

# Enhancing Catholic School Identity

## On the significance of the personal prayer life of students and staff for Catholic school identity

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## A. Introduction

### Objective

The aim of the present analysis is to investigate how the personal prayer life of the students and the staff is related to the Catholic identity of their schools. Here is the formulation as it appears in the document that lists the *Prospective Meta Research Questions*:

**'Personal prayer life': how is the prayer life of the students and the staff related to their subpopulations / scale results? Is there a 'standard profile' when prayer life is 'high' or 'low'?** Responses on the item regarding 'personal prayer life' (*Profile Questionnaire*) can be organized into three summary categories the way that it has been typically done in the ECSI school reports – 'active prayer life', 'irregular prayer life', and 'no prayer life' – and then possible connections between belongingness to one of these categories and scores on the scales are investigated. Moreover, correlations between 'personal prayer life' on the one hand, and the 'prayer at school' item in the 'features of Catholic identity' question in the *Doyle Questionnaire* on the other hand, can be looked into as well.

This analysis is based on the ECSI research data from Catholic schools in the four dioceses in the state of Victoria that participated in the project between the years 2011 and 2018.

## B. Data preparation

### Data preparation

In the data that is collected between February 2011 and April 2018, there are 177,625 valid participants with known personal prayer information (both *Prayer\_Profile* and *Prayer\_Doyle*). Among these, there are 32,715 staff members and 124,893 students in primary and secondary schools.

## C. Descriptive statistics

### 1. Descriptive statistics of the variable *Prayer\_Profile*

Question: "How often do you pray to God individually? (Communal prayer at school, at church, et cetera does NOT count.)" <sup>1</sup>

6 = I pray on a daily basis.

5 = I pray regularly.

4 = I sometimes pray, but not regularly.

3 = I only pray in times of great happiness or trouble.

2 = Once I did pray, but not anymore.

1 = I have never prayed before.

RG	Respondent Group	n	Mean	Min	Max	St. Dev	Variance	Skewness	Kurtosis
1	Students y5-6	46020	4.20	1	6	1.40	1.95	-0.50	-0.39
2	Students y7-8	33734	3.52	1	6	1.57	2.47	-0.04	-0.95
3	Students y9-10	28517	3.18	1	6	1.57	2.47	0.25	-0.91
4	Students y11-12	22233	3.07	1	6	1.55	2.39	0.37	-0.82
6	Teaching staff	25275	4.25	1	6	1.41	2.00	-0.57	-0.41
7	School leadership	8441	4.53	1	6	1.30	1.69	-0.84	0.21
8	CEO personnel	624	4.54	1	6	1.33	1.77	-0.81	-0.07
9	Parents	20381	4.12	1	6	1.39	1.94	-0.46	-0.46

Figure 1. Descriptive statistics of *Prayer\_Profile*.

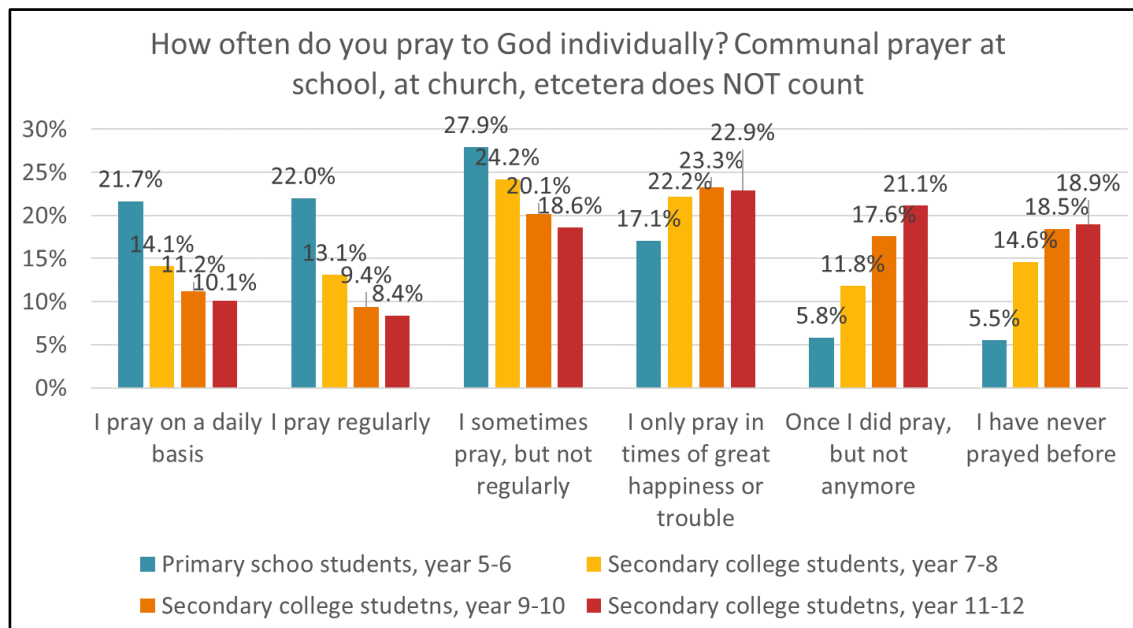


Figure 2. Descriptive statistics of *Prayer\_Profile* for RG 1-4.

<sup>1</sup> Note that the coding of the variable of *Profile\_Prayer* needs to be inverted before it can function in the analysis.

In general, the data above reveal that the oldest students (year 11-12) pray less frequently and withdraw from prayer more so than their youngest peers (year 5-6), with the students in years in between reflection degrees of the same patterns. The most noticeable change in practice is found between those in year 5-6 and those in year 7-8. The remarkable shift as the students grow older is an important observation.

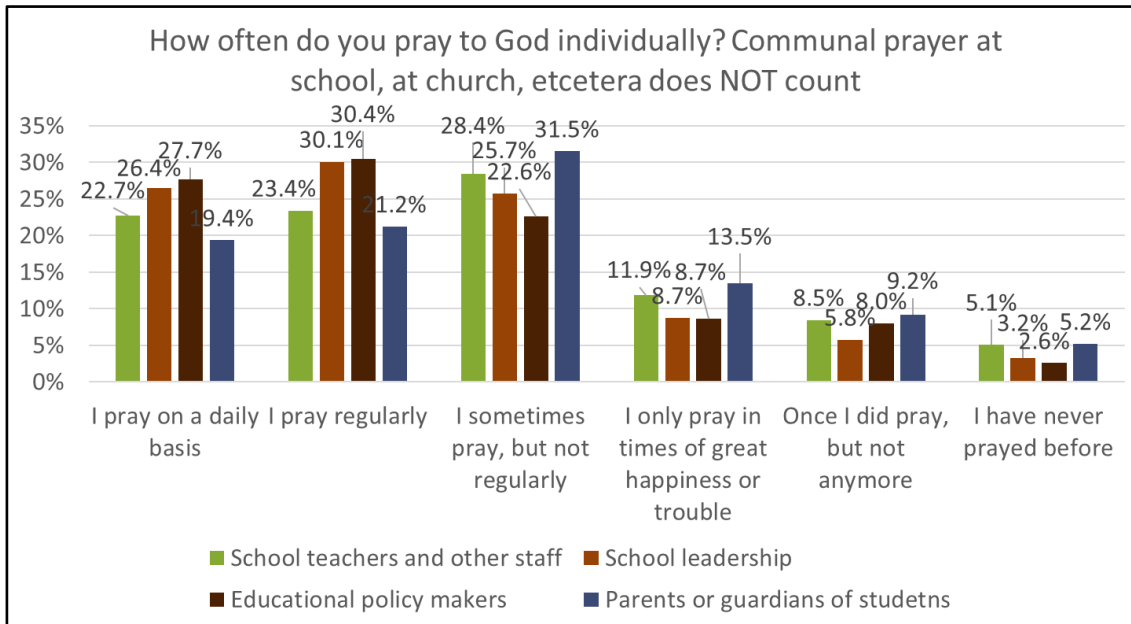


Figure 3. Descriptive statistics of Prayer\_Profile for RG 6-9.

Among the adults as a whole, the above data reveal that those in school leadership are generally more prayerful than teachers and staff (although the latter is quite positive in itself). The profile of those involved in educational policy is slightly more nuanced, reflecting a *slightly* more moderate frequency of prayer by comparison to teachers, staff and school leadership. By further comparison, parents in general pray even to a slightly more moderate degree than other adults.

## 2. Descriptive statistics of variable *Prayer\_Doyle* (DC4N)

Question: "Here are a number of features of catholic schools. Think about the current practice in your school, and evaluate whether you would want the feature MORE or LESS: Prayer at school."

5 = a lot more

4 = more

3 = neither more, nor less

2 = less

1 = a lot less

RG	Respondent Group	n	Mean	Min	Max	St. Dev	Variance	Skewness	Kurtosis
1	Students y5-6	44223	3.58	1	5	0.94	0.88	-0.10	-0.20
2	Students y7-8	32339	3.20	1	5	0.94	0.88	-0.10	0.29
3	Students y9-10	27215	2.96	1	5	0.94	0.89	-0.18	0.31
4	Students y11-12	21228	2.86	1	5	0.93	0.86	-0.20	0.38
6	Teaching staff	24529	3.26	1	5	0.60	0.35	0.82	2.17
7	School leadership	8205	3.34	1	5	0.62	0.38	0.76	1.13
8	CEO personnel	605	3.45	1	5	0.68	0.46	0.54	0.34
9	Parents	19420	3.22	1	5	0.63	0.39	0.91	2.49

Figure 4. Descriptive statistics of *Prayer\_Doyle*.

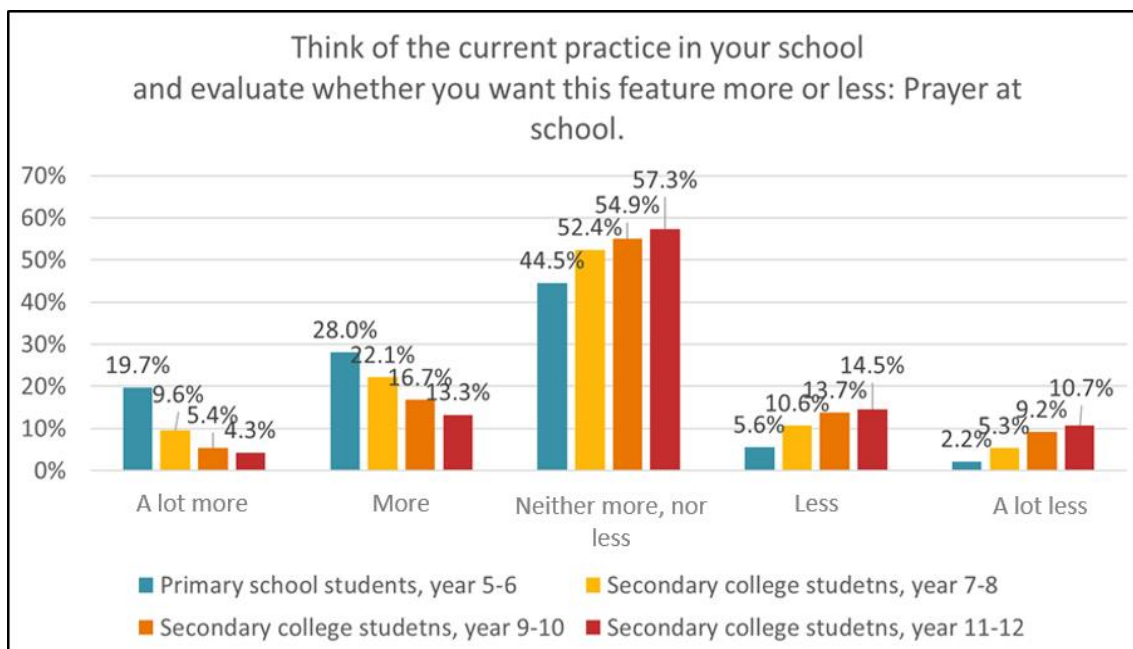


Figure 5. Descriptive statistics of *Prayer\_Doyle* for RG 1-4.

