland 1885); (c) the derogation to the Employment Equality Act that enabled the College's B.Ed programme to select only candidates who were members of the range of reformed Christian churches (Government of Ireland 2013). An analysis of ethos in the case of the Church of Ireland College of Education during the period of reflection and negotiation highlighted the argument made by McLaughlin (2005) that there can be a significant gap between intended and experienced ethos, between the written policy and the lived practice.

An examination of Anglican practices in the College in the years leading up to incorporation indicated that formal public piety was no longer a significant expression of its ethos. Chapel attendance had been a normal part of the life of the College in earlier decades (Parkes 2011). However, by the late 1990s, in particular after the closure of the second-level preparatory college Coláiste Móbhí, this practice had diminished to the point that there were only two annual services attended by significant numbers of staff and students (the graduation and the Carol Service). However, throughout this time, the College had a vibrant Christian Union, run entirely by the participating students themselves. Two aspects of the culture of the College seemed particularly important as lived and experienced ethos – first, the close-knit relationships typical of a small institution, among the undergraduate student body, and between students and staff. The second was both curricular and pedagogical. The particularistic elements of the taught programmes included an expressed commitment to inclusive education, global and environmental sustainability education (through the DICE project and REALT in particular) alongside a commitment to small schools and provision of a religious education programme that was inclusive of a range of reformed Christian denominations while also developing a noticeable interfaith component and engagement with a wide range of social justice issues.

Therefore, while the formal expression of ethos continued the boundaried, segregated inward-looking institutional provision that had characterized Irish society and education and other institutional provision since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century (Bowen 1983; Crawford 2010; Griffin 2002), the lived practices expressed through curriculum content and pedagogical practices and relationships had developed much more of an outward focus. This reflected the reality of the mixed cultural and belief intake to primary schools under Church of Ireland, Methodist, Presbyterian and Society of Friends patronage (Tuohy, Lodge & Fennelly 2011). This diversification was not surprising given the changes in Irish society where religious differences had become less significant and both social and institutional boundaries had become more porous while society itself became much more diverse in its composition (Bowen 1983; Maguire 2002).

The legal agreement for incorporation provided for the establishment of the Church of Ireland Centre in DCU, embedded in the Institute of Education and located on the All Hallows' campus. The 2016 legal agreement has embedded within it the published 2014 Governance vision document (DCU, CICE, MDI & SPD 2014) for the proposed Institute of Education and the two denominational centres, one Roman Catholic, one Church of Ireland and reformed Christian. The vision document was quite detailed in terms of structures, governance, activities and outputs. It recognized the freedom to the Church of Ireland Centre to establish, develop and express its Anglican ethos without interference or proscription by the University or other bodies. It stated the Church of Ireland Centre's obligations to its own community and network of schools but also gave freedom to the Centre to engage with the University community through education, research and other initiatives and through shared activity with the Anglican chaplaincy. It gave the Centre freedom to engage with the wider society. The agreement placed the onus on the Director of the Centre to oversee and enable this range of possible activity and to ensure continuity of ethos. The agreement also provided for a concrete link by way of an Advisory Council with the Church of Ireland.

### **Faith voices in the contemporary public square**

The public square in western democracies is a complex and contradictory place when it comes to voices of faith. Williams (2012) notes that the western idea of the public square has become increasingly synonymous with a strictly secular, liberal democracy. He argues that the western insistence that the public square be a neutral space is both contradictory and lacking in integrity because it prioritises one set of voices, namely the secular, while silencing another set of voices, namely the religious. Watson (2011) argues that secularism advantages atheism over faith in its language – it posits atheism as the default setting. Watson (2011) claims that there is an inherent difficulty with, and unfairness in this: secularism claims to embrace difference but does so by banishing specific identities and views from the public square, rendering them 'Other' and attempting to silence them.

Habermas (1964) outlines how, in medieval times, the church, princes and the nobility were the only authorised voices in what he calls the public sphere. In the contemporary secular, democratic state, the central significance given to human reason and rationality allows for the separation of church and state and relegates religious beliefs to the private sphere. Habermas (2005) argues that, because the State prioritises the secular in an attempt to treat all its citizens equally, religious members of society experience a sense of what he calls cognitive dissonance in order to cope with hegemonic secularism while their secular counterparts have no such similar challenge. The actions of western democratic states in effectively preferring the secular over the religious impacts on the relative status of each in the public square.