In general, student attitudes towards prayer in (one's) school reflects a pattern similar to their personal practice of prayer: namely, that the oldest students (year 11-12) are least desiring of such

practice, the youngest students (year 5-6) most desiring, and those in years in between exhibiting degrees of the same patterns.

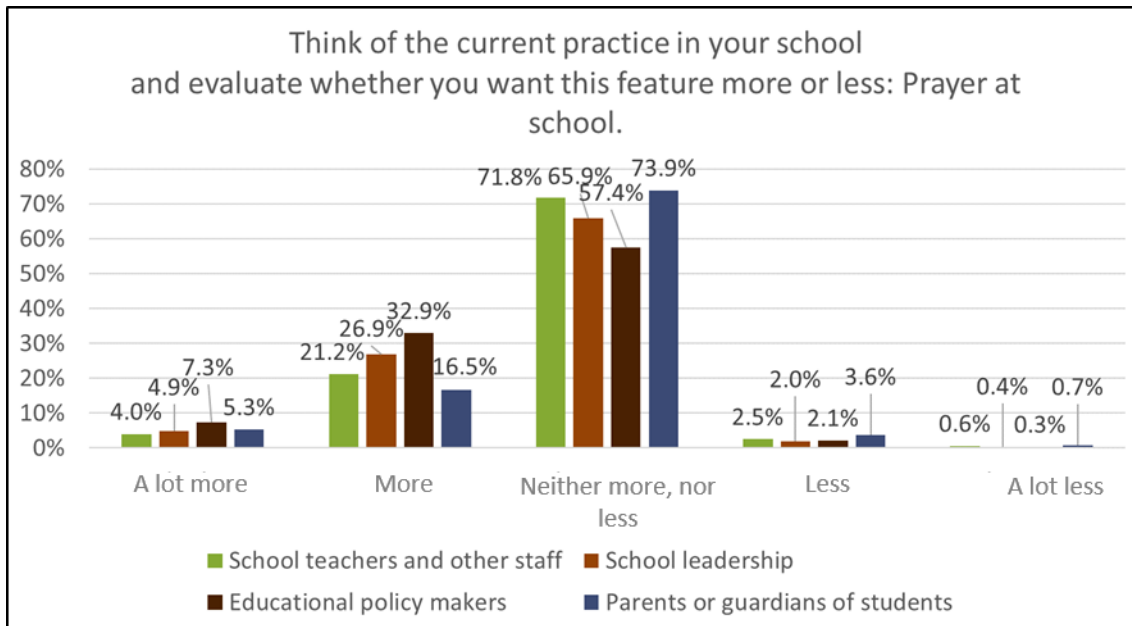


Figure 6. Descriptive statistics of *Prayer\_Doyle* for RG 6-9.

Adult attitudes in general towards prayer in the school where one is employed, or in the school of one's child, also reflect a profile similar to that of their own personal prayer practice. Those in school leadership would like to see more prayer in school by comparison to teachers and staff, and those in educational policy would like the same to an even greater degree. The parent population on the whole, by comparison, reflects more moderate views towards prayer in school. We expect a positive correlation between personal prayer practice (*Prayer\_Profile*) on the one hand, and people's desire to have more or less prayer in their school (*Prayer\_Doyle*) on the other hand. Let's analyse whether this is the case, as well as many other statistical comparisons, in the next section.

## D. Analysis

### 1. Correlation between the variables *Prayer\_Profile* & *Prayer\_Doyle* (DC4N)

To what extent do the responses on these two variables correlate?

*Prayer\_Profile*: "How often do you pray to God individually?  
(Communal prayer at school, at church, et cetera does NOT count.)"

*Prayer\_Doyle* (DC4N): "Think of the current practice in your school  
and evaluate whether you want this feature more or less: Prayer at school."

RG	Respondent Group	Prayer vs DC4N
1	Students y5-6	0.280
2	Students y7-8	0.369
3	Students y9-10	0.407
4	Students y11-12	0.416
6	Teaching staff	0.302
7	School leadership	0.300
8	CEO personnel	0.381
9	Parents	0.391
	Students y7-12	0.405
	School staff and leadership in primary schools	0.196
	School staff and leadership in secondary colleges	0.381

Figure 7. Pearson Correlation coefficients between *Prayer\_Profile* and *Prayer\_Doyle*.

#### Description and interpretation

There is an overall positive, mutual correlation between one's personal prayer life and one's views towards prayer at school. In other words, people who have an active personal prayer life also tend to want more opportunities for prayer at school, and vice versa. In general, this positive correlation is true for staff and students alike.

At the same, there are also notable differences between student age groups: in general, the older the student, the stronger (higher coefficient) the positive correlation is between these variables. Put differently, older secondary college students with a strong personal prayer life (who are in fact a minority relative to the whole population) are more consistent in their desire to attend a school that facilitates their already active prayer life. Inversely, older students without much of a personal prayer life are more consistent in their desire to attend a school that forgoes attention to prayer on campus.

Having a personal prayer life enhances the religious identity of the school and, at the same time, the religious identity of the school enables people to be more prayerful in their own time.

## 2. Longitudinal shifts 2011-2018 based on mean score of *Prayer\_Profile*

### Explanation

- Firstly, the mean score is calculated for each separate year and for each respondent group<sup>2</sup> for the variable of *Prayer\_Profile*:

	RG1	RG2	RG3	RG4	RG6	RG7	RG9
ECSIP VIC 2011	4.137	3.202	2.909	2.913	4.384	4.557	4.123
ECSIP VIC 2012	4.359	3.706	3.408	3.247	4.417	4.627	4.235
ECSIP VIC 2013	4.278	3.657	3.334	3.108	4.274	4.661	4.151
ECSIP VIC 2014	4.258	3.586	3.329	3.272	4.261	4.554	4.229
ECSIP VIC 2015	4.188	3.391	3.016	2.773	4.278	4.561	4.090
ECSIP VIC 2016	4.166	3.549	3.077	3.094	4.228	4.561	4.086
ECSIP VIC 2017	4.162	3.609	3.282	3.119	4.094	4.437	4.102
ECSIP VIC 2018	4.073	3.484	3.132	3.007	4.102	4.377	3.943

Figure 8. Mean scores for *Prayer\_Profile* per year and per respondent group.

- Secondly, in order to make the results more visible, the mean scores are re-scaled by subtracting the minimum value (2.773) of the data matrix above. Then we plot the re-scaled mean scores:

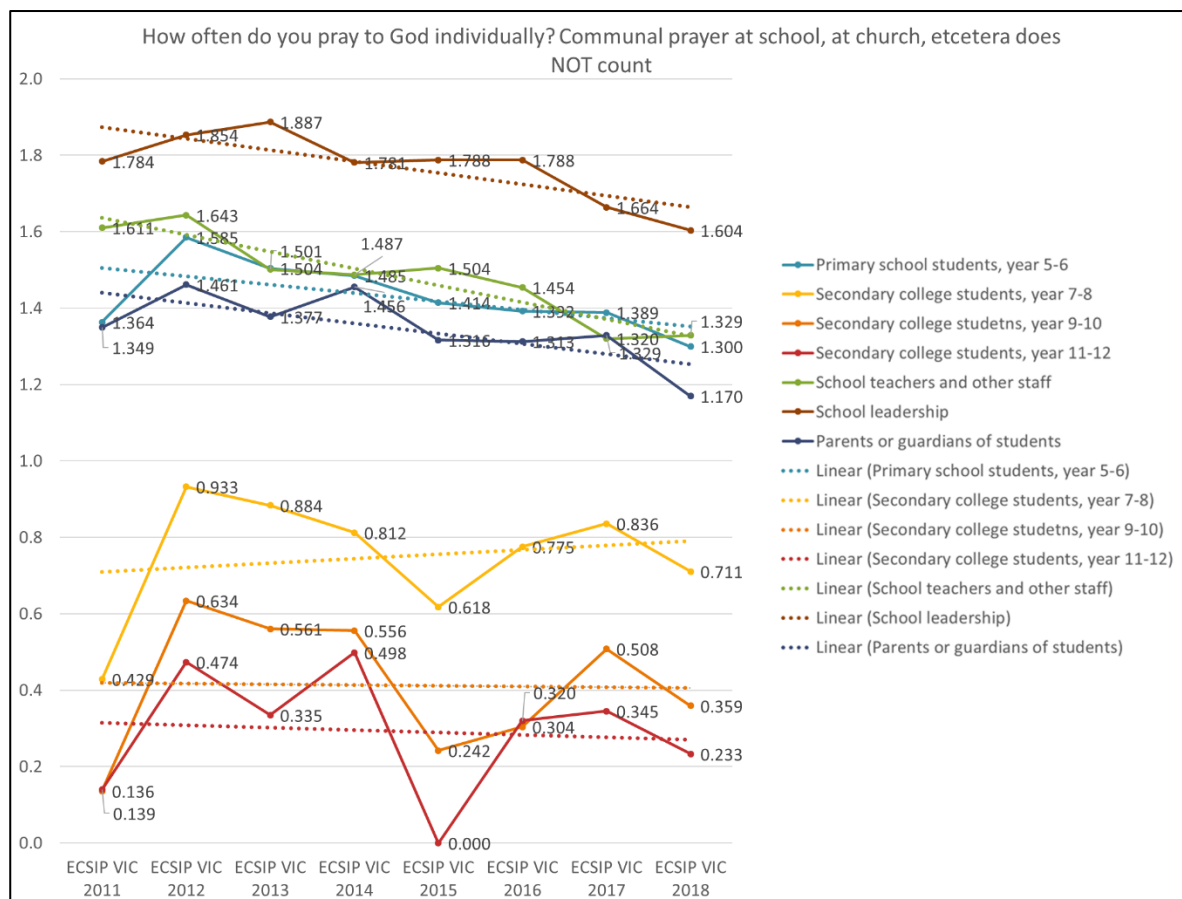


Figure 9. Longitudinal shifts based on the re-scaled mean score of *Prayer\_Profile* for 2011-2018.

<sup>2</sup> Note that Catholic Education Office personnel (RG8) have not been included in Figures 8 and 9 because there is a lack of data that recurs on a yearly basis. Although the four CEO's did the ECSI research at least twice in the period 2011-2018, they participated at various moments in time.



The data in the above figure reveal several noticeable trends. First, the entire group of teachers, staff and school leadership, which is in general more prayerful than the student population, is in itself in a time of slight overall decline in the personal practice of prayer during the period 2011 to 2018. This same trend is also generally true for the parent population, although their overall prayer is reportedly less frequent than students in primary (year 5-6).

Second, the two most senior groups of secondary students (year 9-10 and year 11-12) demonstrate in general relatively low levels of personal prayer and that degree of practice remains approximately the same over the period of this study.

Third, the youngest group of secondary students (year 7-8) reflects a comparatively moderate degree of personal prayer and is in fact the only respondent group in which a slight increase in that practice can be seen over time. Despite variations in their mean score from year to year, these students show an overall trend that indicate that they pray more frequently in recent years compared to previous years.

### 3. Longitudinal shifts 2011-2018 based on mean score of *Prayer\_Doyle* (DC4N)

#### Explanation

- Firstly, the mean score is calculated for each separate year and for each respondent group<sup>3</sup> for the variable of *Prayer\_Doyle*:

	RG1	RG2	RG3	RG4	RG6	RG7	RG9
ECSIP VIC 2011	3.614	3.021	2.762	2.730	3.298	3.430	3.227
ECSIP VIC 2012	3.620	3.230	3.037	2.855	3.294	3.398	3.241
ECSIP VIC 2013	3.590	3.223	2.963	2.807	3.311	3.408	3.252
ECSIP VIC 2014	3.570	3.211	3.006	2.925	3.236	3.309	3.232
ECSIP VIC 2015	3.570	3.168	2.927	2.783	3.239	3.313	3.193
ECSIP VIC 2016	3.554	3.227	2.971	2.911	3.245	3.332	3.175
ECSIP VIC 2017	3.601	3.272	2.995	2.892	3.214	3.319	3.253
ECSIP VIC 2018	3.508	3.221	2.955	2.893	3.220	3.291	3.187

Figure 10. Mean scores for *Prayer\_Doyle* per year and per respondent group.

- Secondly, in order to make the results more visible, the mean scores are re-scaled by subtracting the minimum value (2.730) of the data matrix above. Then we plot the re-scaled mean scores:

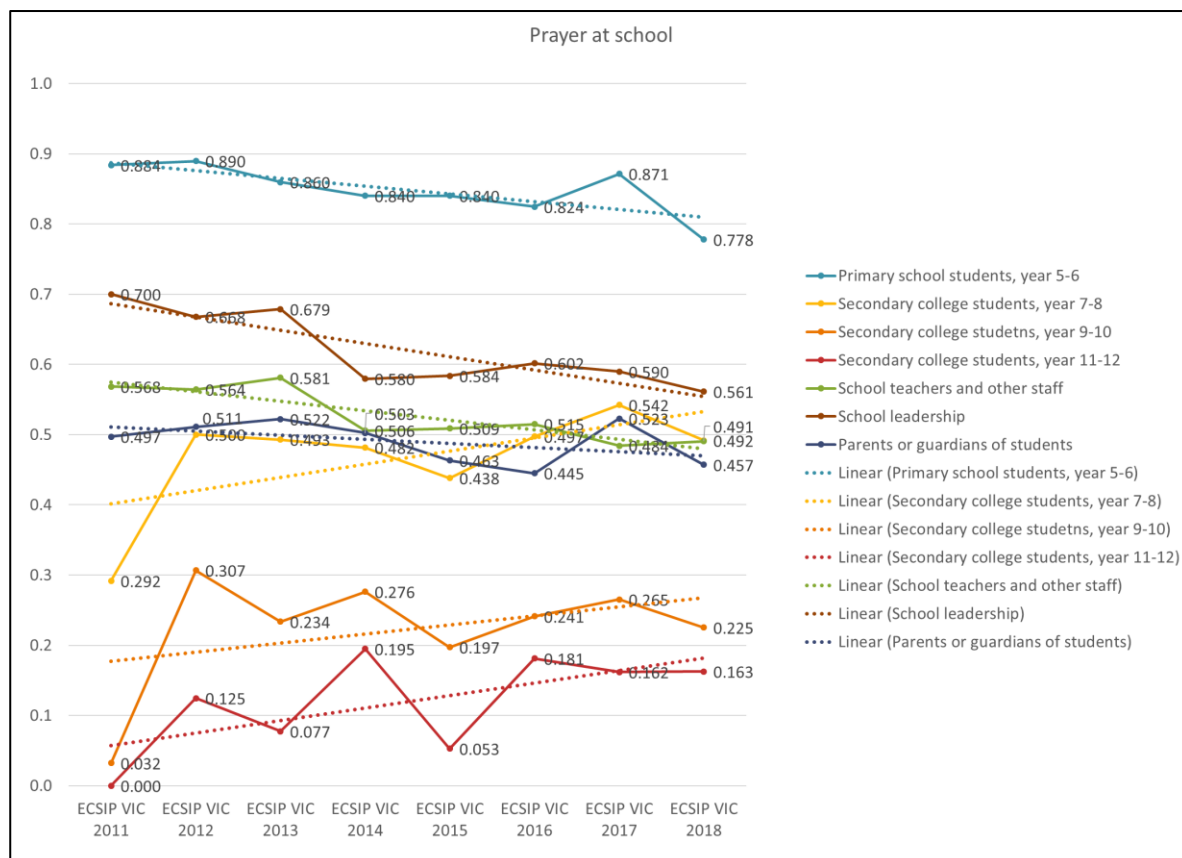


Figure 11. Longitudinal shifts based on the re-scaled mean score of *Prayer\_Doyle* for 2011-2018.

<sup>3</sup> Note that Catholic Education Office personnel (RG8) have not been included in Figures 10 and 11 because there is a lack of data that recurs on a yearly basis. Although the four CEO's did the ECSI research at least twice in the period 2011-2018, they participated in various moments in time.

The data in the above figure on prayer at school reflect several trends similar to those regarding personal prayer practice in the preceding figure, and a few notable differences. First, the attitude towards prayer at school among teachers, staff, school leadership and parents – while more positive than that among students (with the notable exception of primary students in year 5-6) – is becoming less positive over time. This gradual decline is also noticeable among primary students.

Second, this attitude towards school prayer among secondary students (all years), while in general less positive than that among the other respondent groups, is actually in a slight but steady increase over the same period of time. This indicates that secondary college students desire a little more prayer practice in their schools compared to their perception of the 'current practice'. There lies an important opportunity here to enhance the Catholic identity of their schools.

## 4. Distribution of personal prayer life dependent on four subpopulations

The five tables below indicate the frequency of the personal prayer life of the respondents based on their belonging to each of the four *subpopulations*. There are separate tables for students in primary and secondary schools, for school staff and leadership, for parents, and for Catholic Education Office personnel.

### Students in primary schools (RG1)

n	I have never prayed before.	Once I did pray, but not anymore.	I only pray in times of great happiness or trouble.	I sometimes pray, but not regularly.	I pray regularly.	I pray on a daily basis.
SEC	27.1%	21.7%	24.6%	19.1%	4.4%	3.0%
RECONF	1.1%	2.1%	10.0%	21.1%	28.5%	37.2%
RECONT	1.2%	2.0%	13.2%	25.3%	28.0%	30.3%
VALED	3.0%	5.0%	22.2%	39.3%	20.6%	9.9%

Figure 12. Distribution of personal prayer according to four subpopulations - Students in primary schools (RG1).

### Students in secondary colleges (RG2-3-4)

n	I have never prayed before.	Once I did pray, but not anymore.	I only pray in times of great happiness or trouble.	I sometimes pray, but not regularly.	I pray regularly.	I pray on a daily basis.
SEC	37.2%	29.5%	20.3%	9.7%	1.7%	1.6%
RECONF	1.7%	4.0%	13.1%	23.1%	23.6%	34.5%
RECONT	2.4%	4.3%	16.9%	23.6%	22.0%	30.8%
VALED	4.3%	9.6%	31.8%	34.3%	12.1%	7.8%

Figure 13. Distribution of personal prayer according to four subpopulations - Students in secondary colleges (RG2-3-4).

### Teachers and leadership in primary and secondary schools (RG6-7)

n	I have never prayed before.	Once I did pray, but not anymore.	I only pray in times of great happiness or trouble.	I sometimes pray, but not regularly.	I pray regularly.	I pray on a daily basis.
SEC	33.2%	36.9%	15.5%	11.5%	1.6%	1.3%
RECONF	0.6%	1.1%	4.5%	15.0%	30.8%	48.0%
RECONT	2.1%	5.6%	9.5%	25.6%	28.0%	29.2%
VALED	2.1%	5.2%	13.6%	37.1%	25.8%	16.1%

Figure 14. Distribution of personal prayer according to four subpopulations - Teachers and leadership in primary and secondary schools (RG6-7).

### Parents of the students (RG9)

n	I have never prayed before.	Once I did pray, but not anymore.	I only pray in times of great happiness or trouble.	I sometimes pray, but not regularly.	I pray regularly.	I pray on a daily basis.
SEC	33.1%	35.9%	16.4%	11.6%	1.9%	1.0%
RECONF	0.4%	1.1%	4.6%	18.2%	28.3%	47.4%
RECONT	3.0%	7.9%	12.5%	29.3%	23.4%	23.9%
VALED	2.5%	7.1%	16.0%	41.2%	21.4%	11.8%

Figure 15. Distribution of personal prayer according to four subpopulations - Parents of the students (RG9).

### Catholic Education Office Personnel (RG8)

n	I have never prayed before.	Once I did pray, but not anymore.	I only pray in times of great happiness or trouble.	I sometimes pray, but not regularly.	I pray regularly.	I pray on a daily basis.
SEC	29.0%	48.4%	12.9%	6.5%	3.2%	0.0%
RECONF	0.0%	2.9%	8.8%	14.7%	26.5%	47.1%
RECONT	1.0%	6.4%	4.5%	22.6%	33.3%	32.3%
VALED	2.3%	5.3%	21.4%	29.0%	30.5%	11.5%

Figure 16. Distribution of personal prayer according to four subpopulations - Catholic Education Office Personnel (RG8).

### Description and interpretation

It is immediately noticeable that people who are associated with the **Secularising subpopulation** report a much less developed prayer life compared to the other three subpopulations. In all respondents groups of this subpopulation, there is a majority that reports not having a prayer life at all: indicating either "prayed once but not anymore" or "never prayed before". Thus, there is a notable correlation between having no prayer life and desiring (or not opposing) *Secularisation* of the school. Among students as a whole, this effect is more noticeable among secondary college students compared to those in primary schools.

Furthermore, among all respondent groups it is evident that the highest frequencies of prayer can be found in the **Reconfessionalising subpopulation**, followed closely by the **Recontextualising subpopulation**. Most people associated with these two subpopulations have a well-developed personal prayer life. Inversely, people with a well-developed personal prayer life are more likely to be associated with one of these two subpopulations. It should be noted, however, that there are also minorities in these subpopulations whose prayer life is infrequent or even absent.

People associated with the **Christian Values Education subpopulation** exhibit ambiguity with regards to personal prayer. Most of them pray "sometimes, but not regularly". There are also moderate percentages who pray "regularly", or only "in times of great happiness or trouble". Those in one of the extreme positions ("pray every day" and "never pray") are unlikely to support *Christian Values Education*; rather, they tend to align with either *Reconfessionalisation* or *Recontextualisation* ("pray every day") or *Secularisation* ("never pray").

If one wished to enhance the Catholic identity of schools, then fostering an active personal prayer life among students and staff would be a significantly fruitful strategy. Prayer seems to transform people's consciousness towards both *Reconfessionalisation* and *Recontextualisation* (and vice-versa).

## 5. Pearson correlations between personal prayer life and four subpopulations

The table below shows the Pearson correlation coefficients between the personal prayer life of the various respondent groups and the four subpopulations.

Personal prayer life of the respondent groups	Correlation with SubpopA%	Correlation with SubpopB%	Correlation with SubpopC%	Correlation with SubpopD%
Primary school students, year 5-6	-0.53	0.62	0.59	0.35
Secondary college students, year 7-8	-0.62	0.67	0.64	0.45
Secondary college students, year 9-10	-0.65	0.68	0.66	0.50
Secondary college students, year 11-12	-0.66	0.68	0.65	0.50
School teachers and other staff	-0.67	0.67	0.51	0.43
School leadership	-0.65	0.66	0.54	0.41
Catholic Education Office personnel	-0.66	0.62	0.58	0.25
Parents or guardians of students	-0.64	0.66	0.52	0.42

Students y7-12	-0.65	0.68	0.65	0.49
School staff and leadership in primary schools	-0.57	0.62	0.43	0.32
School staff and leadership in secondary colleges	-0.70	0.68	0.56	0.46

Figure 17. Pearson correlations between the personal prayer life of the respondent groups, and four subpopulations.

The coefficients in the figure above reveal a strong negative correlation between personal prayer and school identity for the *Secularising subpopulation*. This is true across all respondent groups, and becomes notably stronger from the younger students to the older ones (-0.53 to -0.62 to -0.65 to -0.66).

The coefficients for the *Reconfessionalising subpopulation* reflect the strongest positive correlation with prayer, and there is no significant variation in this correlation across respondent groups.

Similarly, the coefficients for the *Recontextualising subpopulation* also reflect a strong positive correlation with prayer, although this correlation is slightly less pronounced compared to the *Reconfessionalising* subpopulation.