Wright (2016) describes how, in the ancient world, religion was a very public phenomenon – he describes it as the glue that bound the community together and encompassed the breadth

of both human and divine participation therein. Since the Enlightenment, religion in western nation states has become increasingly limited to the private sphere and sidelined from the public square. Wright (2016) also notes how, in the post-modern era in western democracies, religion has moved away from being perceived positively and has become associated with societal division, terrorism and something from which the human condition would benefit from being released. In a nutshell, in antiquity, religion was a public norm, a benefit and a source of unity; now in post-modernity, it is at best perceived in western secular societies as problematic. To borrow a concept developed by the political theorist Iris Marion Young (2011), it can be argued that religion in western secular societies suffers both from non-recognition (being rendered invisible) while simultaneously being mis-recognised (negatively labelled). Watson (2011) also notes that the privatisation of religion and its removal from the public square in modernity and post-modernity has actually changed the meaning of the word 'religion' (original meaning 'what binds together'). Through its relegation to the private sphere, belief is now prevented from having that core communal expression. It therefore becomes something that is perceived as dividing rather than binding together.

The move away from the engagement of faith in the public square is by no means total however. This is a deeply contested space and manifestations of secularism vary from one western jurisdiction to another. Religion has been pushed to the margins in some western secular democracies – this is particularly noticeable in France for example. However, though religious voices are formally pushed to the margins of the public square, in the French context there is a frequent awareness of their ongoing presence. Dinham and Jones (2012) comment on the engagement by the British State with a wide range of faith bodies and institutions in the public square in an attempt to create greater social cohesion and to address welfare needs through charitable service provision by faith bodies.

In the Irish case, the Roman Catholic church, and the minority Protestant churches (though to a much lesser extent) had a very specific position in the public square in the Irish Free State and then the Republic of Ireland after independence in 1922. The churches were key service providers in education, health and welfare. The churches (and in particular, the majority Roman Catholic church) had a significant voice in the public square and an acknowledged influence on constitutional law, public policy and public opinion (Drudy & Lynch 1993; Inglis 1998). This situation only really began to change in the 1990s. Rivera (2020) critiques the particular Irish expression of secularism where the State continues to appear to favour the majority religion in the public square through the granting to it of privileges and particular recognition in what he terms a benevolent secular state.

When religious voices spoke into the public square of Irish society until the recent past, they were generally the voices of Roman Catholic clergy (Inglis 1998). The Protestant minority learned to keep a low profile after independence. Few Protestant clergy spoke into the majority public square in the way that their Roman Catholic counterparts did, with a few

notable exceptions (Griffin 2002). In general, those Anglican church voices tended to be focused inwards, within the minority boundary. Griffin (2002) documented the fear of putting their heads above the parapet and drawing attention to their difference that characterized the Protestant minority experience post-independence for many, though Milne (2019) describes a different and more positive experience of community integration through local engagement in GAA and farming activities. The Anglican voice occasionally heard in the public square of post-independence Irish society tended to be a decidedly secular voice, represented by a handful of notable laity, including Senator W.B. Yeats, Senator David Norris and the essayist Hubert Butler. With a few exceptions, however, the small Protestant minority in post-independence Ireland remained largely within the separate spheres supported by the State and with an inward focus on its own community's needs and cultures (Lodge 2010; Lodge 2020b) rather than being a consistent presence in the public square of an emerging independent nation.

While Western Europe in particular is now regarded as post-Christian, faith is flourishing across much of the rest of the world (Bediako 2008). Non-Western countries remain highly resistant to secularization (Hanicles 2008). Volf (2011) reminds us, the world has always been a very religious place and this shows no global sign of abating. It is worth remembering that there are many parts of the world where there is a continuing presence of religion and faith as a core part of the public square. The majority of the world's population lives in such cultures (Bowie, Petersen & Revell 2012).

Not only is it the case that the majority of Christians will soon be living outside of Europe and the West (Bediako 2008), but it is also the case that many of those who migrate from developing countries to the West bring with them their religious faith as a core part of their identity. Immigrant Christians bring their own vibrant expressions of Christianity with them to the post-Christian West. Their numbers and vitality stand in stark contrast to the falling numbers of traditional Western expressions of Christianity (Hanicles 2008). The post-Christian West is now regarded as a mission-field by non-Western Christians as well as by those of other evangelistic faiths such as Islam (Sanneh 2008). The high levels of contemporary global migration means that secular western democracies are countries of destination for increasing numbers of people from other parts of the world still deemed pre-secular (Walls 2008). This in itself creates another layer of tension in the western public square because of the newcomers' transferred expectation and assumption of religion as being both a public norm and an accepted individual and community identifier.

These newcomer voices of faith have no experience of being silenced in the public square. They have no experience of faith being relegated to the private sphere. The presence of increasing numbers of migrants into the secular West who regard their faith as a core, public part of their identities presents a genuine challenge to the secular project and to State and societal policies of social inclusion through shared commitment to secular democracy

particularly where some western democracies view the public square as a purely secular space. Western democracies can struggle to recognize the expression of citizenship through public piety (e.g. pilgrimage) as a positive manifestation of public belonging in a pluralist society by Muslim immigrant communities for example (Edmunds 2013). On the other hand, the engagement by successive UK governments with religious bodies and representatives reflects a desire to ensure social cohesion and inclusion of new communities, cultures and beliefs in ways that recognize belief and piety in the public square (Dinham & Jones 2012).