As for the *Christian Values Education subpopulation*, people associated with this subpopulation are somewhat ambiguous regarding religious prayer. Although the correlations are positive, they are less pronounced in comparison to the *Recontextualisation* and *Reconfessionalisation* subpopulations. To be clear, an environment of *Christian Values Education* is supportive of prayer at school and thus also Catholic school identity, but not in the same tradition-rich ways as *Recontextualisation* and *Reconfessionalisation*. Thus, *Christian Values Education* finds itself somewhere in the in-between space between a vibrant Catholic identity on the one hand and *Secularisation* on the other, without committing to either.

These findings indicate that the development of a vibrant and engaging prayer life at school will serve to advance both *Reconfessionalisation* and *Recontextualisation*; while, inversely, the latter two theological identity types are likewise best suited to foster a rich and fruitful prayer life at school.

These findings indicate that, while *Christian Values Education* is an ambiguous strategy and actually a 'false compromise' between those who intend to intensify their schools' Catholic identity and those who use 'Christian values' in order to *Secularise* their schools, the option of *Recontextualisation* shown none of these characteristics. Instead, the correlations with the external variable *personal prayer life* prove that *Recontextualisation* is much more aligned with *Reconfessionalisation*.

## 6. Pearson correlations between personal prayer life and support for Catholic education

Personal prayer life of the respondent groups	Correlation with Dsupp
Primary school students, year 5-6	0.45
Secondary college students, year 7-8	0.49
Secondary college students, year 9-10	0.50
Secondary college students, year 11-12	0.48
School teachers and other staff	0.47
School leadership	0.48
Catholic Education Office personnel	0.47
Parents or guardians of students	0.45

Students y7-12	0.50
School staff and leadership in primary schools	0.40
School staff and leadership in secondary colleges	0.51

Figure 18.

The figure on the left shows the Pearson correlation coefficients between the personal prayer life of the various respondent groups and a variable taken from the *Doyle Questionnaire*, namely *Support for Catholic Education* (Dsupp).

### Do you support the Catholic identity of schools?

6 I am a strong supporter!

5 I support it.

4 I think it is okay.

3 I don't really care about it.

2 I oppose it.

1 I am a strong opponent!

These two variables are positively correlated. It is very clear that people with a high personal prayer practice also support the Catholic identity of schools. Both characteristics 'predict' each other to a large extent: support for Catholic education is linked to the frequency of someone's prayer life, while the frequency of someone's prayer life is linked to support for Catholic education. This is equally true for all respondent groups: students regardless of their age, and adults alike.



## 7. Pearson correlations between personal prayer life and the scale results

This section addresses the relationship between personal prayer life and the results of the respondents on the three multivariate attitude scales: the *Post-Critical Belief Scale*, the *Melbourne Scale* and the *Victoria Scale*. The five figures below contain Pearson correlation coefficients between the variable *Prayer\_Profile* and the mean scores (factual and normative levels) of the eight respondent groups in the ECSI research on the three scales.

Post-Critical Belief Scale	Primary school students, year 5-6	Secondary college students, year 7-8	Secondary college students, year 9-10	Secondary college students, year 11-12	School teachers and other staff	School leadership	Catholic Education Office personnel	Parents or guardians of students
Literal Belief	0.43	0.59	0.59	0.59	0.39	0.39	0.24	0.45
External Critique	-0.45	-0.56	-0.56	-0.56	-0.51	-0.51	-0.57	-0.49
Relativity / Awareness of Contingency	-0.30	-0.47	-0.47	-0.47	-0.12	-0.12	-0.16	-0.16
Post-Critical Belief	0.53	0.68	0.68	0.68	0.36	0.36	0.38	0.31

Figure 19. Pearson correlation coefficients between personal prayer life and the mean scores on the Post-Critical Belief Scale.

Regarding the students (all years), it is remarkable that there is a higher correlation between personal prayer and *Post-Critical Belief*, compared to the correlation with *Literal Belief*. Both believing styles (*Post-Critical Belief* and *Literal Belief*) are clearly connected with having a personal prayer life, but this is true more so for *Post-Critical Belief*. Put simply, praying fosters *Post-Critical Belief*, and *Post-Critical Belief* fosters prayer. This effect is stronger for *Post-Critical Belief* compared to *Literal Belief*.

Both of the unbelieving styles (*External Critique* and *Relativism*) exhibit negative correlations with personal prayer, which means that people who pray less frequently are more likely to display *External Critique* and *Relativism*. It is remarkable that a stronger negative correlation is found between prayer and the unbelieving styles among the students, by comparison to the same correlation among the adults. This indicates that the *Relativism* we find among students is dismissive of Catholic identity in a more pronounced way than the *Awareness of Contingency* we find among the adult groups. The latter is more tolerant of Catholic identity and can better support efforts towards *Post-Critical Belief* – although the correlations remain negative.

Melbourne Scale, factual level	Primary school students, year 5-6	Secondary college students, year 7-8	Secondary college students, year 9-10	Secondary college students, year 11-12	School teachers and other staff	School leadership	Catholic Education Office personnel	Parents or guardians of students
Secularisation	-0.09	-0.07	-0.07	-0.07	-0.18	-0.18	-0.07	-0.05
Reconfessionalisation	0.16	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.07	0.07	-0.04	0.13
Christian Values Education	0.08	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.17	0.17	-0.02	0.18
Recontextualisation	0.10	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.22	0.22	0.21	0.14
Confessionality	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.07	0.07	-0.02	0.07

Figure 20. Pearson correlation coefficients between personal prayer life and the mean scores on the Melbourne Scale, factual level.

Melbourne Scale, normative level	Primary school students, year 5-6	Secondary college students, year 7-8	Secondary college students, year 9-10	Secondary college students, year 11-12	School teachers and other staff	School leadership	Catholic Education Office personnel	Parents or guardians of students
Secularisation	-0.29	-0.35	-0.35	-0.35	-0.51	-0.51	-0.46	-0.48
Reconfessionalisation	0.35	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.38	0.38	0.21	0.40
Christian Values Education	0.15	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.26	0.26	-0.06	0.32
Recontextualisation	0.22	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.21	0.21	0.29	0.14
Confessionality	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Figure 21. Pearson correlation coefficients between personal prayer life and the mean scores on the Melbourne Scale, normative level.

Among the student respondent groups (all levels) at the 'ideal school' level, it is worth noting that a personal prayer life correlates most noticeably with preferences in favour of *Reconfessionalisation*, followed by *Recontextualisation* and then, only to a limited degree, by *Christian Values Education*. Furthermore, this pattern of positive correlation is not the same among the adult respondent groups and in fact varies by adult group. Among teachers, staff and school leadership, a personal prayer life correlates most strongly with *Reconfessionalisation* (although not as strongly as is true for secondary students), then with *Christian Values Education* (which among adults typically bears hidden intentions towards *Reconfessionalisation*), followed closely then by *Recontextualisation*. For all respondent groups, the data make evident that preferences in favour of *Secularisation* correlate negatively with a personal prayer life.

Victoria Scale, factual level	Primary school students, year 5-6	Secondary college students, year 7-8	Secondary college students, year 9-10	Secondary college students, year 11-12	School teachers and other staff	School leadership	Catholic Education Office personnel	Parents or guardians of students
Monologue School	0.12	0.10	0.10	0.10	-0.05	-0.05	-0.13	0.04
Dialogue School	0.11	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.14	0.14	0.22	0.06
Colourful School	-0.05	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01	-0.13	-0.13	-0.14	-0.07
Colourless School	-0.03	0.00	0.00	0.00	-0.18	-0.18	-0.21	-0.09

Figure 22. Pearson correlation coefficients between personal prayer life and the mean scores on the Victoria Scale, factual level.

Victoria Scale, normative level	Primary school students, year 5-6	Secondary college students, year 7-8	Secondary college students, year 9-10	Secondary college students, year 11-12	School teachers and other staff	School leadership	Catholic Education Office personnel	Parents or guardians of students
Monologue School	0.27	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.29	0.29	0.22	0.36
Dialogue School	0.24	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.22	0.22	0.21	0.09
Colourful School	-0.17	-0.21	-0.21	-0.21	-0.41	-0.41	-0.45	-0.38
Colourless School	-0.15	-0.20	-0.20	-0.20	-0.42	-0.42	-0.44	-0.37

Figure 23. Pearson correlation coefficients between personal prayer life and the mean scores on the Victoria Scale, normative level.

Among all respondent groups at the normative level, the coefficients above demonstrate a positive correlation between a personal prayer life and positions in favour of both the *Monologue School* and the *Dialogue School* (the two ideal-types that maximise Catholic identity) with only a slightly more positive correlation between this factor and the *Monologue School* for all but the parent group. In all cases, there is a negative correlation between a personal prayer life and preferences for the *Colourful School* and the *Colourless School* (the two types that minimize Catholic identity). It is also worth noting that these negative correlations are in fact stronger among the adult groups than among the students.

## 8. Scale results for respondent groups with high and low personal prayer life

The following pages contain standard ECSI scale graph results for two subsamples, namely those respondents who have a high personal prayer life (left column), and those respondents who have a low personal prayer life (right column). The comparison between both groups yields valuable insights.

### High personal prayer life:

"I pray on a daily basis."

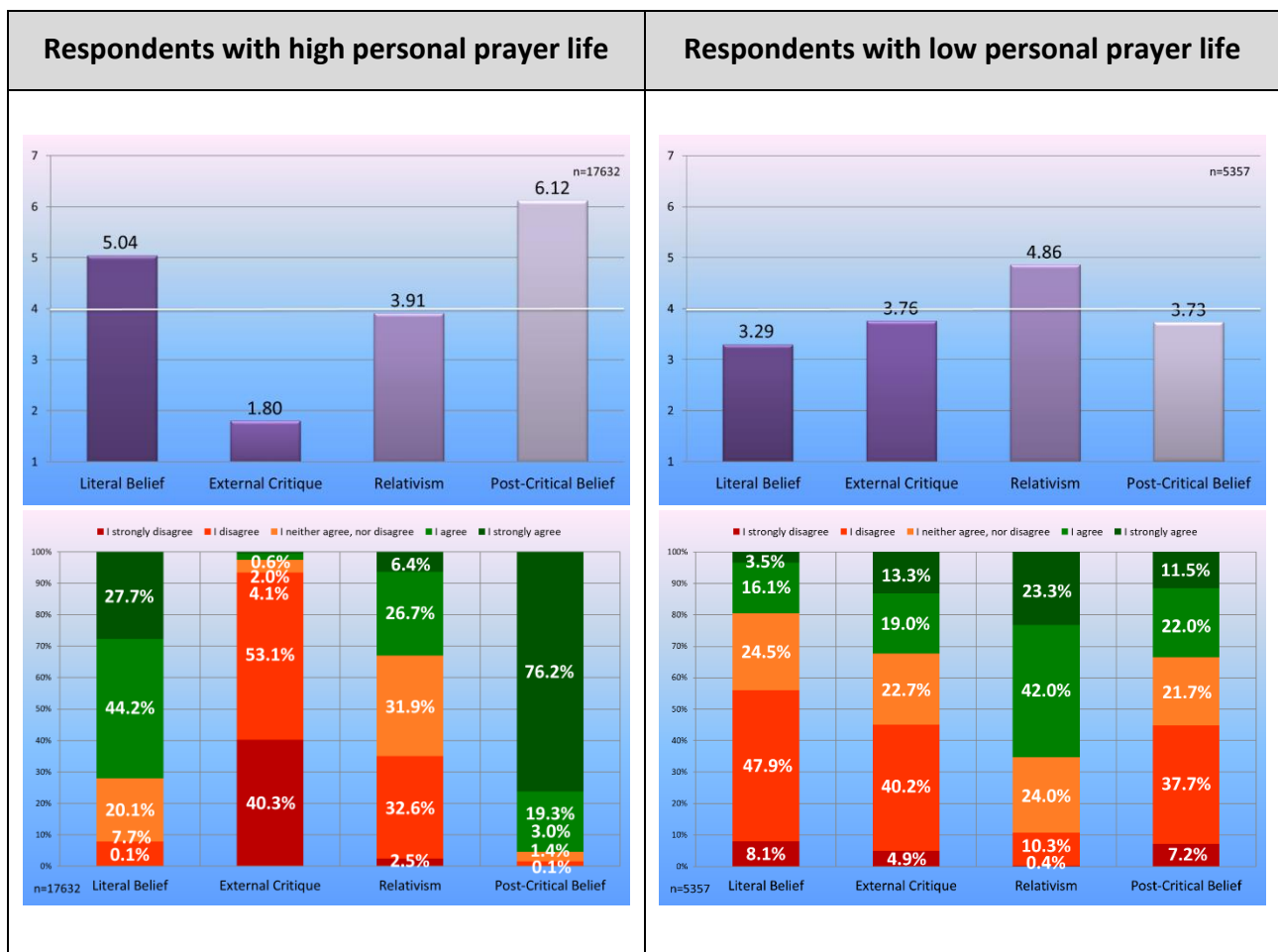
"I pray regularly."