As Mallett and Shaw (2018) argue in the case of England and Wales, policy-making with regard to social action for the common good in the public square has become dominated by secularist NGOs and a range of world faith groups. This is in part due to a withdrawal by the Christian church from a space in which it had previously been a central provider until recent times when the State took over much of that provision. The Christian church has become one voice there among many, a situation that the previously powerful church has found hard to navigate in a space where it had once been dominant (Newbiggin 2003).

Walls (2008) argues that the presence of a multiplicity of voices and cultures of a variety of belief has the potential to unleash a creative theological encounter. However, Warner (2013: 349) issues a warning in this regard: 'the return of religion to the public sphere is as one voice among many with the former authoritative decrees of an official religion shattered into many, often contradictory rival religious spokespersons.' The Christian faith once had an authoritative voice in the public square but now there are multiple voices representing multiple beliefs clamoring for the position of authority previously occupied by that church. The right of Christian churches to speak into the public square (whether in Ireland or elsewhere in secular western democracies) and to provide services such as education in that space has become increasingly contested both by voices of other world faiths and of secularism (Inglis 1998; Warner 2010).

### **Christian educational ethos**

Education is a formal institution of the public square. Sullivan (2012: 185) describes educational institutions as 'intermediate organisations' that 'provide a space between the nation-state on the one hand, and individuals and families on the other hand'. For historical reasons, both in Ireland and internationally, Christian churches have been key providers of education at all levels from primary to third level over several centuries. In the Irish context as Drudy and Lynch (1993) explain how, following independence, the State was more than happy to work symbiotically with the Christian churches (and other faith groups) in the provision of services including primary, secondary and special schools, and third level Colleges providing teacher education, agricultural training and nursing training. The Churches similarly provided a wide range of health and welfare services with the support of the State. As Hogan (1983) notes, for the first fifty years of the State's independent existence, this symbiotic relationship was unquestioned and not considered problematic.

The role played by the Churches and other faith bodies in Ireland in the provision of education has become a deeply contentious. Secularists raise policy, legal and human rights issues locally and at international level (Mawhinny 2009). This reflects similar debates in other jurisdictions. For example, Sullivan (2012) points out that this same tension has its roots in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in England and Wales, and he argues that the dispute between those of faith and secularists in the education space has intensified again in recent decades.

Issues raised about the involvement of faith bodies in education include concerns about who controls and provides education, as well as focusing on the existence of religious education with a faith formation component. Both those of faith and secularists fear that children will be indoctrinated by the ideological position of their opponents (Wang 2013). The debate on a range of aspects of faith engagement in education is ongoing in the Republic of Ireland.

The then Minister for Education and Skills, established the Forum on Patronage and Pluralism in 2011. The role of the Forum was to explore the demand for secular primary schools and decide how primary schools under religious patronage could transfer their patronage to secular bodies (2012). As noted in 2014 by that body, the rate of change of patronage in reality was glacial, and that continues to be the case a decade later. Attempts to make changes at third level were more successful. The Higher Education Authority (International Review Panel 2012) issued a planning document stating that the State would cease funding small, stand-alone Colleges. As Lawlor (2017) points out, many of the small, stand-alone Colleges earmarked for incorporation into secular universities or closure were older faith foundations.

As noted already, there is significant international debate about faith schools and concerning the role of religious education in the compulsory education sector (Lodge 2004; Lodge & Lynch 2005; Sullivan 2012; Wang 2013). While it gets considerably less attention, faith is an issue of contention at third level. This relates partly to the fact that many older third level institutions are Christian foundations both in Ireland and internationally (Schmelterkopf & Beaty 2009). These include institutions in countries which had a strong Christian missionary presence over several centuries and where education was used as a key tool of mission. As Miyamoto (2008) points out, in such nominally Christian institutions, a tiny proportion of both staff and students remain adherents of the founding faith and the lived reality of ethos has almost no relationship to the founding faith of origin. In certain respects, the situation is more complex in modern secular western democracies. The secularising agenda has been adopted with considerable enthusiasm in third level institutions in places such as the United States and the UK. Interestingly, in the US the proportion of the overall population self-describing as non-religious has actually fallen quite considerably since the 1980s. As a consequence, deeply secular Universities and Colleges and their committedly secular



academic staff are increasingly out of step with the identities and needs of the majority of their students (Schmelterkopf & Beaty 2009).