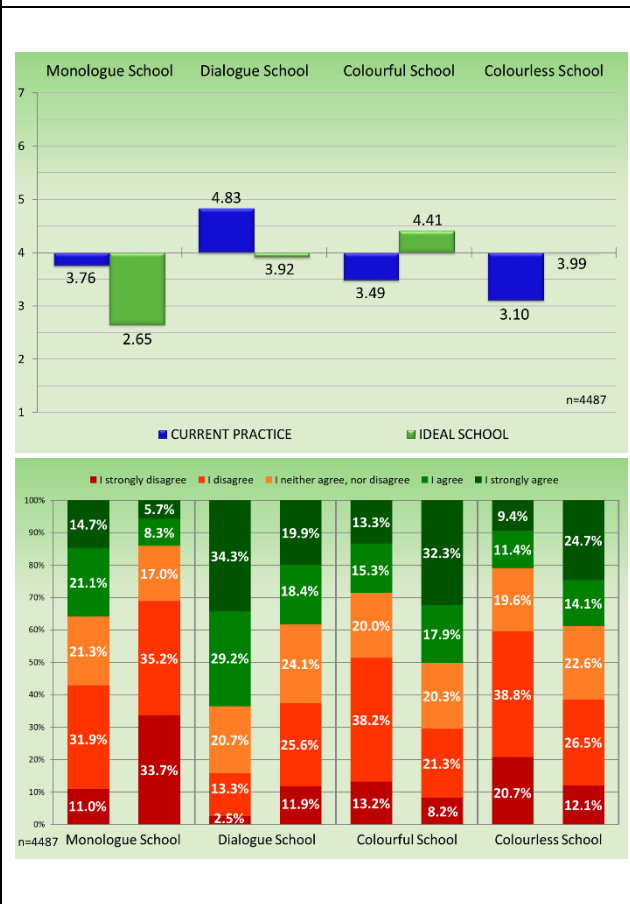
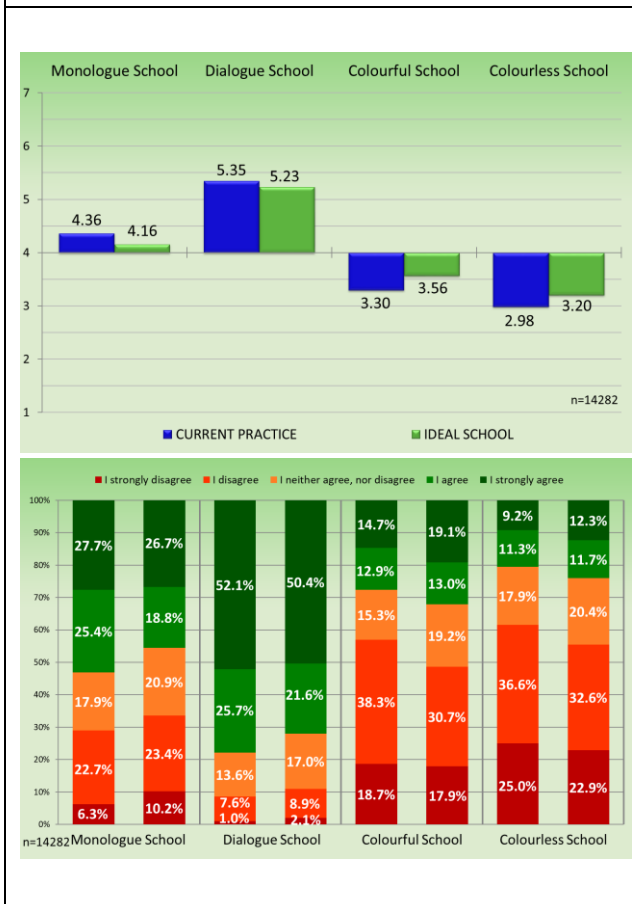
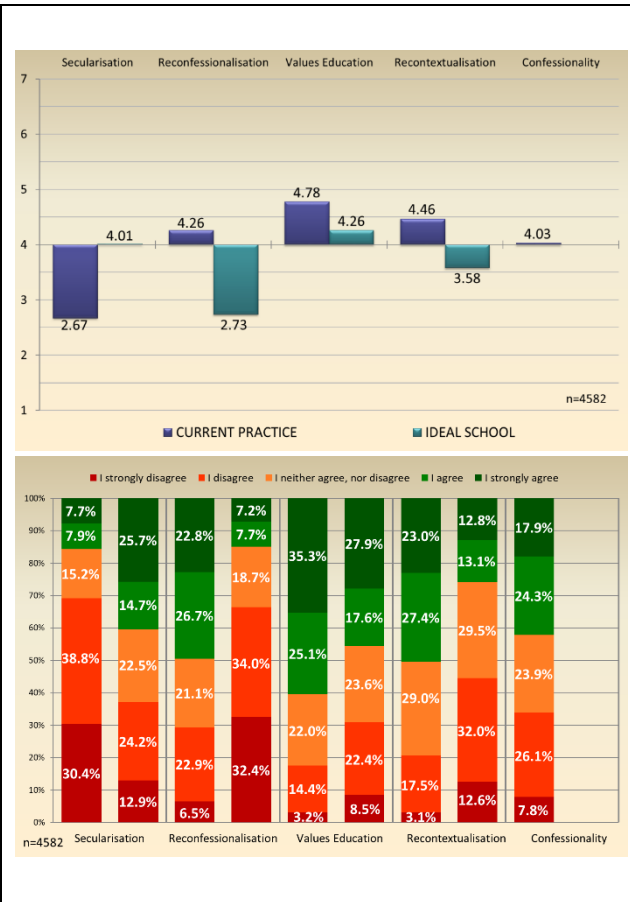
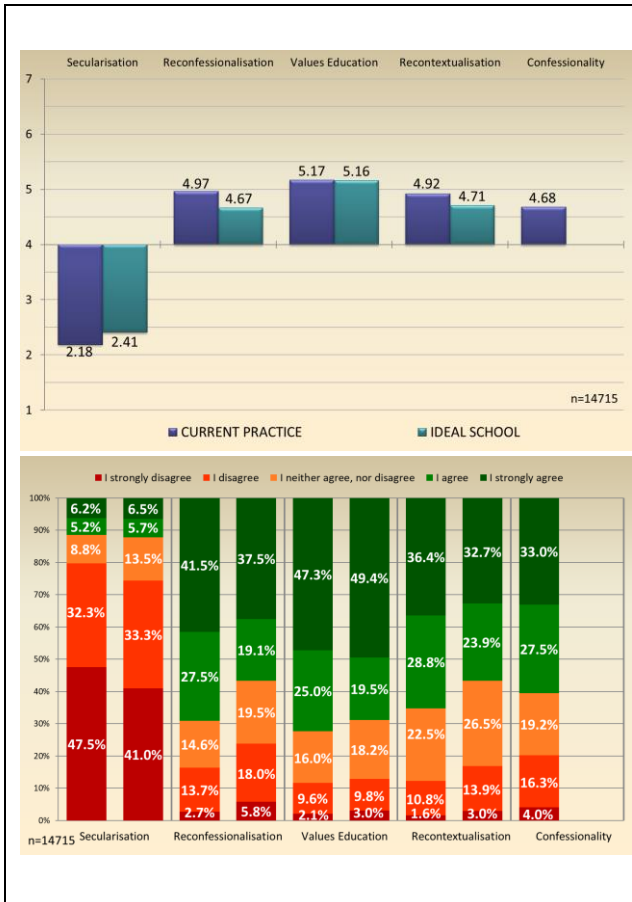
### Low personal prayer life:

"Once I did pray, but not anymore."

"I have never prayed before."

### 8.1 Scale results for students in primary schools (RG1)



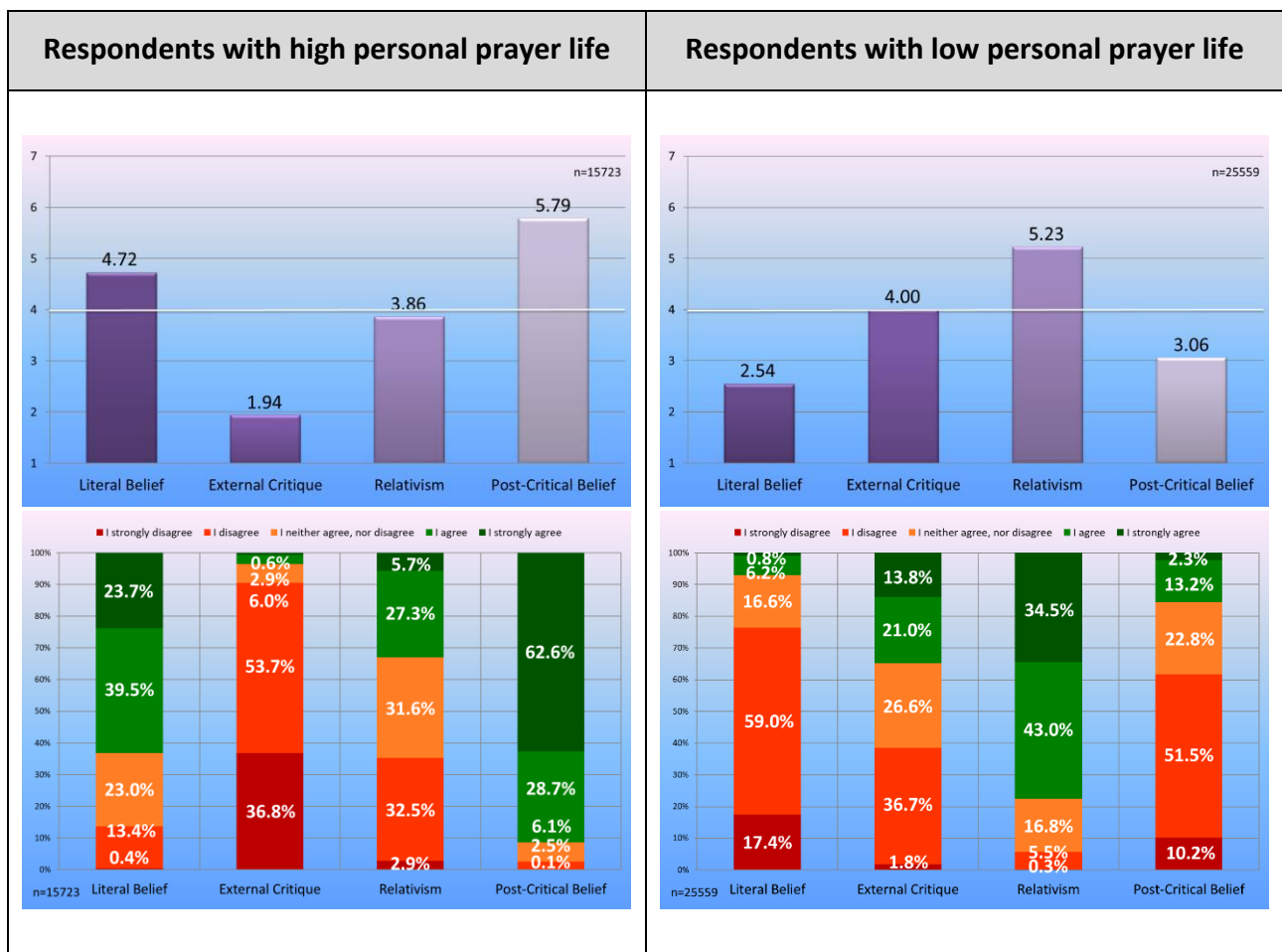


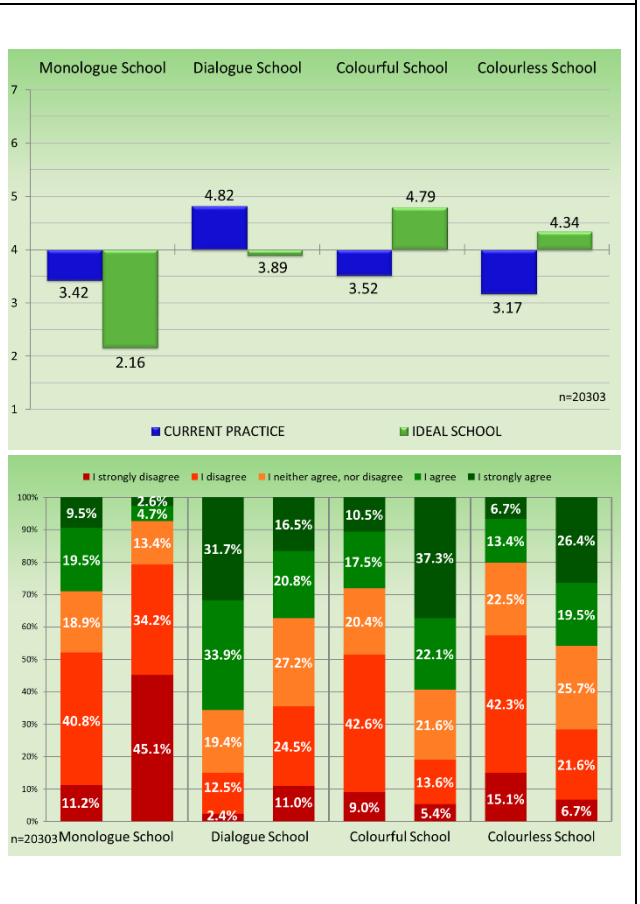
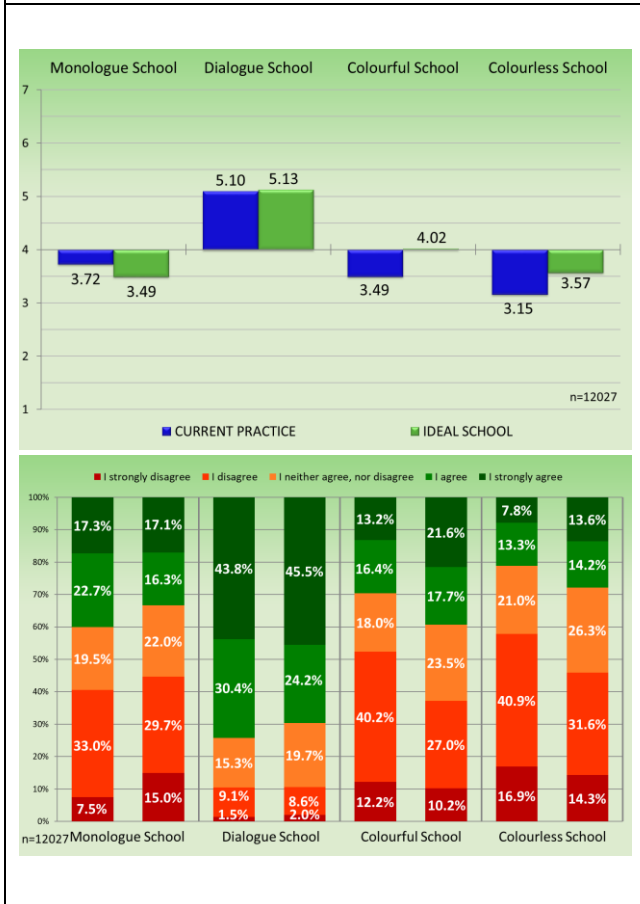
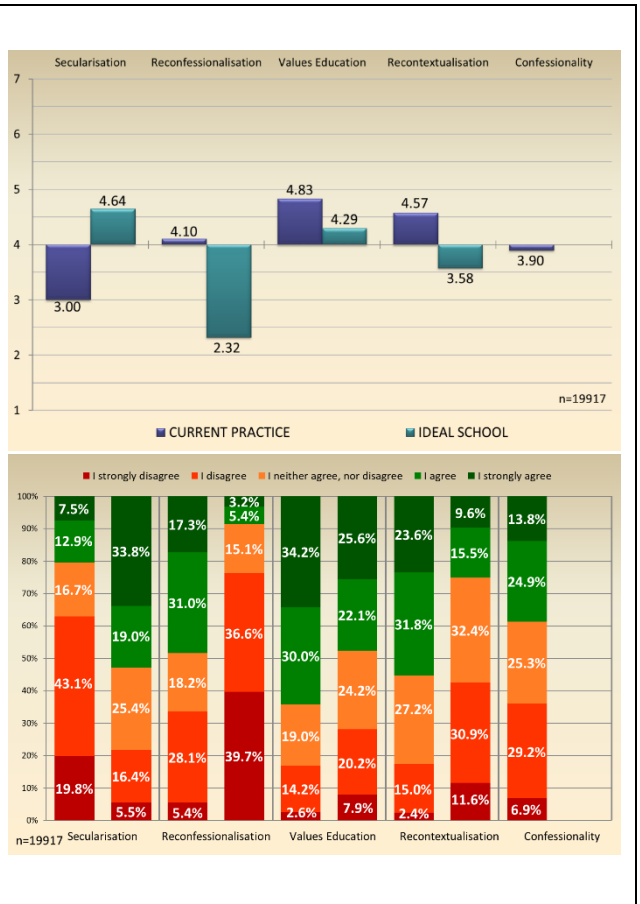
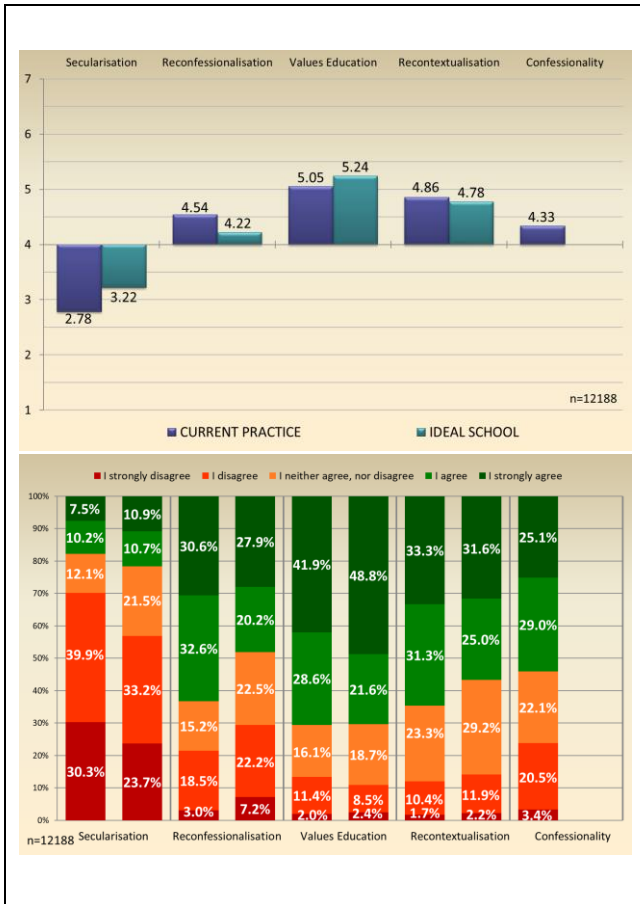
In general, the above data reveal that primary students who report an active personal prayer life are associated with positions of belief in God and support for Catholic school identity to a much more significant degree than their peers who report very limited or no personal prayer.

For those with 'high' personal prayer life: (a) *Post-Critical Belief* dominates to a significant extent, followed by a notably positive result on *Literal Belief*; (b) *Confessionality* is much more positive; (c) *Secularisation* is resisted much more strongly; (d) there is a noticeably more pronounced preference for the three Catholic identity types (*Values Education, Reconfessionalisation, Recontextualisation*); (e) the *Dialogue School* is favoured significantly with some positive appreciation for the *Monologue School*; and (f) resistance towards the *Colourful School* and the *Colourless School* does not diminish significantly.

This pattern is noticeably reversed for those with 'low' personal prayer: (a) *Relativism* dominates and *External Critique* is nearly positive; (b) *Secularisation* is not at all resisted while the three Catholic identity types (*Values Education, Reconfessionalisation, Recontextualisation*) are – although, interestingly, some positive appreciation for *Christian Values Education* remains among this group; (c) the *Monologue School* and even the *Dialogue School* are resisted while the *Colourful School* and the *Colourless School* are not.

### 8.2 Scale results for students in secondary colleges (RG2-3-4)



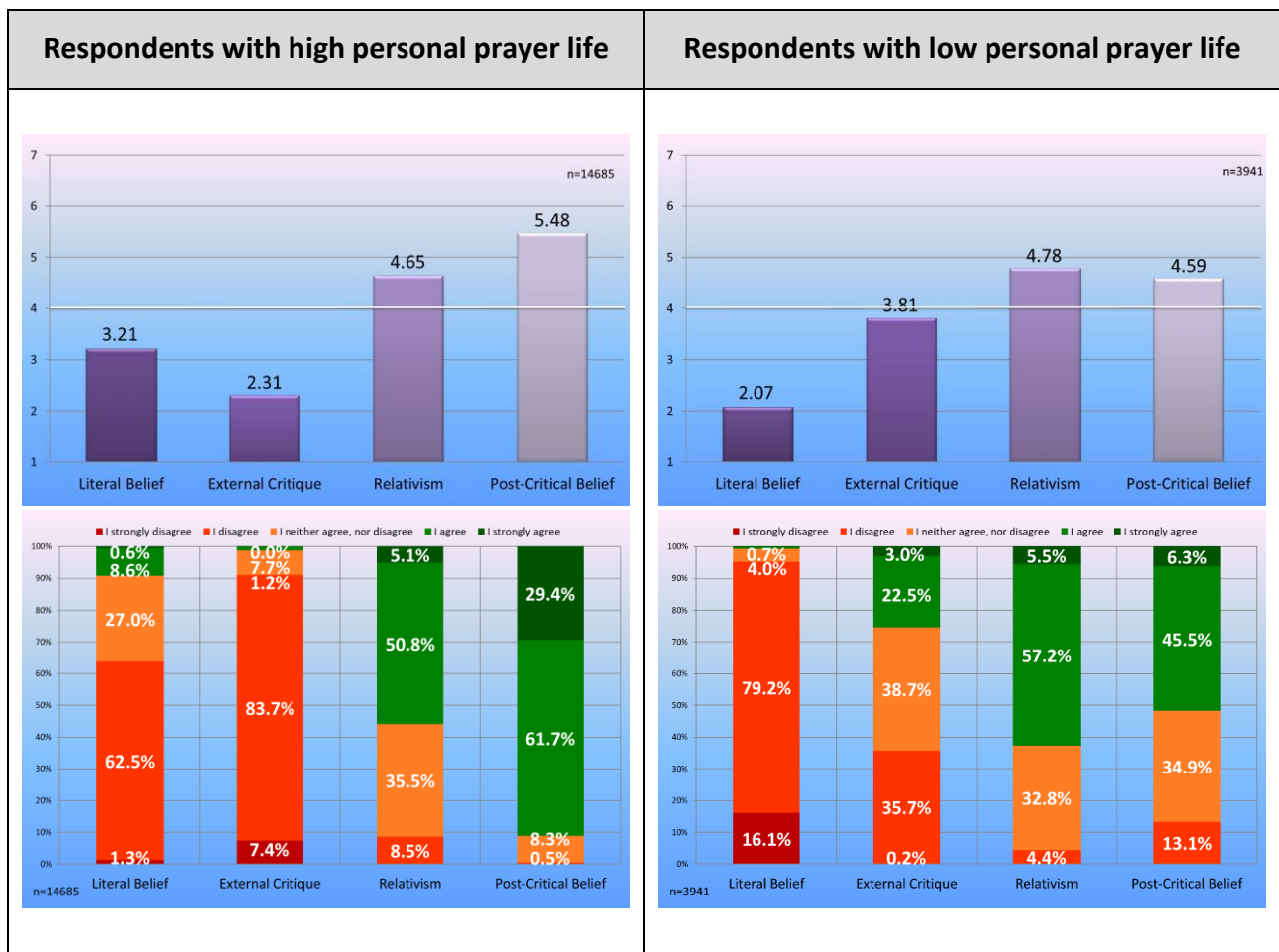


For secondary college students as a whole, the overall patterns are generally the same as with those among primary school students (see above), with several notably more pronounced aspects.