Forster-Smyth (2013) documents the pressures that academics who are people of faith experience in terms of acknowledging their identities in the American Academy in their collegial and institutional relationships. Secularising pressures are experienced in particular around the status of subjects such as theology (Schmelterkopf & Beaty 2009; Mowrey 2013) and also around the purpose of chaplaincy. Hunt (2013) argues that chaplaincy in the university setting has become increasingly contentious precisely because it implies an overtly religious presence in a secular environment. As a result, chaplaincy is having to diversify into student services such as well-being in order to justify its continued funding and existence. Lest we assume that this unease with the publicly pietistic in a secular space is one-sided, it is worth noting that Christian churches can also struggle to recognize the valid vocational roles of those occupying roles that combine the priestly and the academic, such as third level lecturing (Henson 2016).

The situation in western secular democracies is further complicated by State policy bringing smaller third level institutions within secular Universities, thus losing their faith identities. Newsam (2013) notes that the international trend in recent years is for initial teacher education to be moved from smaller independent Colleges of Education (many of which were older faith foundations) to larger secular Universities. Even where third level institutions remain independent faith foundations, Warner (2013) reports that the broader societal secularising agenda exerts significant pressure over those institutions so that their original faith culture is buried in ethos statements that get little if any publicity and do not feature centrally in current policies and practice.

The question arises as to what a Christian ethos actually looks like in a third level setting in a secular western democracy. Malone (2004) describes how a change in educational policy in Australia in the 1990s resulted in the creation of new or expanded Universities incorporating teacher and nurse education colleges, all of which were older faith foundations. One resulting new university is the sole State-funded Roman Catholic University in Australia. Malone (2004) describes how the staff of this institution intentionally use its ethos statement to evaluate and proof their approach to curriculum design, pedagogy, research and community engagement to ensure that there is a clear continuing Christian influence in the University's activities. Sullivan (2004) outlines how those teacher educators who previously worked in denominational colleges now subsumed into secular universities in the UK continue with intention to use their theological expertise to inform their work. They use their faith and theological knowledge as a key tool to develop students' sense of vocation, professional responsibility and ability to critically evaluate the education system for which they are being prepared.

Where faith colleges remain independent, they tend to have close (or reasonably close) relationships with their founding churches. Sometimes, these collaborative links can benefit both the academic institution and the church. Blair (2010) engaged in a case-study of several privately funded Christian colleges or universities in the United States, analysing their relationships with their founding churches. He identified one particularly positive, collaborative partnership where he described the founding church's commitment to social justice and social action. This faith commitment was enacted in the associated university through that College's outward community focus, its intentional location of campuses in poorer neighbourhoods and its facilitation of social action by staff and students that was built into programmes of study. This linked lived and experienced institutional ethos with founding Church vocational commitment to social action.

As Higton (2012) reminds us, third level Colleges and Universities are not church. Third level institutions cannot and should not form people for worship or discipleship; however, a valuable third level education will help form an inclusive, altruistic, critical outlook that is essential to Christian discipleship formation as it is to the formation of a good citizen. Such an education has the potential to foster a focus on critique, the common good and the achievement of more than a selfish purely personal agenda in pursuing education. A third level setting may be the first opportunity in a public space where a young person (or indeed a mature student) may explore faith issues through a combination of good chaplaincy models and critical, thought-provoking educational content and / or active engagement in University-based activities with a social action / justice focus. Such engagement offers opportunities for holistic formation and maturity that prepare a graduate to engage critically and actively in the public square.

### **Warner's vision for a third-level Anglican ethos**

I turn to consider what a specifically Anglican ethos in a third level context might encompass. I start by acknowledging that pinning down a clear definition of *ethos* is actually quite a complex undertaking, as acknowledged by McLaughlin (2005) and that it becomes even more complicated when trying to define a specifically *Anglican* ethos. As Edwards (2015) reports on Anglican secondary schools in Australia, and as Lodge and Jackson (2014) explain about Protestant secondary schools on the island of Ireland, the tendency is for each institution to have its own unique ethos or climate, so that Anglican ethos is further complicated by the tendency to local peculiarity rather than any real universality. In both cases, the researchers, working entirely separately and on opposite sides of the globe, found that the key aspect that linked these disparate entities was a culture of institutional independence and a tendency to play down or secularise the religious aspect in favour of a more generic civic, secular expression. This highlights how easy it is for an Anglican ethos to slide into a mainly secular expression.

As noted earlier, Christian ethos in the third level context can focus on the development of a holistic good citizen. Warner (2013) spells out what he argues are the five characteristics of an authentic Anglican educational ethos in a faith-based University. His focus is on the core of the third level enterprise rather than a slide into piety or denominationalism/sectarianism:

1. **RESPECT & INCLUDE - Inclusivity and respect** – respect for all, regardless of belief, class, status, ability etc. Freedom of conscience, of intellectual inquiry and critical thinking are essential elements. It is a place of intellectual rigour and civil engagement that develops the learning of all members of the community.
2. **SERVICE - A core emphasis on Public Service** – emphasis placed on education that focuses on the common good. Students should be encouraged to volunteer, staff to do public service. The institution focuses its educational activities on developing students as good citizens, capable of critical thinking that they can apply to society, to the third level institution and to their places of worship if they are of faith.
3. **LIFE-ENHANCING - Third level education is viewed as life-enhancing** – rather than being perceived by staff and students as a mechanistic end in itself and purely selfish personal goal. The institution has an education-for-life focus that develops transferable skills and cultivates the intellect of all its students.
4. **FAITH-FRIENDLY - A faith-friendly and faith-development friendly environment** – the institution welcomes those of all faiths and those of no belief. It is careful not to prefer one group over another and also not to create or foster a climate that is hostile to belief, rather creating an active welcome. It encourages all staff and students to engage in critical exploration of, and reflection on, religion and the nature of belief.
5. **PROPHETIC VOICE - Underpinned by a Christocentric meta-critique** – the institutional policy statements and practice should embody Christian values and be open to humbly hearing the critical views of members of the community and those outside and to be open to change.

At the heart of these characteristics is the willingness for those of faith to engage respectfully, inclusively, courageously and critically with the public square, both to speak authentic faith voices into that space while also striving to actively and respectfully hear the voices of others who share that space. Warner (2013) notes that the first three characteristics are very similar to the mission intentions of secular universities. He argues that the final two elements provide opportunities for those of faith to reflect and deepen their own discipleship and to do so in ways that equips them to engage with the public square of both the University and the wider world by developing an ability to apply theological reflection. These characteristics have the potential to provide a framework for planning and proofing of Anglican ethos given their contextual and institutional specificity and their particular focus on the experiences of, and outcomes for learners as well as their proximity to the learning outcomes expressed by secular universities.

## **The Five Marks of Mission – a proofing and planning framework**

Jackson (2017) has observed that Anglicanism is in a minority in every geographical location where it is to be found. This gives the Anglican expression of Christianity an interesting global perspective. It also means that Anglicans across the world share the need to speak into the public square in order to express and explain their spiritual outlook to other Christians, to the adherents of other world faiths and to secularists who are all their co-citizens (Ross 2008).

What are the five marks of mission? In 1984, the Anglican Consultative Council developed a mission statement for the global Anglican Communion,<sup>1</sup> subsequently amended to address ecological concerns a few years later. The five marks are presented as follows on the website of the Anglican Communion (<http://www.anglicancommunion.org/mission/marks-of-mission.aspx>):

“The mission of the church is the mission of Christ:

1. **TELL** - To **proclaim the good news** of the Kingdom
2. **TEACH** - To **teach, baptise and nurture** new believers
3. **TEND** - To **respond to human need** by loving service
4. **TRANSFORM** - To **seek to transform unjust structures** of society
5. **TREASURE** - To strive to **safeguard the integrity of creation** and to sustain the life of the earth’.

The five marks have been adopted by provinces, dioceses and parishes around the global Anglican Communion as a way of holistically expressing the focus and commitments of the discipleship of the church and its membership and its commitments in engaging with the wider world and contributing to the public square. Hodgson (2011) notes that the five marks have the advantage of being easily understood by people regardless of age or background and she also states that the framework has become equally popular with other Christian denominations.

Jefferts Schori (2012) argues that mission is central to the lives of all people, not just those who profess to be Christians. She focuses on the broadest possible meaning of mission – noting that it can be defined as sending, serving (by feeding, healing and teaching) and caring for the vulnerable. She argues that mission is about more than proclaiming the Gospel; rather it is also how Christians live as citizens in the world, how they engage with those around them. In this context, the five marks of mission offer a framework for how Christians engage with the world around them, including with those of other beliefs or no religious beliefs. They also

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<sup>1</sup> The Anglican Communion is the name given to the collective of regional Anglican churches across the world that are in full communion with one another, through holding similar doctrine, order / structure and forms of worship. The Anglican Communion was established in this form at the Lambeth Conference in 1867. These churches are independent of one another, they are not centrally governed. All consider themselves to be both reformed and Catholic, but represent a broad range of values, styles of worship, interpretations of scripture and traditions.

serve as an invitation to those outside the Anglican community to engage in partnership in the activities of care or action by all who share human citizenship.

Zink (2017) describes how there has been relatively little analysis or evaluation of the five marks since their introduction in 1984. In the late 1990s an Anglican Communion-wide Mission Commission (known as MISSIO) engaged in a critical review of the five marks. Zink (2017) notes the wariness expressed by the MISSIO review of the checklist form in which the five marks are presented. Zink (2017) argues that the five marks seemed to have had relatively little impact until quite recently, becoming ubiquitous in the last decade. According to Zink (2017), one of the strengths of the five marks as a framework is that their existence has enabled cross-cultural and ecumenical dialogue and provided a means of achieving consensus among different groups of Christians amid differences of opinion and focus of doctrine.

The dioceses of Dublin and Glendalough have been using the five marks as a framework for discipleship development since 2014 (United Diocese of Dublin and Glendalough 2014) and have shared the *Come&C* approach based on the five marks with the Anglican dioceses of Spain and Portugal and also Jerusalem. The five marks have provided a common Anglican framework in this context to enable cross-cultural dialogue between Irish, Southern European and Middle Eastern Anglicans (Tuohy & Feeney 2019).

Walker (2011) provides an example of the use of the five marks as a framework for analysis. He demonstrates how the five marks can be used to evaluate research data about believers and non-believers' engagement with Church. He also argues that the five marks can provide a framework of invitation. He outlines how they can help to guide people within the Church so that they can identify engagement and action that can act as ways of including those on the margins of church (or those outside traditional church) to participate in the broadly defined social mission of the church. Walker (2011) shows how the practical action orientation of the five marks potentially enables those of faith to reach out beyond their own church walls to those on the margins or beyond, and to work in equal partnership with those outside of church to do so. This is possible because the five marks show the shared concerns of church and wider society for ecology, social justice, personal development and flourishing across generations - the universal need to care and be cared for. The five marks offer Anglicans a framework both to analyze their own beliefs and practices while also offering ways of sharing and communicating those beliefs and practices into the public square in partnership with those of other faiths and of no religion.

In recent years, Anglican churches in various jurisdictions have utilized the five marks to frame educational initiatives with children and adolescents that are invitational to all learners in Anglican schools recognizing that not all of these learners are themselves Anglicans or members of other Christian churches focusing on shared social action. The Anglican Church

in New Zealand has developed an online schools' resource based on the five marks. For example, its material on the 4<sup>th</sup> mark (to transform unjust structures) includes a range of materials for use with different age groups to stimulate discussion and deepen understanding of a range of social justice issues as well as linking with groups engaged in actions to address injustice (<https://anglicanschools.nz/4th-mark-of-mission/>). The Church of England has developed materials based on the five marks entitled *RE with Soul* for enquiry-based learning in primary and post-primary Anglican schools which focus both on deepening understanding and on stimulating action beyond the school (<http://www.rewithsoul.co.uk/about-us/partners-2/five-marks-mission/>).

The five marks are generic statements of intention, purpose and identity, discerned and agreed by representatives of the various national churches that are part of the Anglican Communion at a particular point in time. In the last decade, as outlined in this section, the five marks have begun to be used for purposes other than what was originally intended by those who first discerned them. The individuals and groups devising discipleship programmes, educational resources and using them for research and development activities have found the five marks to be a useful framework to test the extent to which a particular activity can fit under an Anglican umbrella in prospect or in retrospect. They have also been found to provide an invitational framework to engage those outside the church in shared social action without an assumption that participation together means conversion. In essence, the five marks offer the potential to be a useful mechanism for operationalising the words of Rowan Williams 'don't ask if it is Anglican; make it Anglican'.

### **Two-fold challenge – oscillating the Centre's gaze inwards / outwards and finding a voice in a secular space**

Turning back to the Church of Ireland Centre, the focus is how to maintain that space as appropriately Anglican within a secular university setting. Since its legal establishment, the Church of Ireland Centre has been involved with the teaching, assessment and public service obligations to its network of schools spelled out by the establishing document.<sup>2</sup> It has also been engaged in outreach, research, innovation and heritage activities.<sup>3</sup> The Centre takes responsibility for marketing its B.Ed pathway and assessing its applicants. These activities

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<sup>2</sup> The legal agreement that established the Church of Ireland Centre includes the 2014 Vision document describing the role and structure of the Centre. This states that the Centre is responsible for a range of activities on the Bachelor of Education programme, namely: the provision or procurement of teaching and assessment in Religious Education (encompassing the Religious Education Certificate and three modules in Religions, Ethics, Morals and Values); the Small Schools specialism (which is also offered to students outside the Centre's cohort and includes Inclusive Education; Teaching in Multi-grade Classes; Early Childhood Education; Outdoor & Project-based Learning; Teaching, Leading & Learning in Small Schools); Irish. The Centre also has responsibility for tutorials, action research tutorials and supervision of projects in Protestant school ethos and multi-grade teaching. The Centre has oversight of School Placement for its cohort in Protestant schools.

<sup>3</sup> The Centre produces three Newsletters per year for its schools and other interested parties in the wider Protestant community. These Newsletters detail the range of outreach, research, innovation and heritage activities in which the Centre is involved.

reflect the agreed maintenance of certain structural aspects of Anglican ethos (namely the retention of the College's title in the Centre's name and the selection and preparation of those able to support the ethos of primary schools under Church of Ireland, Methodist, Presbyterian and Society of Friends patronage through its B.Ed pathway). The Centre's Director has a particular contractual duty with regard to the preservation of its Anglican ethos.