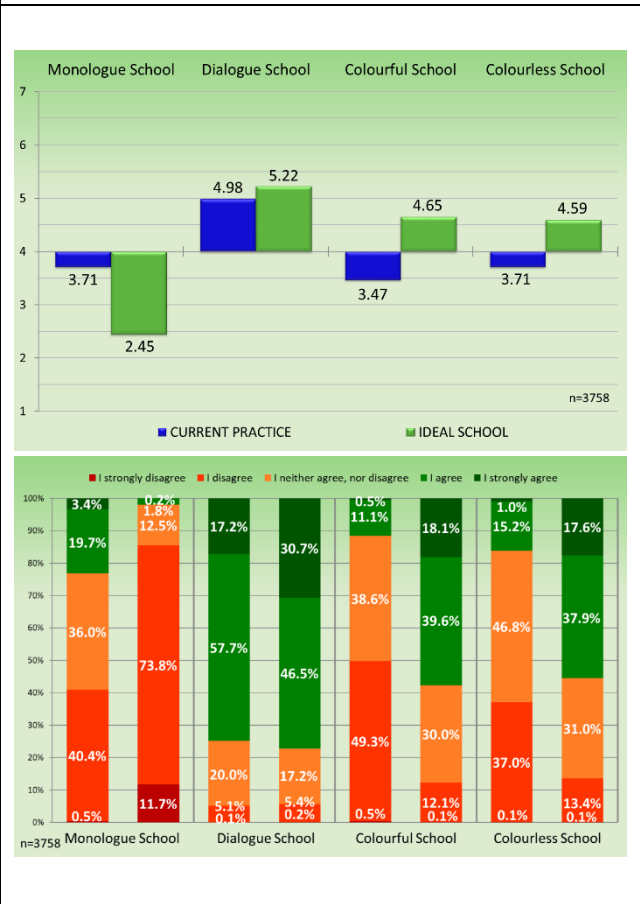
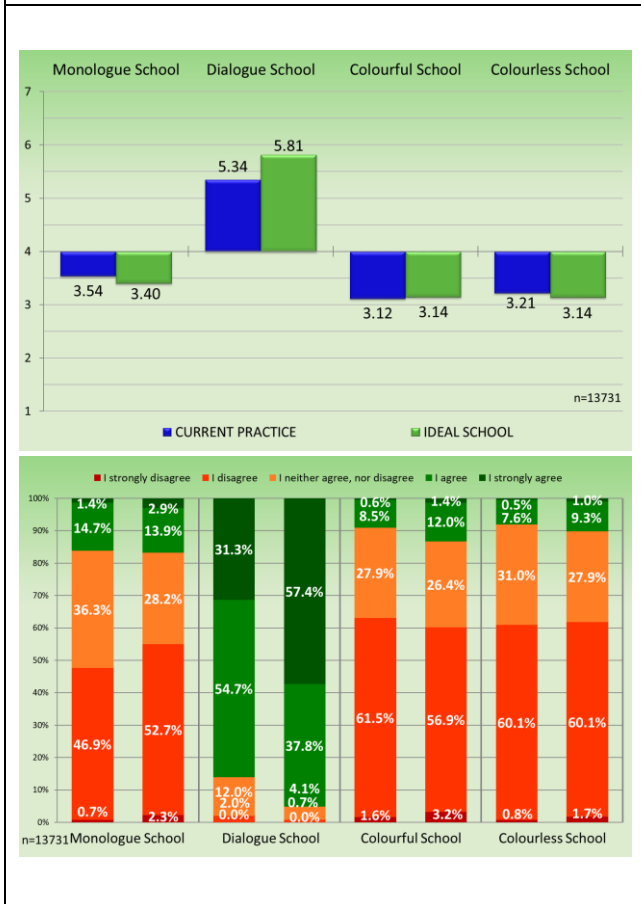
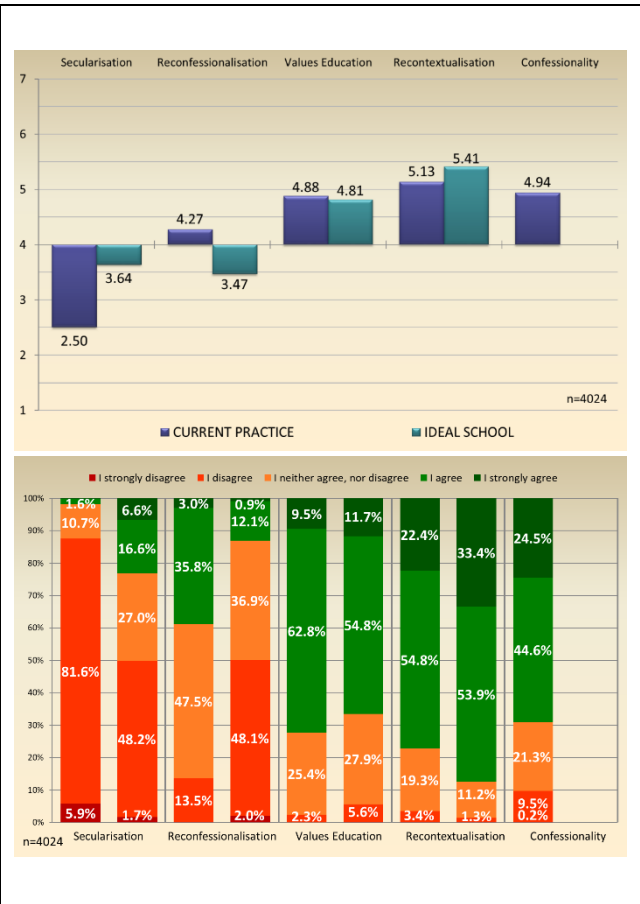
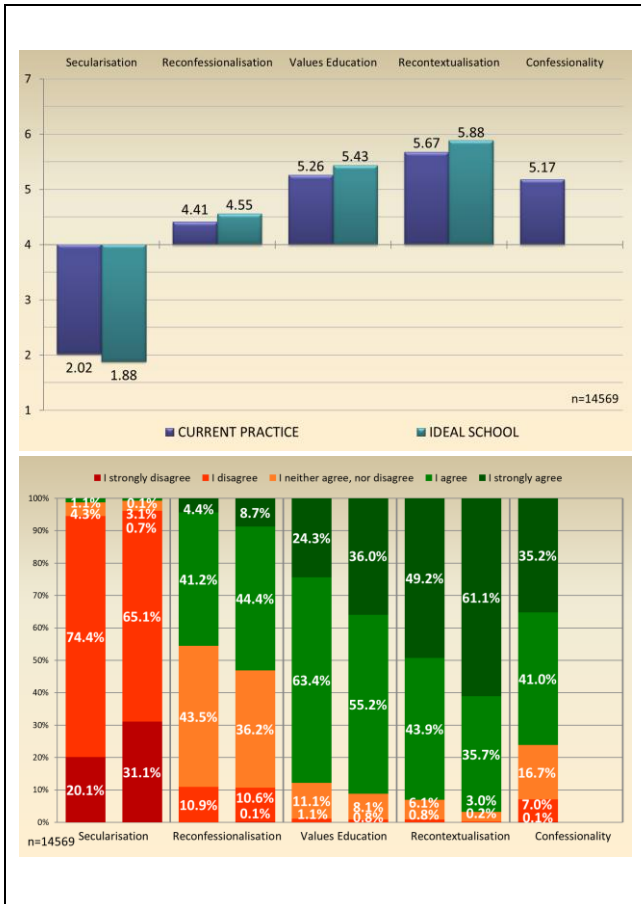
Among secondary students with 'high' personal prayer life: (a) *Reconfessionalisation* is resisted slightly (although still positive); and (b) the *Dialogue School* is favoured with a hint of the *Colourful School*, but with no positive consideration of the *Monologue School*.

Among those with 'low' personal prayer: (a) preferential attitudes towards *Secularisation*, the *Colourful School* and the *Colourless School* become noticeably more positive than by comparison to these same attitudes among primary students with 'low' personal prayer.

### 8.3 Scale results for teachers and leadership in primary and secondary schools (RG6-7)



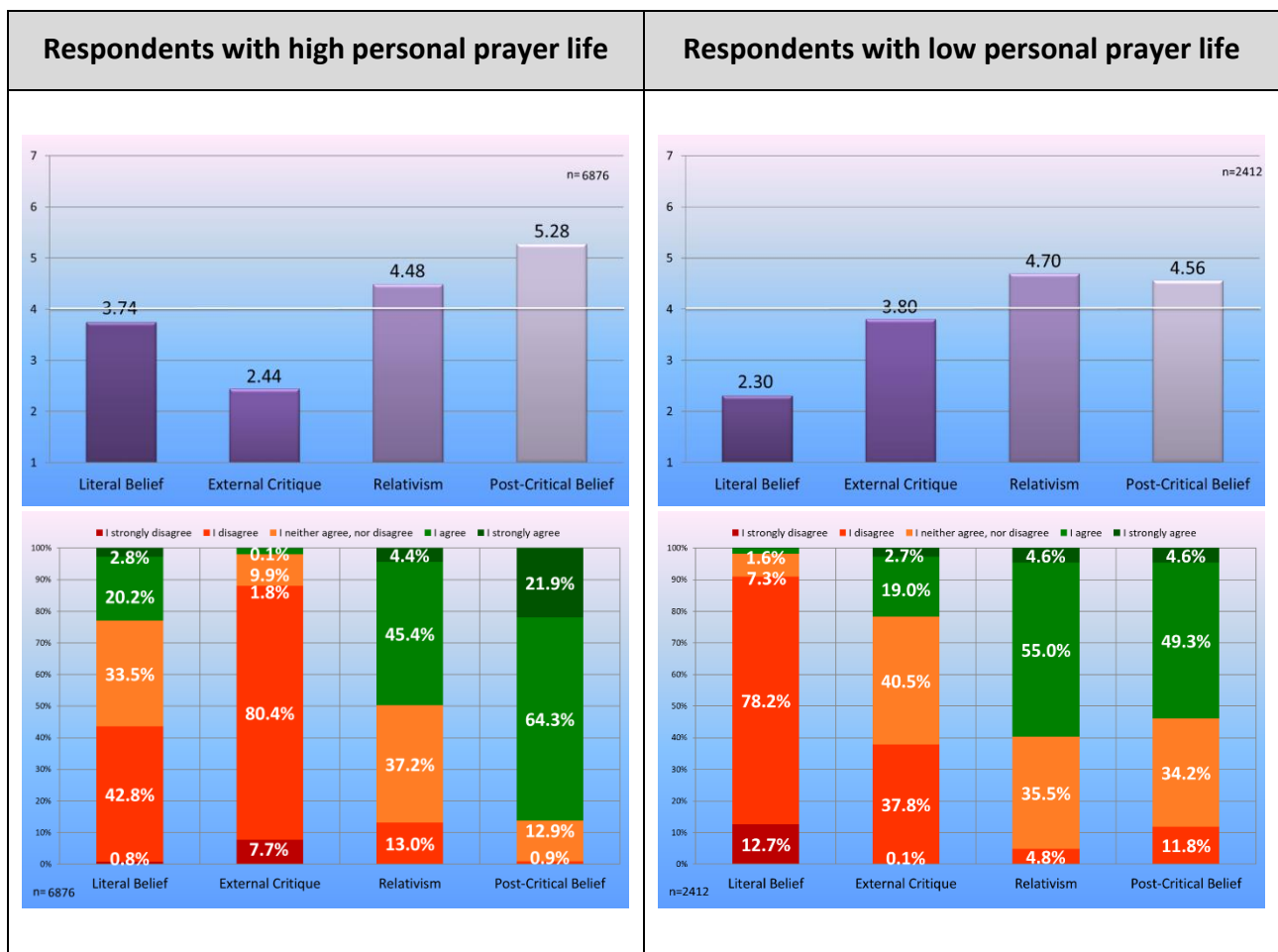


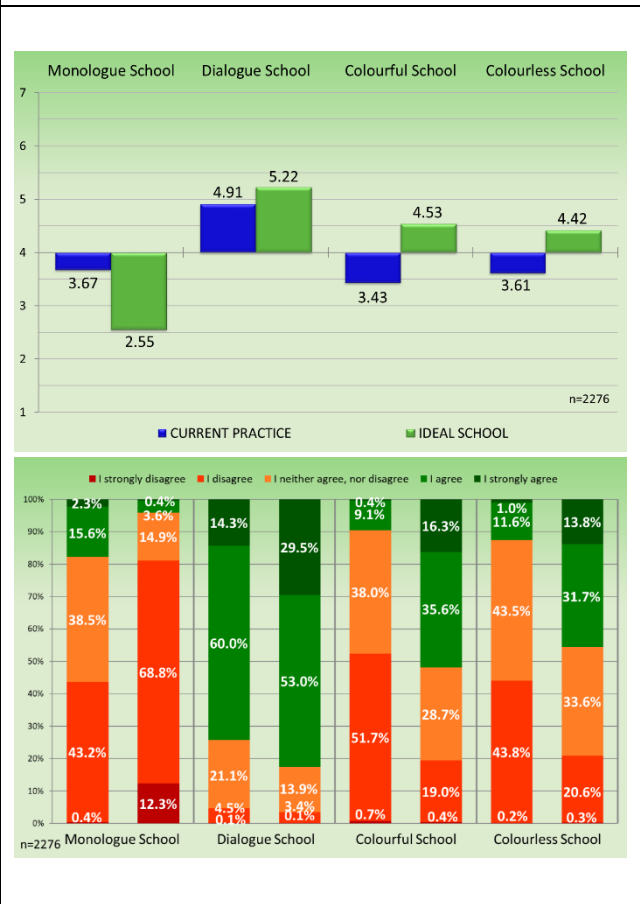
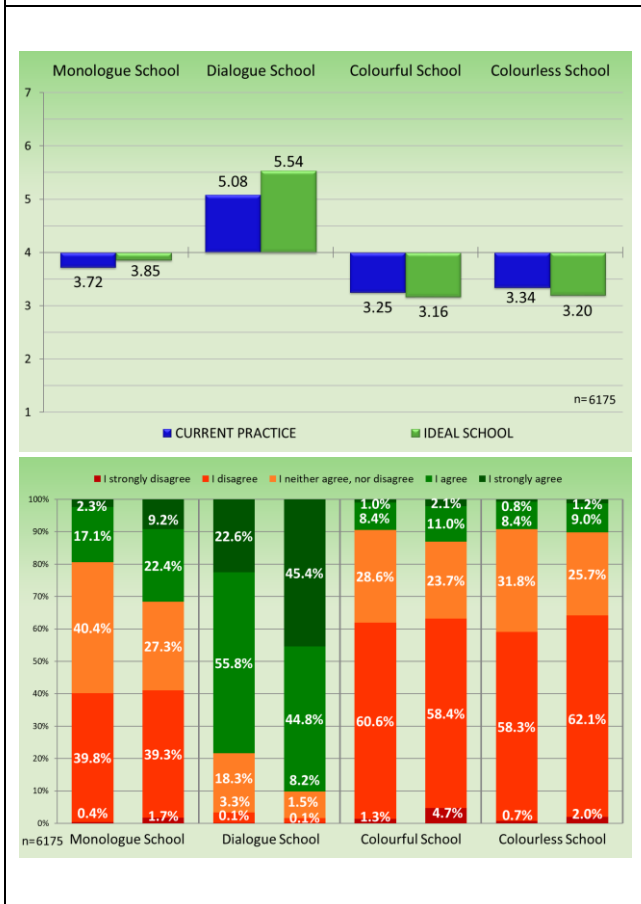
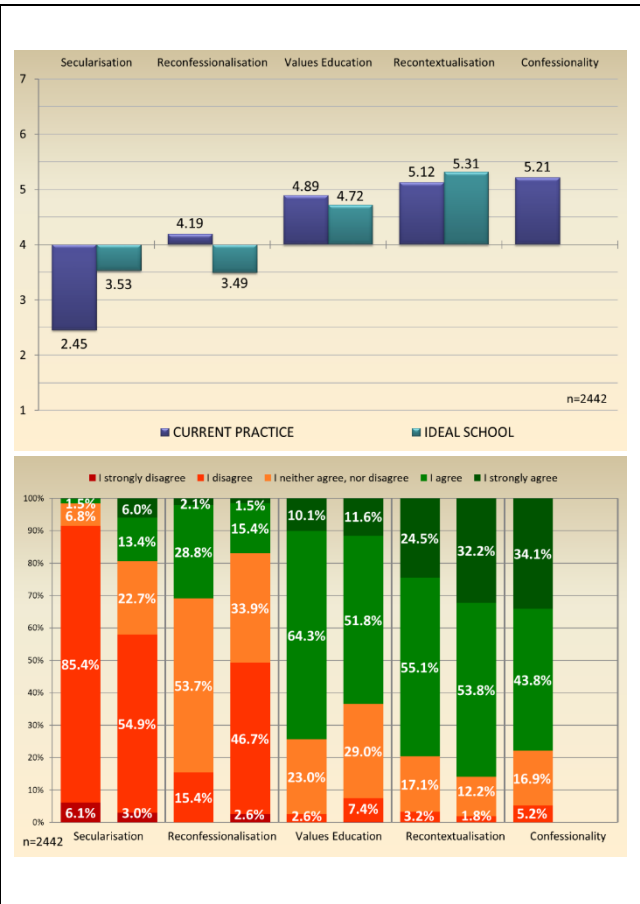
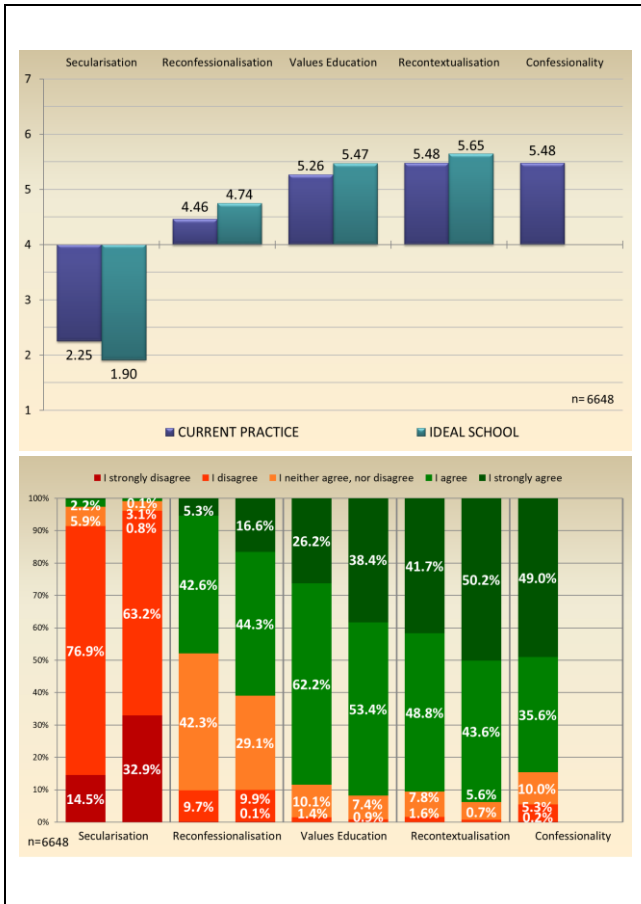


Among teachers and leadership in primary and secondary schools, several important findings are worth noting. In reference to the PCB Scale, both those with 'high' prayer life and 'low' prayer life demonstrate similar levels of *Awareness of Contingency*. For the former, that *Awareness of Contingency* yields to Post-Critical Belief, while for the latter, that same *Awareness of Contingency* dominates in a more *Relativistic* way, coloured by aspects of *Post-Critical Belief*. Among the latter group, *External Critique* is also much higher (nearly positive) than among the former group.

Regarding the *Melbourne Scale*, both groups demonstrate support for *Recontextualisation* and (to some extent) *Christian Values Education*, although those with 'low' personal prayer are not nearly as resistant to *Secularisation* as are those with 'high' personal prayer. A similar trend is also evident in reference to the *Victoria Scale*, where both groups are favourable towards the *Dialogue School*, but for those with 'low' personal prayer, this is a kind of *Dialogue* that is coloured much more so by positive attitudes towards both the *Colourful School* and the *Colourless School*. For that same latter group, this suggests that they are less likely to engage issues of Catholic identity in such *Dialogue*.

### 8.4 Scale results for the parents of the students (RG9)





The parent respondent group reflects patterns similar to those observed among the teachers, staff and school leadership (see above), with the notable exception that the parents in general demonstrate higher degrees of *Literal Belief (PCB Scale)* and *Confessionality (Melbourne Scale)* than do the teachers, staff and leadership as a whole.

## E. Conclusions and recommendations

In summary, the results of these analyses underscore quite strongly that the question of personal prayer life is one of the most significant factors in support of a vibrant and meaningful Catholic school identity. Likewise, such Catholic school identity supports in turn the development of an active and meaningful personal prayer life. These conclusions serve to reinforce in an empirical way what spiritual authors and theological scholars have similarly been stressing for a long time.

It is also worthwhile to note carefully that this mutual association between support for Catholic school identity and a vibrant and active life of prayer aligns with both *Reconfessionalisation* and *Recontextualisation*. In fact, an interaction between aspects of both identity types is important to the development of a prayer life both personally and at school. For example, traditional recitations of the *Our Father* and *Recontextualised* expressions of the same are both mutually supportive and mutually enriching, together offering an environment of prayer that helps maximise not only one's engagement with the prayer but also one's ability to appropriate meaning therein.

Also of note, while *Christian Values Education* does correlate positively with prayer, the findings above make evident that this correlation is noticeably less strong compared to the correlation between prayer and *Reconfessionalisation* and *Recontextualisation*.

Two recommendations follow from these findings. Firstly, if schools desire to enhance their Catholic identity in a robust and meaningful way, they are well-advised to invest in helping their students, staff and parents develop their prayer life. Such an investment is in itself an (important) aspect of Catholic identity and will result in greater support for further efforts to enhance Catholic identity. Practically speaking, schools may wish to develop projects on 'developing personal prayer' and 'building a culture of prayer at school' that align not only with the criteria and best practices of *Recontextualisation* but which also incorporate a strong sense of rootedness in and continuity with the Catholic tradition (foundations of *Reconfessionalisation*).

Secondly, from a policy perspective, schools and governing bodies may wish to consider the ways in which one's thinking about and practices of prayer (personally and at school) form a part of the selection and on-boarding processes for students, teachers, and school leadership. The findings of this study have made evident that openness to prayer at both levels makes a significant difference in the Catholic identity of the school.

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