The description of Anglican ethos set out by Warner (2013) emphasizes the importance of positive, respectful, inclusive relationships of service and integrity both within the institution and with the world outside institutional parameters. It envisages education as being primarily concerned with human flourishing, rather than only focused on individual attainment. Warner's Anglican ethos creates a place of third level learning that can engage with people of faith and facilitate their spiritual flourishing while also including and welcoming those of other beliefs in equally respectful, dialogic and holistic ways. It is underpinned by a theological meta-critique which enables prophetic speech into the public square of the university and the wider society.

Warner's Anglican institutional characteristics are an interesting template onto which to map the Centre's structures, governance, activities, outputs and a way of evaluating its plans and outputs. It provides a way to identify common ground between the Centre's ethos and the University's strategic plan, recognising that this is the Centre's locus. Respect, inclusivity and critical thinking and engagement are expected norms in the University, as they are in the Centre. Both the University's Interfaith Centre and its chaplaincy, along with the Centre itself, are intended to provide an environment that engages and supports holistic spiritual development for all, regardless of their personal beliefs. The Centre's structures, governance and some of its core activities and outputs present a genuine challenge to meeting all of the criteria identified by Warner. The structural focus on minority community maintenance built into the legal agreement means that much of the Centre's required activity and gaze is at least partly focused inwards. This inward focus is anathema to the generous engagement outwards with both the University community and the public square that Warner envisages for all members of that community, staff and students alike. However, this is best perceived as a challenge that can be highlighted and provide a focus for genuine critical reflection on service.

The five marks of mission of the Anglican Communion also offer the potential to provide both a useful planning framework and analytical framework to proof the work of the Centre – in the words of Rowan Williams, to 'make it Anglican'. There is some overlap between the categories in Warner's Anglican ethos and the five marks of mission. Both are outward focused, with an expectation of service for the common good, critical engagement with both the immediate locality and wider society all underpinned by a commitment to Gospel values that are expressed individually and shared with the faith community, the wider community and the public square. As noted earlier, the five marks provide a framework for Anglicans to

analyze, understand and explain shared beliefs and a framework for shared activities of care and concern with those beyond the particular faith community. As outlined already, the five marks have been used as both analytical and developmental frameworks though this was not the original intention of those who discerned and agreed them.

**Table 1: Anglican Ethos Assessment Tool - Warner's five characteristics of an authentic Anglican ethos in third level with the five marks of mission of the Anglican Communion**

5 marks	Tell	Teach	Tend	Transform	Treasure
Warner					
Respect & include					
Service					
Life-enhancing					
Faith-friendly					
Prophetic voice					

Table 1 is based on a combination of Warner's five characteristics of Anglican third level ethos and the five marks of mission of the Anglican Communion. This has been developed as a tool for assessing existing structures and activities of the Church of Ireland Centre as well as guiding planning for changes or additions to those activities. My priority is that each activity assessed can address at least one each of both Warner's characteristics and the five marks. Here are three examples of the application of the Anglican ethos evaluation tool:

*Application to curriculum and pedagogy*

I made revisions to the content and pedagogy of REMV (Religions, Ethics, Morals and Values) in B.Ed year 2 commencing in Autumn 2020, remaining within the descriptive framework of the approved module documentation. REMV B.Ed year 1 introduces six world faiths to the students (Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism). REMV B.Ed Year 2 explores a range of moral and ethical issues such as poverty, racism, inter-religious conflict, human sexuality, climate concerns and human rights drawing critically on interfaith and interpath perspectives and using narrative as a key learning tool. Module content continues to be developed through dialogue with, and inputs from members of the Dublin City Interfaith Forum (see Appendix Table A1).

I teach beyond the Centre's B.Ed pathway and its particular student cohort as a core part of my contribution to the university. I am also part of the team that teaches and supervises the dissertations of students on the MA in Chaplaincy and the M.Ed programmes. I was invited to develop a new module assessing poverty, equality and education through both practical and theoretical lenses for a strand on the M.Ed for teachers working in schools with designated disadvantaged status. I applied the ethos tool to an aspect of my work beyond



the Centre to demonstrate its applicability to all of my work in the university (see Appendix Table A2).

#### *Application to public event planning*

Planning has been underway since December 2020 for a streamed, live public lecture to be offered through the Centre in partnership with the united diocese of Dublin and Glendalough. The guest speaker is the novelist Catherine Fox who writes about the culture and theology of Anglicanism most notably in the Lindchester series published since 2016 by SPCK. A new novel is due to be published in May 2021 and the public event will coincide with this. Planning for this event has focused on sharing of insights about Anglican culture and theology beyond the Centre into the public square of the University and wider society (see Appendix Table A3).

#### **Concluding comments**

Mirroring Irish society more broadly, the Centre occupies a liminal space that oscillates between the pre-secular through the secular to the post-secular. The legal agreement for incorporation ties the Centre and its Director into service to its own minority community and schools and the preservation of its ethos through those formal structures and agreed activity. This represents a continuation of the inward gaze of the pre-secular era. However, the agreement also gives space for creative reach outwards both into the University and into the public square beyond, enabling an outward gaze. The Anglican ethos evaluation tool facilitates this intentional oscillation of the gaze inwards/outwards. The image of the Janus head is a useful visual representation of the Centre's existence in, and engagement from, this liminal space looking and serving both inwards and outwards.

The legal agreement for incorporation has given the Church of Ireland Centre the right to exercise a legitimate voice within the structure of the University. It has also given the Centre the means to manage the oscillating inward/outward gaze. This means that the Centre needs to continually and intentionally cultivate its expert voice so that it is a contributor both to the academy and to the public square beyond the University while also serving minority community cultural maintenance. The Centre continues to create and cultivate active links with Anglican parishes, schools, dioceses and other bodies locally, nationally and internationally. It contributes education, assessment, research and policy expertise both in and beyond the university. This demonstrates that voices of faith can contribute with validity to pluralist thinking about education (Parker-Jenkins, Glenn & Germen Janmaat 2014) and can be among the range of religious and secular voices that contribute to, and enrich, a variety of debates within the University and beyond (Mendieta & Vanantwerpen 2011). Religions are part of the world we inhabit, both its historical legacy and its contemporary lived reality and higher education needs to engage critically with both those historical and current realities (Jacobsen & Jacobsen 2012) rather than dismissing voices of faith in a hard secular approach. Dinham (2021) argues that universities have been guilty of side-stepping the need to assist students to think and feel critically when it comes to religion. Chaplaincy on its own cannot

tackle such critical reflection. Such critical reflection needs to be part of academic teaching and research in order to facilitate critical engagement as part of the holistic learning process. Application of the Anglican ethos evaluation tool to curriculum and pedagogy can perhaps go some distance to intentionally addressing that teaching and learning gap.

Williams (2012: 48) argues that ‘ultimately we do not have to be bound by the mythology of a purely private conviction and public neutrality; and, if my general argument is right, the future of religious communities in modern society should show us some ways forward that do not deliver us either into theocracy or an entirely naked public square.’ Forster-Smyth (2013: 323) describes the work of the chaplain in a way that really resonates with the ongoing evolution of the ethos of the Church of Ireland Centre in a secular university setting: ‘our work ... often takes place in the liminal spaces of the academy. On our campuses, we stand in the spaces that lie between knowing and not knowing, between truth and wonder, between what has come before and what is yet emerging’.

This idea of journeying in the space of liminality, and, like the Janus figure, gazing both inwards towards our own minority community and outwards to the public square are touchstones for the Centre as it draws to a conclusion its first five years on its journey in a pluralist, secular space. It will continue to explore how best to achieve a balance in its expression of an authentic Anglican voice that moves on a spectrum between the theocracy of pre-secular Christendom and the entirely naked public square of harsh secularism. The liminal space that the Centre continues to create and to occupy is strategic to this energy and necessary oscillation, just as it is strategic to managing the Centre’s own oscillating inward/outward gaze to enable it to speak truthfully and prophetically into, and dialogue with, both its own community and the public square of the University and the education policy space beyond. It is guided by an Anglican framework provided by the five marks of mission and an articulated expression of ethos in the third level space offered by Warner given shape in the Anglican ethos evaluation tool.

The hope and intention is that the Anglican ethos which continues to evolve will be sufficiently flexible to allow policy and practice to enable a dynamic policy/practice dialogue. It should also present an expression of Anglican ethos to those within the community and beyond it that has moved beyond the limitations of pietistic expression and into prophetic engagement in the public square as well as providing learning opportunities for students that allow genuinely holistic self-development. Finally, it should equip the members of the Centre and its students to turn their critical gaze and voices both inwards and outwards, contributing to dialogue and growth within the various reformed Christian churches themselves.

**Appendix 1**

**Table A1: Anglican Ethos Assessment Tool – revisions to REMV year 2 module**

5 marks	Tell	Teach	Tend	Transform	Treasure
Warner					
Respect & include		√	√		
Service			√		
Life-enhancing				√	√
Faith-friendly	√	√			
Prophetic voice				√	√

**Table A2: Anglican Ethos Assessment Tool – development of new M.Ed module**

5 marks	Tell	Teach	Tend	Transform	Treasure
Warner					
Respect & include			√	√	
Service			√	√	
Life-enhancing				√	√
Faith-friendly					
Prophetic voice				√	√

**Table A3: Anglican Ethos Assessment Tool – public lecture on Anglican culture & theology**

5 marks	Tell	Teach	Tend	Transform	Treasure
Warner					
Respect & include	√	√			
Service		√	√		
Life-enhancing	√	√	√		
Faith-friendly	√	√			
Prophetic voice				√	√

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